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CONSUMERS WARNED DO NOT SIGN SOLAR CONTRACTS IN HASTE

Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, Paul White, is urging consumers not to sign solar contracts in haste.

“South Australia has seen a spike in people entering contracts with solar companies to take advantage of high installation rebates and ‘feed-in’ tariffs,” the Commissioner said.

“The tariff reduces from 44 cents to 16 cents per kilowatt from 1 October 2011, so demand for solar contracts appears to have increased to meet the deadline.

“Consumers should not use the deadline to hastily enter into contracts with solar companies in order to receive the higher benefits.

“We are aware that there are solar companies asking for deposits as high as 70 per cent before installation occurs.

“Outlaying several thousand dollars upfront can be risky for the consumer if the installer cannot supply or becomes insolvent.

“While under Australian Consumer Law it is not illegal to pay high deposits, Consumer and Business Services recommends that consumers should obtain at least three quotes and be careful not to pay too much for a deposit.”

For building work valued over \$12,000, consumers should only pay up to \$1,000 deposit under the *Building Work Contractors Act 1995*.

“Consumers should also be diligent in checking that their potential solar installer has either a Building Work Contractors Licence or an Electrical Contractors Licence and ask to see their trader’s licence card,” the Commissioner said.

“Alternatively you can search the licensed contractors’ register on the Consumer and Business Services website for a list of appropriately licensed installers.

“Victims of unlicensed work can often suffer financial loss and poor quality work.

“Suspect unlicensed solar installers should immediately be reported to Consumer and Business Services.”

To report concerns about suspected unlicensed solar installers, or to lodge a complaint, contact Consumer and Business Services on 131 882 or visit www.cbs.sa.gov.au.

For all media inquiries contact the 24-hour AGD Media Line 0422 007 069