

MEDIA RELEASE

Acting Commissioner for Consumer Affairs

ELECTRONIC SCANNING AUDITS – MIXED RESULTS FOR NT

04/2008

The NT has yet again improved overall in electronic price scanning but there's still more work to be done – that's the message from this year's national audit on electronic scanning released today.

The Northern Territory took part in the audit which focused on a range of stores and businesses including service stations, pharmacies, hardware stores and discount and variety stores.

Acting Commissioner of Consumer Affairs Gary Clements said 200 stores were visited and more than 5000 individual items scanned across the country.

"While the NT wasn't the best, we did improve in the percentage of our stores found to have no scanning errors," Mr Clements said.

"We went from 7% to 32% over the past 3 years. I'm not saying that is great but at least it's a steady improvement.

"And there was some additional good news – with an increasing number of businesses 100% compliant and we congratulate them on their continued vigilance in this regard. The businesses were, Coles Darwin & Palmerston, Shell Nightcliff, Chemmart Nightcliff, Priceline Alice Springs, Mitre 10 Casuarina and yet again Bunnings Casuarina and Palmerston."

Other NT statistics from the national audit:

- Of all the items scanned in the NT, 93% scanned at the correct price.
- Of the 7% of items which scanned incorrectly 3% were overcharges and 4% were undercharges.
- Variety stores cross Australia had the lowest level of compliance, with 77% of stores having at least one price scanned incorrectly. In the Territory, service station stores continued to have the lowest level of compliance.

"Consumers cannot feel completely confident they will be charged the correct amount at the checkout while stores are showing errors," Mr Clements said.

"An incorrect price scan, whether that be in favour of or against the consumer, is still a potential breach of the Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading Act."

Northern Territory stores that showed non-compliance will be advised of the errors and asked to rectify the situation.

Follow up visits will be conducted in the near future, and if errors are again detected Consumer Affairs will consider further action including naming offending stores.

"Consumers should check their dockets, if you find a problem, talk to the store, if you can't resolve it there, report it to Consumer Affairs," Mr Clements said.

“We will take action where a store fails to take corrective action after a scanning problem has been brought to its attention. There is no excuse for a store failing to address scanning problems.”

Complaints regarding price scanning should be directed to Consumer Affairs on 1800 019 319.

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