

Question on Notice

No. 562

Asked on Tuesday, 20 August 2013

MR PUCCI asked the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice (MR BLEIJIE)–

QUESTION:

Will the Minister outline what initiatives have been undertaken by the Office of Fair Trading in the past year to engage young people in consumer protection issues in the Logan region?

ANSWER:

I thank the Member for Logan for his question.

Data provided by the Office of Economic and Statistical Research indicates that people under 25 years old make up a third of the Queensland population. The Office of Fair Trading has developed several initiatives to engage with this vulnerable consumer group.

'Get Out There' website

The Office of Fair Trading hosts the 'Get Out There' website (www.getoutthere.qld.gov.au) which is an animated site specifically designed for young people, hosting a wealth of information young consumers need as they transition from school years to tertiary education or employment.

Young people can visit the website to learn more about:

- keeping their money under control;
- buying a car;
- their rights as consumers;
- renting a house;
- finding a job; and
- scams and identity theft.

During the 2012-13 financial year there were more than 5900 visits to the 'Get Out There' website and over 31,200 individual page views.

The Office of Fair Trading promotes the 'Get Out There' website when they attend youth focused events, for example, an Orientation Week event at the Logan campus of Griffith University in July 2013.

Buy Smart competition

The Office of Fair Trading regularly conducts presentations about young people's consumer rights and responsibilities at schools all over the State.

The Office of Fair Trading also runs the annual Buy Smart competition, which is designed to encourage young people to increase their understanding of consumer issues.

On 1 March 2013, I launched the 2013 Buy Smart competition at Chancellor State College on the Sunshine Coast.

I encourage all Members to promote the competition to school principals and teachers in their electorates to get students involved. Entries for the 2013 competition close on the last day of term three, 20 September, which is fast approaching.

The winners of the Buy Smart competition will be announced and receive their awards at Parliament House on Tuesday, 29 October 2013.

During the 2012-13 financial year, the Office of Fair Trading conducted 47 presentations to over 2200 school students, including a class of year nine students from Park Ridge State High School in the Logan district.

Social media and digital resources

Young people are also provided consumer information through social media. They can follow the Office of Fair Trading on Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

They can also download the Buy Smart QLD app for smartphones from the Office of Fair Trading's website (www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au). This app features information on consumer rights and information on refunds, repairs and replacements. You can also use the app to store photos of receipts, in case they fade or get lost, and to receive alerts when lay-by payments are due or warranties are about to expire.

Young people can access a wealth of information from the Office of Fair Trading's website. They can conduct free searches across fair trading databases to see if traders they are dealing with hold appropriate licences and if charities are appropriately registered. From the website they can directly send email enquiries to the Office of Fair Trading and electronically lodge formal complaints.

Other organisations

The Office of Fair Trading works closely with other organisations providing services to the community, empowering and enabling them to provide consumer information when appropriate.

In 2012-13, the Office of Fair Trading worked with a number of organisations that assist young people in the Logan area, including:

- Legal Aid Queensland;
- Logan Family Relationship Centre;
- Logan Youth and Family Services;
- South West Brisbane Community Legal Centre;
- The Benevolent Society;
- Youth and Family Service (Logan city) Inc; and
- Uniting Care