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SCAMMERS TARGET TROPICAL ISLAND HOLIDAY SEEKERS

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Jennifer Rankine, has issued a renewed warning about over-the-phone travel offers, following an influx of calls about the latest offerings from scam artists.

South Australians have reportedly been seduced into surrendering their hard earned dollars with the promise of a discounted getaway to the Caribbean – a holiday which doesn't exist.

“It's a deceitful operation that is again doing the rounds. People have reportedly been getting phone calls out of the blue with a ‘holiday’ offer to the Bahamas or Florida. Some have sought advice about whether the trip exists while others were alarmed when they discovered their credit cards had been debited by unauthorised amounts,” Ms Rankine said.

The call begins with a recorded message about a holiday offer and instructs the person to press ‘9’ for further information. People are then transferred to a telemarketer who entices the victim into paying around twenty percent of the holiday's total value. In one case, the victim's credit card was debited by nearly \$900.

“People obviously need to stop and think very carefully before responding to any offer over the phone. While an ‘out of the blue’ phone call may catch you off guard, and might sound inviting, it's important to consider the possible dangers or consequences of any offer before agreeing to it.

If you give your bank, credit card or personal details to someone operating with ill intent, then you may find unauthorised transactions appear on your credit card or that funds in your bank account disappear.” Ms Rankine said

Anyone who discovers unauthorised amounts being debited to their credit cards is urged to contact their financial institution immediately to arrange a chargeback.

“People are encouraged to sign up to the national ‘Do Not Call Register’ which will cut down the number of unwanted calls but obviously won't stop scammers from calling.

Under the *Do Not Call Register Act 2006*, telemarketers can check their calling lists against the Do Not Call Register. If a telemarketer calls a number on the Register, they may be in breach of the Act and could face penalties,” Ms Rankine said.

To enquire about a suspicious call or to report a suspected scam contact Consumer Affairs on 8204 9777 or 131882 for regional callers. Information on scams is available at www.ocba.sa.gov.au or www.scamwatch.gov.au