

Media Release

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Government of South Australia

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International online marketing products being pushed in SA

Everyone wants to make easy money but the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) is warning people to take the time to consider all financial decisions.

The alert comes after Adelaide consumers were invited to attend an Internet marketing workshop, at which business deals will be offered, costing thousands of dollars and likely to produce uncertain returns.

StoresOnline International Inc plans to hold the latest in a series of workshops in Adelaide this week at the Entertainment Centre. The organisation sells web design and hosting software for people who wish to sell goods or services over the Internet from home.ⁱ

The Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, Mark Bodycoat is concerned that consumers may sign up without first doing some research.

“Be on your guard. Previous experience shows that the main purpose of these workshops is to sell software.”

Consumers were invited to attend a seminar by a personal invitation through the mail, which included a ticket for two attendees and a dining package to be used at the conclusion of the seminar. The promotional material included testimonials from people claiming to have used StoresOnline and made big profits. The first seminar whets their appetites to attend a later workshop in which, they are told, they will learn how to get their business up and running and receive marketing tips to achieve a high volume of sales.

“Consumers should have the opportunity to understand what they are getting into. The process is going to limit your opportunity to make comparisons in your own time. Don’t sign anything until you have considered the costs, made your own comparisons with alternative providers, and evaluated what you are getting in return.”

StoresOnline is based in the USA and is also known as iNet Seminars or Imergent Inc. Imergent Inc has previously been the subject of legal action in the USA.

The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) took court action against StoresOnline in 2005 and successfully sought refunds for those who had signed up. For future seminars StoresOnline is required to provide a three-business day cooling off period and inform attendees of their right to cool off.

“The three day cooling off period is the last opportunity to consider the contract you may have signed, but it should be stressed that it is always better to check things out first.”

StoresOnline International Inc has no registered office in South Australia which would make it difficult for consumers to recover monies or get any other redress.

“Be especially wary about being put under pressure to make a decision. Consider offers very carefully before parting with your money. Get advice if you need to. Some extra time and care now may save a lot of heartache later.”

For further information contact the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs on (08) 8204 9777 or 131 882 for country callers.

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The Entertainment Centre is the venue provider for the seminars pursuant to a commercial arrangement only, and is no way affiliated with StoresOnline and its internet marketing scheme.