

Scammers targeting small business and “tradies”

The Small Business Development Corporation (SBDC) is today warning tradies and other small businesses advertising in local newspapers and trade publications, to be aware of scams involving bogus invoices and demands for payment.

SBDC Chief Executive Officer, David Eaton says scams of this type prey on busy small business operators, and those who do not have structured payment systems in place.

“Many small business operators, particularly self-employed tradespeople, are busy working in their businesses and are time-poor when it comes to paperwork,” Mr Eaton said.

“This can leave them vulnerable to scams where payment of invoices for unauthorised advertisements is demanded.

Commissioner for Consumer Protection, Anne Driscoll says many businesses have been cold-called by people claiming to represent a variety of publications and demanding payment for advertising in those publications.

“Investigations are continuing into these reports and we would like to warn all businesses to be aware of these unsolicited approaches,” Ms Driscoll said.

The SBDC has been contacted by the Community Newspaper Group concerned that scammers may be targeting their valued classified advertising clients in these deceitful practices.

Christine Sutherland, Sales Director for the Community Newspaper Group said the paper’s trades and services section may have been a target in this current wave of scams.

“We have had reports from a couple of our customers regarding this scam and that the callers, in an effort to lure them in, have pretended to be from the Community Newspaper Group,” Ms Sutherland said.

“We would like to inform all of our customers, that if they have any doubts or concerns that the person they are talking to, who is claiming to be from the Community Newspaper Group, may not be who they say they are, simply take their name and call us on 13 20 13 to resume the conversation. That way you can be sure the caller is bona fide.”

For more information and advice, contact: the Small Business Development Corporation on **13 12 49** or visit www.smallbusiness.wa.gov.au; Consumer Protection on **1300 30 40 54** or consumer@commerce.wa.gov.au

and the WA ScamNet website: www.wascamnet.wa.gov.au .

Kind regards,

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