



Warning about recorded calls scam

ACMA has warned people about telemarketing calls offering an 'unexpected prize' that are being made to Australian consumers on the Do Not Call Register.

The register prohibits non-exempt telemarketing calls from being made to listed numbers. ACMA has had a number of complaints from consumers on the register who have received recorded telemarketing calls telling them they have won a 'free' holiday.

The messages direct consumers to 'dial 9' to claim their prize. Those who do so are connected to an operator who describes a holiday package and then asks for the caller's credit card details.

ACMA Chairman Chris Chapman said that the best thing for consumers to do is simply hang up when they receive such a call.

'Regardless of whether a company's call centre is in Australia or overseas, it is generally not allowed to make telemarketing calls to numbers on the Do Not Call Register.

'Industry has responded well to the register and most companies are respecting people's choice not to receive such calls.

'The register has proven very effective in reducing the telemarketing calls that people receive, but wholly overseas operations like this one can take time to shut down.'

ACMA is currently working with other regulators within Australia and overseas about the matter. Complaints about telemarketing may be lodged with ACMA at <www.donotcall.gov.au> or 1300 792 958.

Information about 'unexpected prize' scams, including tips about how to protect yourself, is available on the Scamwatch website operated by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission at <www.scamwatch.gov.au>.

New industry fees to access the Do Not Call Register

ACMA has determined the fees telemarketers will be charged to access the Do Not Call Register in 2008-09.

From 1 July, there is a slight average increase of 5.4 per cent in annual subscription fees for accessing the register, relative to 2007-08. The excess usage charge remains unchanged. The fees scale follows the Australian Government's election commitment and a recent Federal Budget measure requiring industry to fully fund the direct costs of operating the register.

Since the inception of the register in May 2007, industry had been required to make a partial contribution to the operating costs through the payment of access fees. ACMA estimates it will have received \$2.12 million in total revenue from telemarketers accessing the register in its first year—\$0.88 million more than originally projected.

This over-recovery is largely due to the demand for list-washing services—where telemarketers can check, or 'wash', their calling lists against the numbers listed on the register—being underestimated in initial subscription fee modelling.

Before determining the new fees, ACMA consulted with industry about whether to spread the return of the over-recovered funds against the next three financial years or return them in one

year, 2008-09. ACMA received 13 submissions from interested parties and there was overall industry support for spreading return of the over-recovered funds over three years.

This will help to minimise price fluctuations and deliver a relatively stable scale of fees over the initial four-year register contract period (from 1 February 2007 to 1 February 2011).

To date, Australians have listed more than 2.3 million telephone numbers on the Do Not Call Register and industry has submitted more than one billion telephone numbers for washing against the register.

More information on the Do Not Call Register is available on the register website at <www.donotcall.gov.au>.

Summary of current and new charging arrangements

Subscription type	Annual quantity of submitted numbers included in subscription	Annual subscription fee		Excess usage charge (per submitted number over annual maximum) (\$)
		Fees up to 30 June 2008 (\$)	New fees for 2008-09 (\$)	
A	500	0	0	0.004
B	20,000	71	74	0.004
C	100,000	320	340	0.004
D	1,000,000	2,800	3,000	0.004
E	10,000,000	24,000	25,200	0.004
F	20,000,000	40,000	42,000	0.004
G	50,000,000	60,000	63,000	0.004
H	100,000,000	80,000	84,000	0.004