

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

Tuesday, 22nd September 2009

WEBSITES CHECKED FOR BOGUS CLAIMS IN INTERNATIONAL SWEEP

Consumer authorities will trawl through the Internet today to weed out websites promoting offers that are ‘too good to be true’.

Staff from South Australia’s Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) will be working with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commissioner (ACCC) to target sites that promote employment opportunities, health claims and miracle cures that look suspiciously like scams.

Minister for Consumer Affairs Gale Gago says, “When times are tough you can bet scammers are trying their hardest to take advantage of consumers who are short on cash or suffering ill health.”

“Scammers may offer ways to make money or improve your health or wellbeing, but really all they want is to take your money or access your banking or personal details.

“We want to intercept websites that promote scams to prevent consumers from falling victim to these bogus offers.”

The Internet Sweep is an annual initiative of the International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network, with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) coordinating Australia’s involvement.

OCBA will investigate any dubious claims made on websites operated by South Australian businesses, with the ACCC to follow up concerns about interstate-based traders.

Traders that make misrepresentations to consumers risk a maximum penalty of \$100,000 for a body corporate and \$20,000 for an individual under the *Fair Trading Act 1987*.

Minister Gago warns consumers to be wary of websites that include statements such as:

- Make big money with little or no effort
- No experience required
- Earn money from home using your computer

The Minister also encouraged consumers to seek advice from a health professional before ordering medicines or other so called miracle cures online.

“Unfortunately some products marketed online as the latest and greatest way to cure a disease or improve your health are really just over-priced and ineffective.”

To report concerns about claims made by online traders consumers should contact OCBA on 8204 9777, or 131 882 for country callers or contact the ACCC on 1300 302 502.