

**IN THE OFFICE OF THE STATUTORY OMBUD FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES
PROVIDERS**

Case Number: FAIS 04470/13-14/GP (3)

In the matter between:-

JUDE LEGRAND

COMPLAINANT

and

PIETER DE WET t/a MODEL INSURANCE COMPANY

RESPONDENT

**DETERMINATION IN TERMS OF SECTION 14(3) OF THE FINANCIAL SERVICES
OMBUD SCHEMES ACT NO. 37 OF 2004 ('FSOS Act') READ WITH SECTION 28(1)
OF THE FINANCIAL ADVISORY AND INTERMEDIARY SERVICES ACT NO. 37 OF
2002 ('FAIS ACT')**

A. THE PARTIES

[1] The complainant is Jude Legrand, an adult male of Observatory, Gauteng.

[2] The respondent is Pieter De Wet, a sole proprietor who conducted short-term insurance business under the name Model Insurance Company ('Model') whose address is 502 Charter House, 75 Crompton Street, Pinetown, KwaZulu-Natal.

B. BACKGROUND

[3] The determination is made in terms of the FSOS Act¹ read with section 28(1) of the FAIS Act². The complainant in this matter is one of a number of policy holders who lodged complaints with this Office following the respondent's failure to honour their claims.

[4] The respondent held himself out to be an authorised short-term insurer and collected premiums from members of the public. It emerged from enquiries with the Registrar that the respondent had never been licensed in terms of Section 7(1) of the FAIS Act to render financial services to the public. He had also never been registered to conduct business as a short-term insurer as required by Section 7 of the Short-term Insurance Act ('STIA'). In terms of Section 7 of the STIA:

- '(1) No person shall carry on any kind of short-term insurance business unless that person –
- (a) is registered or deemed to be registered as a short-term insurer, and is authorised to carry on the kind of short-term insurance business concerned under this Act; or
 - (b) is authorised under section 56 to do so, and carries on that business in accordance with this Act.'

¹ Financial Services Ombud Schemes Act 37 of 2004.

² Financial Advisory and Intermediary Services Act 37 of 2002.

[5] During February 2012, the Registrar issued a warning, requesting the public not to conduct business with Model. Despite this warning, the respondent continued to conduct unregistered insurance business. The Registrar reported the respondent to the Commercial Crime Branch of the South African Police Service and secured an interim interdict in the Kwazulu-Natal High Court to stop the respondent from carrying out short-term insurance business.

C. JURISDICTION

[6] The respondent is not a member of a recognised scheme as contemplated in Section 10 and 11 of the FSOS Act.

[7] Accordingly and in terms of Section 13 of the FSOS Act, the FAIS Ombud, in its capacity as Statutory Ombud assumes jurisdiction over the Respondent in respect of this complaint.

[8] The FAIS Ombud therefore deals with this complaint in terms of Section 14 of the FSOS Act.

D. COMPLAINT

[9] The following are the material aspects of the complainant's complaint:

9.1 During June 2013, the complainant contacted the respondent to apply for a short-term insurance cover. Whilst waiting for approval of the policy, the complainant learnt of various complaints levelled against Model on the consumer complaint web site, 'Hello Peter'. Not wanting to do

business with Model, the complainant instructed the respondent to cancel his application for insurance.

9.2 The respondent failed to adhere to the complainant's instruction and debited his bank account during July and August 2013 for premiums amounting to R950.10 and R850.10 respectively.³ Complainant managed to have the R850.10 debit reversed by his bank.

9.3 Aggrieved by the respondent's failure to refund the unauthorised premium of R950.10, the complainant lodged a complaint with this Office.

E. RELIEF SOUGHT

[10] The complainant wants the respondent to refund the unauthorised premium of R950, 10 debited from his account.

F. RESPONDENT'S VERSION

[11] The complaint was sent to the respondent requesting him to resolve it with the complainant, alternatively to furnish this Office with a detailed response. The respondent failed to address this Office on the merits of this complaint. Subsequent thereto, the complaint was formally accepted for investigation in terms of Section 27(4) of the FAIS Act and the respondent was again invited to file a response to the complaint. Although the respondent failed to address the

³ Proof provided.

Office on the merits of this complaint, it is worth quoting two e-mails he sent to this Office.

11.1 In response to the Section 27(4) notice the respondent stated:

'I have received the mail... and if I am currently unemployed and unable to pay what then'⁴

'i have on numerous cations tried to get silence for two years and have leased with the registrar at the FSB to find a way forward but was told that i would need 10 million rand in cash for that or hand over the clients to a registered company which i did hand over to Sapcor as i was told , we did pay claims until the FSB warned the public about model insurance and so we started having a lot of cancellations and was unable to pay claims in the last period so at the moment i would like to settle these amounts but cant due to unemployment and would like to make an offer once I have a job'⁵

[12] Given the admissions made by the respondent as contained in the two e-mails, it is no surprise that he did not respond to the merits of this complaint. Quite simply, the respondent has no defence against the allegations made against him. Therefore, the complaint must succeed.

G. FINDINGS

[13] From the undisputed facts before this Office, it can be concluded that:

13.1 The respondent misrepresented to the public that he was an

⁴ E-mail dated 20 August 2014. Errors not omitted.

⁵ E-mail dated 21 August 2014. Errors not omitted.

authorised short-term insurer and financial services provider;

13.2 The respondent debit the complainant's bank account for an amount of R950.10 without authorisation.

H. QUANTUM


[14] The complainant is claiming an amount of R950.10 representing the unauthorised premium debited from his bank account. I therefore intend to make an order in the amount of R950.10.

I. ORDER

[15] In the premises the following order is made:

1. The complaint is upheld;
2. Respondent is hereby ordered to pay to the complainant the amount of R950.10;
3. Interest at a rate of 9% per annum, seven (7) days from date of this order to date of final payment.

DATED AT PRETORIA ON THIS THE 15th DAY OF OCTOBER 2014.



NOLUNTU N BAM

OMBUD FOR FINANCIAL SERVICES PROVIDERS