

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Commissioner of Consumer Affairs**

1 April 2012

#### **DONT BE FOOLED THIS DRY SEASON**

As the Dry Season fast approaches, Territory residents are again being warned to be on their guard against travelling con men.

Acting Commissioner of Consumer Affairs Sandy Otto said these rip off merchants would be heading north to escape the southern winter in order to continue their illegitimate practices.

"These are people who knock on your door and offer cheap, 'today only' deals on jobs such as bitumen laying, paving, painting, roof repairs and gardening," Ms Otto said.

Ms Otto said the Northern Territory was part of a national campaign to stop travelling con men ripping off consumers and harming legitimate business and includes a national hotline (1300 133 408) to 'dob in' a con man.

New South Wales has recently reported the highest incidence of travelling con-men with 145, with the other states and territories ranging from one to 30 reported cases.

"Warn your family, friends and neighbours, especially the elderly and those living in isolated and remote areas, as these groups are often targets for travelling con men," she said.

Consumer Affairs is asking residents to be wary of people who knock on your door unexpectedly, offer cheap deals for 'today only', or use high pressure sales tactics, such as offering to drive you to the bank to get your money.

"We are working closely with Consumer Affairs agencies, especially Queensland and Western Australia, during the Dry Season to warn consumers to be watchful of these travelling con men and report any sightings on the national hotline.

"I strongly suggest If you need home repairs you should shop around, get several written quotes and only use established local tradespeople who can provide references from previous clients," Ms Otto said.

To report a suspected travelling con-men, call the national hotline on 1300 133 408 alternatively you could contact NT Consumer Affairs on 1800 019 319 [consumer@nt.gov.au](mailto:consumer@nt.gov.au)