

Media Release



Government of South Australia

Office of Consumer and
Business Affairs

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16 January 2007

Beware of unauthorised advertisements

Businesses are being warned by the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) not to spend money on unauthorised advertisements in publications being distributed in their area. OCBA has received calls from concerned businesses about unauthorised advertisements appearing in a free newspaper.

OCBA is aware of a free lifestyle publication that has recently appeared in at least one regional South Australia tourist visitor centre. It has been alleged that a number of advertisements for businesses that appear in the publication have not been authorised by the businesses themselves.

The Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, Mark Bodycoat, is concerned that this type of unauthorised activity is consistent with false billing scams that have preyed on businesses in the recent past.

“In these scams, a business operator may not realise that an advertisement for their business has appeared in a publication, until they receive an invoice a few weeks later. The scams try to squeeze money out of businesses to pay for advertisements that were never authorised.”

The lifestyle publication displays advertisements that appear to have been copied from another publication, which does have the appropriate authorisation from its advertising clientele.

The businesses whose unauthorised advertisements appear in the lifestyle publication have yet to receive an invoice. However, Mr Bodycoat says that businesses should always be on the lookout for the possibility of receiving an invoice for something they never ordered.

“I encourage businesses to keep a record of all ads that they authorise to guard themselves against false billers, and if they suspect an invoice scam to contact Consumer Affairs. The simple message is – if you didn’t authorise it, don’t pay it”.

If businesses are affected by unauthorised advertising they are encouraged to contact OCBA on (08) 8207 2557.