

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

Thursday, 23rd April 2009

SA PRICE SCANNERS LEAST ACCURATE OF AUSTRALIAN STATES

Some South Australian retailers need to get their act together after recording the worst performance of all the States in a recent national audit of price scanning accuracy. The Territories were worse.

Minister for Consumer Affairs Gail Gago says SA's price scanning accuracy has dropped to 91 per cent – down from 92 per cent last year – leaving offenders on notice that any repeat behaviour will prompt enforcement action.

“South Australians work hard for every cent they spend and there is nothing more frustrating for a shopper than to feel ripped off at the checkout,” says Minister Gago.

“Interestingly five per cent of inaccurate scans were overcharges and four per cent under charges, meaning it's probably a case of retailers needing to pay more attention to their data entry process rather than deliberately skimming extra money.

“Obviously human error is always possible across a large number of items, but that's no excuse if there is a repeated breach.”

South Australian results are summarised as follows:

- Of the total 625 items audited, 91% scanned at the correct price.
- Of the 58 items scanned at an incorrect price, 30 were overcharges and 28 were undercharges.
- The highest overcharge was for a garden light purchased from a hardware store, which scanned \$13 more than the correct price.
- Hardware stores had the highest rate of error with every hardware store tested returning errors and 14% of items incorrect, followed by convenience stores with just 1 store without error and 11% of items incorrect.
- Service stations performed poorly last year with just 86% accuracy, but they have heeded warnings and recorded 98% accuracy in this year's audit.
- Problems were found at 68% of stores audited.

National results include:

- Hardware stores were also poor performers nationally with just 20% audited passing without error.
- Of the 5000 items audited, 91% scanned at the correct price.
- Of the 437 items that scanned at an incorrect price, 220 were overcharges and 217 were undercharges.
- The highest overcharge was for a toy television in a variety store, which scanned \$37 more than the correct price.
- Problems were found at 68% of stores audited.

“Those suggesting one price to their customers and charging another will be followed up by the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA),” says Ms Gago.

“Stores are also on notice that further audits will be undertaken throughout the year.

“These stores must have their operations ship shape by the next round of follow-up inspections or they’ll face enforcement action.”

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

Additional information about the 2009 national price scanning audit

The annual national price scanning audit has been coordinated by SA’s Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) for 5 years - this year checking a random sample of 625 items from convenience stores, service stations, pharmacies, hardware stores and discount variety stores.

Supermarkets were not included in this year’s audit because of their good performance last year. Instead they were replaced by convenience stores.

Items Scanned in SA

	Over charge %	Under charge %	Total Accuracy %
Hardware Stores	6	8	86
Convenience Stores	6	6	89
Pharmacies	6	3	91
Variety Stores	4	6	90
Service Stations	2	0	98
Overall	5	4	91

Percentage of all items scanned which showed the correct price

	Total Accuracy %
Qld	96
NSW	94
WA	94
Tas	92
VIC	92
SA	91
ACT	86
NT	85
Overall	91