



Media Release

Consumer and Business Affairs

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Consumer Affairs warn on Post Christmas Refund Rights

In the post-Christmas rush to return unwanted gifts to stores, consumers need to be aware that they are not always entitled to a refund.

Acting Commissioner for Consumer Affairs Gary Clements said even though most stores, especially the larger ones, have generous refund policies or will provide a credit note, they are not obliged to compensate every purchaser.

“Each Christmas there is a flood of people returning unwanted gifts only to find that the store is under no obligation to provide a refund,” Mr Clements said.

“Consumers have no legal right to return goods just because they may be the wrong colour, wrong size, duplicate gift or unsuitable in some other way.

However, he said “NO REFUND SIGNS” in stores are illegal.

“That’s because there are three circumstances where the consumer *does* have a legal right to compensation:

1. the good/s are faulty; or
2. the goods are not fit for the purpose for which they were bought; or
3. the goods turn out to be different to those described when sold to you.

“It is the responsibility of the retailer to rectify the situation, not the wholesaler or manufacturer”.

“Compensation usually takes the form of a refund, repair or replacement, depending on what is determined as ‘fair and reasonable’.”

Consumers seeking a refund should return the goods to the store and provide a receipt or cash register docket as proof of purchase.

“If the refund is refused, the consumer should place their request for a refund in writing to the store, and if the matter still can’t be resolved, they can contact Consumer Affairs on telephone 1800 019 319,” Mr Clements added.

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