

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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CONSUMERS ENCOURAGED TO SEEK REFUND ON SCRATCHIE GAME

People who played a “scratchie” competition that requires “winners” to subscribe to a premium rate SMS service - and didn’t receive the full terms and conditions – can apply to get a refund through the promoter.

The competition - which involves a scratchie ticket inserted in the Sunday Mail on 9 November – is at the centre of State and national investigations.

After scratching a ticket and matching three symbols consumers are told they can claim their prize by sending a text message to the promoter.

Consumer Affairs Minister Gail Gago said many consumers have not realised that the process of claiming a prize involves a subscription that costs \$10 for every five days.

“The back of the ticket explains the terms and conditions, except for the few cases reported where it is alleged that the terms and conditions had not printed, apparently due to a printing error,” Ms Gago said.

“If consumers have incurred charges because they did not realise the terms and conditions, they should contact their telephone service provider in the first instance and if that is unsuccessful, they should contact the Telecommunications Industry Ombudsman.

“To unsubscribe from the scratchie game consumers must text the word “stop” to the provider.”

Ms Gago has encouraged people to report their concerns to Consumer Affairs by phoning 8204 9777 or contacting their telephone service provider

The promoter’s contact details are on the scratchie ticket.

The Office of Consumer and Business Affairs has been investigating any issues about disclosure of the terms and conditions and the Office of Liquor and Gambling is investigating the matter as the authority responsible for issuing lottery permits in South Australia.

“OCBA reports that some success has been achieved already with the promoter agreeing to refund the fees to consumers whose tickets had not printed correctly to display the terms and conditions,” Ms Gago said.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission is investigating the competition at the Commonwealth level because the promoter is a national company.

Meanwhile, the Commonwealth Government, which is responsible for regulating '19' premium service providers, has today released a draft code for consultation.

Ms Gago issued a general warning to consumers to read the fine print before entering any competition or claiming a prize.

“There are some competitions that are advertised on television, in magazines or on scratch tickets that offer big prizes, but when you read the fine print consumers are asked to subscribe to an SMS service or to send numerous text messages in order to be eligible to win a prize.,” she said.

“Consumers need to proceed with caution when entering a competition or claiming a prize because sometimes there is a catch. Consumers may find that responding to the promoter actually costs them money rather than bringing winnings their way.”