

Media Release



Government of South Australia

Office of Consumer and
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Itinerant traders cruising again

Consumers are being urged to come forward if they have been approached by anyone selling goods from the back of a van. The Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) is looking to gather further information about two itinerant traders, who have been selling electrical items.

Recent reports indicate that itinerant traders have been cruising the streets again, approaching people at bus stops or car parks and offering to sell electrical items such as hi-fi and home cinema systems.

The Acting Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, Euan Miller, is warning consumers not to be caught out by these fly-by-night salespeople.

“The Office of Consumer and Business Affairs would like to hear from anyone who has dealt with these itinerant sellers.”

“Consumers who may have purchased goods from the back of a van may be reluctant to come forward for fear they have been involved in an illegal activity. The primary concern of OCBA is to gather as much information as possible to help with its investigation into these itinerant traders.”

Police officers have spoken with two males in the car park of a Fulham shopping centre. The salesmen were selling 'eKlipsch' home theatre systems from the rear of a van and claimed the goods were available at a heavily discounted price. OCBA is concerned about possible breaches of the Fair Trading law.

The fly-by-night salesmen seem to have equipment which is a cheaper alternative. In comparison to the premium quality “Klipsch” audio products, many consumers may assume that the electrical items are of comparable quality or are the genuine articles.

“Consumers may be misled that they are purchasing electrical items that are of high quality, but experience shows that they may really be a cheap and nasty alternative.”

It is a breach of the Fair Trading Act 1987 to misrepresent the characteristics of goods. If there are any problems with the goods the salespeople will be hard to track down because they quickly move on.

Additionally, the conduct of carrying on business by travelling from place to place, selling goods or services, is classified as door-to-door selling, and is regulated under the Fair Trading Act. It is highly unlikely that these sellers are complying with the Act.

“If these travelling salesmen are selling items over \$50, the buyer must be provided with written documentation to sign and be informed about their cooling off rights. It is unlikely that consumers are being afforded their consumer rights. They are only concerned with the money from a sale,” Mr Miller said.

Consumers are also reminded that these itinerant sales people are notoriously known to pack up and move on. If there are any problems with the electrical items consumers have little opportunity to seek recourse.

“If anyone has information about traders selling goods from the back of a van, they should contact Consumer Affairs.”

Consumers should phone Consumer Affairs on 8204 9777 or regional callers on 131 882.