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MOBILE PHONE SURVEY EXPOSES MAJOR CONCERNS

This week's phone in day on 'mobile matters' attracted more than 220 calls from concerned individuals about a range of problems with their mobile phones.

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Jennifer Rankine, said she was pleased with the resounding response from people all over the State keen to canvas their concerns.

"The phone-in day provided helpful information that highlighted specific issues. It became clear, after reviewing the hundreds of calls, that there is a widespread view that mobiles are a significant source of trouble for a large number of people," Ms Rankine said.

The majority of callers expressed their dissatisfaction with poor coverage in regional areas, poor performance of phones and warranty problems.

"A high number of complaints also related to poor coverage in regional areas along with poor performance of next generation phones, particularly when buyers were told the devices would perform as well as or better than CDMA phones.

One regional caller found out by accident that his mobile phone would only work when he climbed to the 17th rung of his radio tower. Another caller reported having problems with poor coverage in a metropolitan suburb.

Technical faults in major brand handsets also emerged as a significant problem

"Consumers then lodged complaints about delays in repairs, being without a loan phone while phones were being repaired, and that some phones were not fixed properly. To a lesser degree there were also complaints about plans and billing charges."

"I was also extremely disheartened to learn about a 16 year old who bought a phone and plan through an 18-year-old friend as the purchaser. That afternoon the phone was lost or stolen and now the pair face bills of \$990 for the phone and \$600 to get out of the contract," Ms Rankine said.

The information is being collated and will be used in developing local and national strategies to address problems in the mobile phone industry.

"This is pivotal data which will be used to determine how best to protect phone users, but also be used to maximise an effective working relationship between Consumer Affairs, traders and service providers," Ms Rankine said.

People experiencing problems with their mobile phones can still contact OCBA on 8204 9777, regional callers 131 882 or visit www.ocba.sa.gov.au.