
Saturday, April 11, 2008

STORES CHECKED FOR PRICE SCANNING ACCURACY

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Jennifer Rankine, today called on retailers – and service stations in particular - to be more vigilant following the release of a national price scanning audit.

The Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) has coordinated national price scanning audits over four consecutive years, with stores checked this year including supermarkets, service stations, pharmacies, hardware stores and discount variety stores.

Minister Rankine said the audit involved 5,000 items being scanned across the country through 200 stores.

“The results clearly show that there is still a need for stores to work harder at ensuring their customers are charged the correct price at the checkout,” she said.

Nationally supermarkets fared the best with 96% of all items scanning at the correct price, but discount variety stores trailed last with only 89% of items scanning at the right price.

National results are summarised as follows:

- Problems were found at 66% of stores audited.
- Of the 5,000 items audited 92% scanned at the correct price.
- Of the 396 items that scanned at an incorrect price, 191 were overcharges (with a total value of \$264.45) and 205 were undercharges (with a total value of \$556.07).

South Australian results are summarised as follows:

- Problems were found at 72% of stores audited.
- At least one price scanning error was found at every service station and hardware store audited.
- Of the 625 items audited 92% scanned at the correct price.
- Of the 48 items that scanned at an incorrect price, 29 items were overcharges and 19 were undercharges.
- More than half of the overcharges (15) occurred at service stations.
- The highest overcharge was for a pair of socks which scanned at \$9.90 above the correct price.

“It’s disappointing that we have noticed a drop in price scanning accuracy here in South Australia from last year’s 97 per cent and I fear this shows that some stores have become complacent about making sure that their price scanning systems are accurate,” Minister Rankine said.

“I’m particularly concerned that service stations in this state were found to have an accuracy of just 86 per cent. This is simply not good enough.

“As a result, OCBA will increase the number of price scanning checks to ensure compliance, through all retail sectors.

“Where inaccuracies are detected, OCBA will be insisting that the trader put appropriate processes in place to address any future price scanning errors and will seek to prosecute stores that continue to overcharge consumers for scanned goods.”

Minister Rankine reminded consumers to check their receipts carefully against the shelf price or advertised price.

“If any price scanning errors occur then bring it to the store’s attention,” she said.

“If the matter is not resolved quickly by the store, then contact OCBA.”

Complaints regarding price scanning should be directed to OCBA on 8204 9777, or 131 882 for country callers.

More results from the 2008 price scanning audit are provided on the following two pages.

Percentage of all items scanned which showed the correct price

Jurisdiction	Supermarkets	Service Stations	Pharmacies	Variety	Hardware	All Items Scanned
ACT	95%	94%	81%	85%	93%	89%
NSW	96%	92%	94%	88%	91%	92%
NT	95%	90%	97%	87%	94%	93%
QLD	94%	96%	95%	92%	93%	94%
SA	97%	86%	94%	94%	91%	92%
TAS	90%	89%	90%	89%	82%	88%
VIC	100%	88%	92%	83%	100%	93%
WA	99%	93%	94%	93%	97%	95%
Total	96%	91%	92%	89%	93%	92%

Number of Stores correct by Jurisdiction (ie. No price scanning errors found)

Jurisdiction	Items	Stores	Stores
ACT	625	25	5
NSW	625	25	10
NT	625	25	8
QLD	625	25	6
SA	625	25	7
TAS	625	25	7
VIC	625	25	13
WA	625	25	11
Total	5000	200	67

% Stores correct by Store Type & Jurisdiction (ie. No price scanning errors found)

Jurisdiction	Supermarket	Service Stations	Pharmacies	Variety	Hardware	All Stores
ACT	60%	20%	0%	0%	20%	20%
NSW	60%	60%	20%	40%	20%	40%
NT	40%	20%	40%	0%	60%	32%
QLD	40%	40%	20%	20%	0%	24%
SA	40%	0%	40%	60%	0%	28%
TAS	60%	40%	40%	0%	0%	28%
VIC	100%	20%	20%	20%	100%	52%
WA	80%	0%	40%	40%	60%	44%
Total	60%	25%	28%	23%	33%	34%

Highest over charges by jurisdiction and store

Jurisdiction	Overcharge	Store type	Item
ACT	\$7.00	Pharmacy	Vitamins
NSW	\$5.98	Variety	Toy Game
NT	\$7.15	Hardware	Powerboard
QLD	\$9.00	Hardware	Thermos Mug
SA	\$9.90	Variety	Socks
TAS	\$15.55	Pharmacy	Cosmetic
VIC	\$20.00	Variety	Computer Accessory
WA	\$2.70	Variety	Watering Can

Number of Items Overcharged by Store Type & Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Super market	Service Station	Pharmacy	Variety	Hardware	All Items Overcharged
ACT	3	6	11	3	5	28
NSW	3	8	2	1	6	20
NT	1	11	1	2	3	18
QLD	7	3	3	1	7	21
SA	1	15	4	3	6	29
TAS	11	3	8	4	16	42
VIC	0	5	2	7	0	14
WA	0	8	6	2	3	19
Total	26	59	37	23	46	191