

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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SA TIDYING UP TELEMARKETING TACTICS

Parliament has passed the State Government's new laws designed to put the brakes on harassment in the home by telemarketers.

Minister for Consumer Affairs Gail Gago says the laws, updating the Fair Trading Act, will come into force later this year and include a 10-day cooling off period on contracts entered into as a direct result of telemarketing.

"These changes offer South Australians the new protection of a cooling off period if they change their mind after agreeing to an over the phone offer," says Minister Gago.

"These safeguards are important because calls usually come out of the blue when people are not prepared, haven't been able to research the deal they are being lured into and often leave people feeling as if they were coerced into a contract.

"The new laws will mean that consumers will be able to cancel the contract within the 10-day cooling off period.

"The Government is also moving to minimise harassment in the home by making it an offence to coerce a consumer when negotiating an agreement or in trying to prevent them from exercising their new cooling off rights.

"Offences can incur penalties of up to \$5,000."

Under the changes:

- Traders must provide full disclosure of the terms of the agreement;
- A telemarketer must not harass or coerce a consumer when negotiating an agreement; and
- A trader must not harass a consumer to try to prevent them from cooling off.

"Many South Australians feel harassed by pushy intrusions into their personal or family time and this is another way the State Government is helping reduce those unnecessary pressure tactics," says Ms Gago.

The new SA laws complement the operation of the Commonwealth Do Not Call Register, which allows people to register their details to opt out of receiving telemarketing calls. More than two million people have already registered for this.

For further information about the Commonwealth Do Not Call Register phone 1300 792 958 (local call cost), visit the website at www.donotcall.gov.au or contact Consumer Affairs on 8204 9777.