



RICHARD O'SULLIVAN Commissioner of Consumer Affairs

CONSUMERS SHOULD BE WARY OF TIMESHARE OFFERS

Consumer Affairs is receiving complaints from Territorians who have been ripped off after giving credit card details to telemarketers offering timeshare deals.

Companies operating out of Florida USA are contacting Territorians by telephone or by 'pop up' advertising on the Internet to promote timeshare offers and prizes which include accommodation and travel packages.

The Commissioner of Consumer Affairs Richard O'Sullivan said "We have already received complaints from concerned consumers who provided their credit card details and have had money taken out of their account, but have received nothing in return, and attempts to make contact with the company have proved fruitless."

"The offers usually include accommodation packages at timeshare resorts and may include passes to theme parks, short cruises and discounted airfares".

In the Northern Territory anyone who is retailing travel packages must hold a travel agents licence. Consumers can contact Consumer Affairs to check if the travel agent they are dealing with is licensed.

Mr O'Sullivan said "The companies using these sales techniques are smooth operators and coerce people into believing that the accommodation offers are a good deal at bargain prices. With the number of enquiries being received through my office, I am concerned that more people will fall victim to these offers".

"It is important to continue to remind Territorians that to provide their credit card details to people they do not know is enabling that person to remove money from their account, and they could run the risk of their account being drained. If money is transferred to an overseas account, it will be very difficult to recover it" he said.

Consumer Affairs advice –

- don't respond to telemarketing calls from overseas – just hang up;
- if you are tempted by the offers, ask the caller to provide the information to you in writing;
- sleep on it before making any decisions; and
- be wary of special offers that sound too good to be true – they probably are.

CONSUMER AFFAIRS MEDIA CONTACT : RICHARD O'SULLIVAN - 8935 7735

NOTE: Mr Denis Hansen a consumer caught out by the above is willing to speak to the media regarding *his* experience ph: 8988 1375.