

# News Release

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**Hon Gail Gago**  
Minister for State/Local Government  
Relations  
Minister for the Status of Women  
Minister for Consumer Affairs  
Minister Government Enterprises  
Minister Ast Minister for Transport, Infrastructure & Energy

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## **FAKE RENTAL ACCOMMODATION ALERT**

Consumer Affairs Minister Gail Gago is warning prospective tenants to be wary of fake rental and shared accommodation listings on the Internet.

The warning follows complaints to the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) from consumers in South Australia who have sent money for properties that they thought were genuinely available from a landlord.

“It appears that the scammers are copying genuine ads for rental properties and asking prospective tenants to pay an amount upfront,” Ms Gago said.

“Consumers are being duped into thinking that these people are the legitimate owners of the property.”

OCBA has advised that the scammers make excuses as to why the property cannot be inspected and then insist that money be sent to a partner based overseas to ‘secure’ the property. In the reported cases the consumers have sent money and have not been able to contact the fraudulent owners/landlords since.

OCBA has contacted the website operators to advise them of the scam and has asked that the fake listings be removed.

“Once consumers have sent money to a scammer based overseas they are not likely to ever see the money again,” Ms Gago said.

“Australian authorities are limited with any action that can be taken to recover monies sent overseas or to investigate fraudsters based in other countries.

“Consumers need to be on their guard because scams can sometimes be difficult to detect.

“The scammers go to a lot of effort to make their offer appear as legitimate. In this case it seems they are using addresses and photographs of real properties - but they are not the real owners.”

Renters are advised:

- Don't pay any money until they have inspected the property and are satisfied that the rental agreement is signed by both parties and is genuine.
- Make sure they get a receipt for any money paid.
- Be wary of sending money overseas, particularly to a post box number.

Anyone who has responded to the rental scam should contact OCBA's Tenancies Branch on 8204 9544. Information about recognising and avoiding fake rental listings is available on the OCBA website - [www.ocba.sa.gov.au](http://www.ocba.sa.gov.au)