

Media Release



Government of South Australia

Office of Consumer and
Business Affairs

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Invoice scam hits SA businesses

South Australian businesses are again being targeted with false billing scams.

The Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) has received a recent influx of enquiries from businesses who have been invoiced for advertisements they have not authorised.

With these scams, a business operator may not realise that an advertisement for their business has appeared in a publication, until they receive an invoice and a copy of the publication.

The Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, Mark Bodycoat is warning businesses of this type of false billing scam and advises businesses to check their invoices before paying them.

“Local businesses are being preyed upon with unauthorised advertising appearing in publications without their permission. These unscrupulous operators are hoping the businesses are too busy to check their invoices.”

Concerned businesses have contacted OCBA about unauthorised advertisements appearing in a variety of publications including journals that deal with drugs, accident support, volunteering and road safety.

“The publications seem to promote messages of value to the community, which the scammers hope will strike a chord with business owners. But often with false billing scams the publications are not circulated to anyone other than the businesses whose advertisements appear in them.”

OCBA has also received reports of businesses receiving phone calls 'just confirming' the advertisement they had booked when in fact they had never heard about it before.

“This is another trick used by the scammers. They will try anything to get your money. Business operators should not lower their guards.”

“I encourage businesses to keep a record of all ads that they authorise to guard themselves against false billers, and if they suspect an invoice scam to contact Consumer Affairs. The simple message is – if you didn't authorise it, don't pay it”.

The advice coincides with the national scams awareness campaign promoting the message “SCAMS TARGET YOU - Protect Yourself”. This four-week campaign is being coordinated by the Australasian Consumer Fraud Taskforce to help people protect themselves from becoming scams victims.

If businesses are affected by unauthorised advertising they are encouraged to contact OCBA on (08) 8207 2557.