

MEDIA RELEASE

Acting Commissioner for Consumer Affairs

18 September 2008

No Refunds – No Way

A quarter of the Territory's fashion and clothing retail outlets are not properly displaying or wording "no refund" signage in their stores.

As part of a national project, Consumer Affairs recently completed a compliance survey of "*no refund*" signs in clothing retail outlets with only 75% of stores getting it right.

"It is very important for traders to understand their customers have specific legal rights when they find themselves with products that are faulty, wrongly described, different from samples or do not do what they are supposed to," Acting Commissioner for Consumer Affairs Gary Clements said.

"I was disappointed to learn that some stores were indicating by signs, messages on their sales docket and by other means that customers were either not entitled to refunds at all, or were restricted to credit notes and other remedies of the store's choosing."

Out of the 73 shops checked across the Territory, only 55 were fully compliant while 18 outlets returned results indicating various areas of non-compliance.

Nationally, officers checked a sample of 349 small to medium sized fashion outlets with 72% of stores correctly complying.

Mr Clements said "*No refund*" signs are in conflict with consumer protection laws concerning refunds and stores which had it wrong on this occasion will receive education material and be advised formally to revise their practices.

"Subsequent checks and call-backs will not be so lenient and traders who mislead their customers into believing they do not have any rights to refunds, or advise of restricted policies that are not supported by law, can face fines of up to \$275,000 for companies," Commissioner Clements said.

All consumer protection agencies across Australia are committed to a strategy of trader education and compliance and retailers of all types of goods can expect to come under scrutiny in future surveys.

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The national survey results were:

State/Territory	Sites	Compliant		No Refund	No Refund Sale Items	Exchange Only	Credit Note Only	No Refund (Hygiene)	Other Policy
		Yes	No						
SA (62.5%)	40	25	15	6	3	1	1	1	3
ACT (65%)	40	26	14	3	5	1	0	0	5
NSW (85%)	40	34	6	4	0	0	0	2	0
VIC (58%)	36	21	15	3	1	2	0	1	8
TAS (75%)	40	30	10	1	2	2	1	2	2
WA (67%)	40	27	13	2	6	0	0	1	4
QLD (82%)	40	33	7	5	0	0	0	0	2
NT (75%)	73	55	18	5	4	2	0	1	6
TOTALS	349	251	98	29	21	8	2	8	30

“We will be working with traders as well as undertaking various educational activities to ensure retailers and consumers have access to information about their rights and responsibilities, so everyone gets a fair go,” Mr Clements said.

Consumers are advised to contact Consumer Affairs on 1800 019 319.

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