

# Media Release



**Government of South Australia**

Office of Consumer and  
Business Affairs

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## **NO SUCH THING AS A FREE LUNCH**

Commissioner for Consumer Affairs David Green warns South Australians to be wary of marketing seminars that lure consumers with offers of a free meal and the chance to be in the draw to win a prize in return for consumer feedback on goods.

The Office of Consumer and Business Affairs has been advised that there are a number of invitations to attend marketing seminars with complimentary dining experiences at hotels and restaurants across Adelaide in circulation.

“These invitations can be a ruse to get people in a room and use high pressure sales tactics on them. They can include complimentary dinner and drinks at hotels or restaurants and are often followed by pressure to make large purchases with significant up front payments,” the Commissioner says.

“In a number of reported cases interstate, payment has been made up front for goods that are not delivered,” warns the Commissioner.

Consumers need to be aware that the cooling off-period under the Fair Trading Act may not apply for goods purchased at these types of seminars, as the solicitation may not be defined as door-to-door sales. Consumers should ask whether the purchase is subject to any cooling-off period.

“Consumers should also consider whether they are in a position to decide whether the purchase is good value for money. Are they aware of what the product would normally sell for and if this is a reasonable amount?,” says the Commissioner.

It appears that on attending these marketing seminars, invitations are made for consumers to purchase these goods and there is a concern that high pressure sales tactics are being employed.

Consumers who have attended seminars and purchased goods where these have not been supplied within a reasonable time are encouraged to contact the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs to discuss their concerns and seek advice, or they may contact their financial institution in order to lodge a disputed transaction for credit card purchases.

Traders should also be aware of their responsibility when contracting for the supply of goods and services. It is an offence to accept a payment for goods or services in South Australia where the goods are not supplied within a specified time, or if no period is specified, within a reasonable time.

"The old adage that "there's no such thing as a free lunch" is very apt. I encourage all consumers to investigate these invitations, not feel obliged to make any purchases and limit any up-front payments," says Commissioner Green.

To report concerns with marketing seminars please contact OCBA on 82049777 or 131 882 for regional callers

**For further information** contact the Strategic Communications Group, Attorney General's Department and Department of Justice **media line: 0422 007 069**