

DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AND EMPLOYMENT PROTECTION, UPDATE ON ACTIONS TO  
PROTECT THE PUBLIC

**1181. Mr D'ORAZIO to the Minister for Consumer and Employment Protection:**

Can the minister inform the House about moves by his department to protect consumers against unscrupulous operators?

**Mr KOBELKE replied:**

There has been a real shift under this Government to ensure that the department is about consumer protection and moves away from the old view of fair trading. A clear example of this came to light again in the courts this week in actions taken against photographer Mr Peter Holz and his wife Katharina, who own and operate International Freelance Models Organisation, also known as I.F.M.O.-Profoto, in Westfield. Some time ago they were convicted of five offences for taking money for photograph portfolios on the promise of nonexistent modelling work. The court imposed a \$6 000 fine in January 2001 for making false representations about employment to five women and girls for modelling work in Australia and overseas. One example of this sort of totally unacceptable predatory behaviour involved a 13-year-old girl and her mother who paid \$2 500 for photos supposedly needed for a modelling agency in America.

This week Justice Christine Wheeler dismissed an appeal by Mr and Mrs Holz against that conviction. The department has been willing to take up the case and pursue it vigorously. Those court determinations indicate that the Department of Consumer and Employment Protection is setting a high standard in consumer protection and is making it very clear that that sort of predatory behaviour will not be tolerated and the full force of the law will be brought to bear when people engage in that conduct.