



Door Knocking (Door-to-door sales)

The practice of door-to-door sales occurring in residential housing has attracted a lot of attention over the past few years. Consumer advocates particularly within the Community Services sector have consistently campaigned for better protections for vulnerable and disadvantaged people in relation to door-to-door sales.¹ In January 2011 the Commonwealth Government introduced The Australian Consumer Law to provide nation-wide regulation and protection for consumers.² SACOSS believes these laws are an important step towards protecting vulnerable consumers from intrusive, exploitative and coercive sales practices.

How does the Law protect consumers?

The Australian Consumer Law provides three specific consumer protections relevant to door knocking. Firstly, the sales person must advise the resident that they can request the seller to leave. Secondly when a consumer requests a sales person to leave, the seller must immediately comply and not return for 30 days. Lastly, it is an offence to conduct residential door-to-door sales on Sundays and public holidays, before 9am and after 6pm on any other day (or after 5pm on Saturdays).³

What can you do?

Whilst residents have the power to request salespeople to leave immediately, this does not always provide enough protection. Particularly vulnerable consumers, such as elderly people and people who do not use English as their first language, may not be able to participate in this type of conversation. Placing a 'Do Not Knock' sticker near or on the front door of a residence is a legal and powerful method in preventing unwelcome door-to-door sales. Previous legal cases have demonstrated that the federal courts consider a 'Do Not Knock' sticker placed on the front of a residential home to be the same as the consumer requesting the seller to leave the residence.⁴ 'Do Not Knock' Stickers can be obtained through the Consumer Action Law Centre website (<http://donotknock.org.au/take-action/get-the-sticker-2/>) or contact SACOSS on the details below if access to the internet is not available.

If persistent door knocking is experienced after a seller is requested to leave and / or a 'Do Not Knock' sticker is visible on the front door, complaints regarding energy providers can be lodged with the Energy and Water Ombudsman SA

Phone: 1800 665 565

Translation Service: 131 450 and National Relay Service: 13 36 77

Email: contact@ewosa.com.au

GPO Box 2947 Adelaide 5001

*For further information regarding this fact sheet please contact
Bronwyn Colby, SACOSS Policy Officer on
8305 4212 or email bronwyn@sacoss.org.au*

¹ Consumer Action Law Centre 2011-2012, <http://donotknock.org.au/about-the-campaign/history-of-dnk/>

² Legal Services Commission of South Australia 2013, http://www.lsc.sa.gov.au/cb_pages/news/Do_Not_Knock_campaign_wn2012.php

³ Australian Competition and Consumer Commission n.d, <http://www.accc.gov.au/consumers/sales-delivery/telemarketing-door-to-door-sales>

⁴ Consumer Action Law Centre 2011 – 2012, <http://donotknock.org.au/useful-stuff/legal-status-of-the-do-not-knock-sticker/>