

Sunday, 17 August, 2008

WARRANTY AND REFUND RIGHTS BLITZ

The Office of Consumer and Business Affairs is staging a phone-in this week for consumers who've had trouble with warranty and refund issues over the past two years.

Consumer Affairs Minister Gail Gago says the phone-in from August 18 - 22 is aimed at helping consumers and traders understand their rights and obligations and find out where the 'hotspots' are.

"OCBA is keen to hear from consumers who've had negative warranty-related experiences over the past two years so that it can find out who the problem-traders are, or which consumer group is most vulnerable, and allocate resources accordingly," Ms Gago said.

"OCBA recorded more than 1700 warranty-related complaints last financial year which suggests that traders aren't giving consumers the proper information - because they don't actually understand their obligations or because they don't care about them.

"New fact sheets on warranty rights have also been put together for both consumers and traders, to equip them with information about how a statutory warranty works. The basic message is that by law, every consumer product or service sold in South Australia is covered by a statutory warranty.

"Any consumer product or service that is sold in South Australia should be 'fit for purpose' and should last for a reasonable period of time. That means that if something goes wrong, a consumer should be entitled to a refund, repair or replacement - as long as they haven't misused the product or service."

Traders must ensure that the product or service they're selling meets the following conditions:

- It is fit for the purpose for which it was sold;
- It is not faulty;
- It performs to an appropriate standard; and
- The sample matches the supplied product

"Fair trading agencies across Australia regularly receive complaints about warranties so it's important that we arm consumers with the right information about their rights and get traders to do the right thing.

The number to call for the phone-in is OCBA's consumer advice line - 8204 9777, or 131 882 for country callers. For more information, visit OCBA's website www.ocba.sa.gov.au or phone on 8204 9777 or 131 882 for country callers.