



10 March 2011

Possible electricity switch scam targeting elderly in Auckland

The Office of the Electricity and Gas Complaints Commissioner was today told about young men going door-to-door in an Auckland housing complex for the elderly, encouraging people to change power companies.

At least one resident of the Otara complex provided identification and bank details and signed a piece of paper. The elderly woman did not know what she had signed or what company the men represented. Citizens Advice Bureau has stepped in to assist the woman by putting stops on her accounts, and alerting other residents.

Electricity and Gas Complaints Commissioner Judi Jones says people should ask lots of questions of anyone who turns up on their doorstep to persuade them to change electricity providers.

'In this case, it's not clear if the men were from an electricity company,' Ms Jones says. 'Representatives should always provide identification for themselves and the company, and be prepared to leave written quotes.'

'Changing electricity suppliers doesn't have to happen in a hurry – it is something people do in their own time, having considered what is best for their circumstances,' Ms Jones says.

'There is not much argument for people to decide on the spot, and no reason at all to hand over personal information.'

'People who want to change power companies can look at websites like Consumer NZ's powerswitch, www.consumer.org.nz/powerswitch, or phone around and ask for quotes.'

The Electricity and Gas Complaints Commissioner Scheme can only deal with complaints about companies that are members of the scheme. Ms Jones says people with concerns about door-to-door marketers should try to get a company name so they can ring and make a complaint, or they can call her office for information 0800 22 33 40.

For more information, contact:
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The Electricity and Gas Complaints Commission will be at [Fieldays 2011](#), 15-18 June, Mystery Creek, Hamilton. Visit us at the Australian and New Zealand Ombudsman Association stand in the Bledisloe rural living area, site 35.