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NORTHERN TERRITORY GOVERNMENT MEDIA RELEASE

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DR PETER TOYNE MLA

Minister for Justice

CONSUMER AFFAIRS GETS MONEY-BACK FOR TERRITORY CONSUMERS

Indigenous consumers in communities and town camps around Alice Springs are being targeted by two Queensland businesses selling photographic services and home portraits.

Some Indigenous consumers have signed contracts and bank account direct debit authorities for between \$242 and \$2243. The average financial commitment is estimated at \$942 and most payments were set up with no end date.

Dr Toyne said. "Both of these Queensland companies have breached the Northern Territory Door to Door Regulations under the *Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading Act*. The companies did not provide consumers with the prescribed forms to rescind the contract should they change their mind within the 10 days.

Consumer Affairs is working with Alice Springs based Tangentyere Council to identify consumers who have signed for these services and wish to rescind their contracts, cancel direct debit payments from their bank account, and have any money already paid refunded".

"Some 13 consumers have already had their contracts successfully rescinded and it is estimated there are a further 60 consumers who are yet to come forward" he said.

Dr Toyne said "It is the buyers choice who and how they purchase goods, but the NT Door to Door law is there to protect consumers from making irrational decisions under pressure, or signing for goods they can't afford. The 10 day cooling off period gives consumers the opportunity to change their mind, before any goods are provided and money is paid".

Dr Toyne said it is timely to advise Interstate traders to check out the NT laws before embarking on a sales spree in the Territory, and breaches of the NT Door to Door legislation will be dealt with severely.

Mr Leigh Shacklady from Tangentyere Council is willing to take calls from the media