

# News Release

www.premier.sa.gov.au



**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

Tuesday, 12<sup>th</sup> January 2010

## **BIG DROP IN SCAM REPORTS TO CONSUMER AFFAIRS**

The number of scams reported to South Australia's Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) has been declining in recent years, with the number of reports now half what they were four years ago.

OCBA received around 2,500 enquiries last financial year compared with 4,860 enquiries in 2005. The number of formal complaints requiring follow up by OCBA officers has also dropped, from 1,350 complaints in 2005 compared with 1,020 last year.

Minister for Consumer Affairs Gail Gago says "Publicity about scams over the years has served to increase awareness in the South Australian community, so now many people simply delete or throw out any scam offer without feeling the need to report it to authorities."

The introduction of the SCAMwatch website - operated by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, together with a push for greater public awareness about scams by fair trading offices have impacted on the drop in numbers.

Scam reports peaked in 2005 when large quantities of the 'David Rhodes' chain letters were circulating across the country. OCBA destroyed more than 4,000 letters that had been intercepted before they could reach the intended South Australian recipients, and issued numerous warnings about the scheme.

"OCBA continues to draw attention to the various scams that emerge. These are often variations of older concepts, but continue to catch some consumers off-guard," says Minister Gago.

One of the recent scams reported to OCBA involves an email claiming to come from an offshore oil and gas company, telling the recipient they have been chosen to receive \$850,000. Consumers are asked to send their contact details and some form of identification.

"This latest scam is really quite obvious as it contains a number of spelling and grammatical errors, but even so, not all consumers look at the finer details of an email once they've seen the dollar amount that's supposedly coming their way," says the Minister.

Minister Gago reminded consumers that they need to be wary before giving out their personal details or sending any money offshore, otherwise they may find themselves out of pocket and possibly a victim of identity fraud.

To report a suspected scam consumers can contact OCBA on 8204 9777, or 131 882 for country callers. For more information visit [www.ocba.sa.gov.au](http://www.ocba.sa.gov.au) or [www.scamwatch.gov.au](http://www.scamwatch.gov.au)

### **Enquiries to OCBA about scams and schemes**

Year	No. of enquiries
2009	2475
2008	3303
2007	3844
2006	3794
2005	4856