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DODGY BITUMEN BANDITS ON THE WEST COAST

Residents in the Pt Augusta, Whyalla, Port Lincoln and Ceduna areas should be on guard for dodgy bitumen layers in the region.

Representatives from the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs have identified bitumen trucks that were previously used by an unlicensed gang of bitumen layers. The unlicensed gang targeted local residents in 2009 and performed overpriced and substandard work.

Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, Paul White asks consumers in the area to be on the lookout.

“These characters are on the move targeting locals with unsolicited offers to have their driveway bitumised,” the Commissioner said.

“Consumers must be aware, if you employ these dodgy traders you will end up with a poor quality and costly job.

“Once payment is handed over, these traders will disappear, making it difficult to seek recompense for their shoddy or incomplete work, so any repair will be at your further expense.

“If you are a local resident and spot suspicious traders, their Victorian plated trucks, or are approached with an unsolicited agreement, I urge you to contact the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs,” he said.

Under the new Australian Consumer Law, these itinerant traders operate in breach of door-to-door sales regulations. Under the law, consumers have a 10-day cooling off period during which the trader cannot provide any goods or services or accept any payment.

“If a trader breaches these regulations, consumers are entitled to have their money refunded and the contract nullified,” Mr White said.

“Individual traders who breach door-to-door sales regulations will also face penalties of up to \$10,000, and up to \$50,000 for companies. Undertaking unlicensed building work carries penalties of up to \$20,000.

“I urge consumers to be diligent in verifying the qualifications of traders by checking their licence card to make sure they are appropriately licensed and not to pay traders within the 10 day cooling off period.” the Commissioner said.

To report itinerant traders or for more information, consumers can call OCBA on 8204 9777 or 131 882 for regional callers, or visit the website at www.ocba.sa.gov.au.

Media line: 0422 007 069