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BUILDING/RENOVATING COMPLAINTS STILL HIGH

Building and renovating concerns continue to feature significantly in complaints lodged with the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) according to figures released today by Consumer Affairs Minister, Karlene Maywald.

“Last financial year (2004/05), OCBA received 799 formal complaints about building issues, a welcome drop from 978 in the previous year, but still a high enough figure to be of concern to people making what is one of the most important decisions of their lives,” Minister Maywald said.

“The major complaints included quality of work, problems with contracts, extensive delays, lack of communication between the builder and the consumer, unlicensed activity and indemnity insurance

“It’s pleasing that complaints about building or renovating were down by 18 percent from the previous year and this reflects how OCBA’s enforcement activities are making an impact.

“OCBA has also dealt with a number of complaints recently by consumers who have been left in the lurch by the builder’s failure to take out indemnity insurance. Consumers have been left with shoddy work, half finished jobs and no insurance to claim against,” Minister Maywald said.

“I urge consumers who are building or renovating to ensure that their builder has taken out indemnity insurance as they are required by law to do before any work commences.

“This insurance protects the consumer from some of the losses that may be suffered if their building contractor dies, disappears or becomes insolvent during the building process. Builders are legally required to take out indemnity insurance for any domestic building contract worth over \$12,000.”

Minister Maywald today released a new brochure titled, “Building a Home, Additions and Renovating”, an initiative to help protect consumers when it comes to home building or renovating.

“The brochure is a valuable resource for consumers covering a broad range of issues, including indemnity insurance, contracts, payments and approvals. It’s largely based on the years of experience that OCBA staff have had in dealing with consumer complaints of this nature.

“I am pleased that OCBA is taking steps to further protect consumers when they take on building or renovating projects. I commend this new brochure to all consumers to avoid the potential pitfalls, and be able to enjoy their new or improved home,” Minister Maywald said.

For a copy of the brochure phone OCBA on 8204 9515, or report any problems with a builder phone OCBA’s free advisory service on 8204 9777.