

# Media Release



Government of South Australia

Office of Consumer and  
Business Affairs

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## **INTERNATIONAL PHONE SCAM RINGING AROUND SA**

Commissioner for Consumer and Business Affairs, Paul White, is warning consumers to be wary of phone scammers claiming to represent Microsoft in order to access personal data.

The Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) has received a growing number of complaints from the public about suspicious phone calls, which may form part of an ongoing international scam.

“OCBA has received 40 complaints in the past 12 months about this scam, but of concern is that 21 of these have been in the past three months. Fortunately none of the consumers reporting the scam to OCBA have indicated that they actually became victims,” the Commissioner said.

In this particular scam, an individual phones claiming they are a certified Microsoft engineer, or a representative from some other reputable service provider, and that the consumer has a virus in their computer.

The scammer convinces the consumer to turn on their computer and leads them through pathways within the computer’s operating system that prompt error messages to demonstrate that there is a problem.

The scammer then directs the consumer to a website to download a program that gives the caller remote access to the computer.

“There are many potential dangers associated with giving strangers remote access to your computer. Once they have access, they can obtain credit details and personal information to access bank accounts or make purchases in your name,” the Commissioner said.

“The best way to protect yourself from these scammers is to hang up. Never give out credit card, online account details or remote access to your computer over the phone unless you have made the call and the phone number comes from a trusted source,” the Commissioner said.

Consumers are urged to report the scam to the ACCC via the ‘Scamwatch’ website [www.scamwatch.gov.au](http://www.scamwatch.gov.au) or call the infoline on 1300 302 502.