

Media Release



Government of South Australia

Office of Consumer and
Business Affairs

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Information Services**

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WARNING FOR HILLS RESIDENTS ON BITUMEN SCAM

Residents in the Woodside-Mount Barker areas are being warned to be on the lookout for itinerant traders carrying out substandard and over-priced bitumen work.

Today the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) received several reports about the dishonest traders targeting residents in the Adelaide Hills.

Acting Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, Anne Gale warns consumers in the area, who are approached with an unsolicited offer to have their driveway bituminised, to be suspicious.

“Consumers will end up with a poor and costly job which will require extensive repair work at further expense,” the Acting Commissioner said.

“These ‘fly-by-night’ traders tend to disappear as soon as money changes hands, making it extremely difficult for victims to seek recompense for the shoddy or incomplete work.”

Itinerant bitumen layers usually operate in breach of the door-to-door sales provisions in the *Fair Trading Act*. The provisions give consumers 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 provisions, then consumers are entitled to have their money refunded and the contract nullified.

Traders who breach Fair Trading regulations face penalties of up to \$10,000. Undertaking unlicensed building work carries penalties of up to \$20,000.

“Consumers should check a trader’s builder’s licence and seek a contract in writing before engaging their services or exchanging money,” the Acting Commissioner said.

Consumers are asked to contact OCBA if they are approached by these traders or can provide any information about their conduct or whereabouts.

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