

Media Release



Government of South Australia

Office of Consumer and
Business Affairs

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Dangerous gas fitter disqualified

When you hire a gas fitter you would assume they did their job with a high level of safety. A Whyalla Stuart household was alarmed to find their gas cooker was not secured adequately, creating a hazardous situation if the cooker was pulled forward.

In the District Court, the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) successfully disciplined Mr. Clifford James 'Jim' Higgins of Whyalla for his unsafe practices. The District Court has ordered that, until further order, Higgins be disqualified from being registered as a gas fitting worker under the *Plumbers, Gas Fitters and Electricians Act, 1995*.

The disciplinary action was brought against Mr. Higgins when he failed to adequately secure the cooker to the floor as is required by the Australian Standards.

Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, Mark Bodycoat said that Higgins' gas fitting work was dangerous and it was essential that disciplinary action be taken to protect the public from him.

"The licensing and registration system is meant to protect consumers, particularly from incompetent and dangerous trades people. To be granted a licence or registration you need to be suitably qualified and capable of doing particular types of work."

In September 2006, OCBA prosecuted Higgins in relation to the same matter, because he didn't hold the appropriate registration when he did the gas fitting work. He was convicted and fined \$3,000. The prosecution penalized Higgins for breaking the law, but the disciplinary proceedings were intended to protect the public from his activities.

"This case highlights how important it is to hire an appropriately licensed or registered tradesperson. Your own personal safety could be riding on it."

Consumers can contact OCBA on (08) 8204 9777, country callers 131 882 or visit the Licensing Public Register at www.ocba.sa.gov.au to check whether a person is appropriately licensed or registered or to find a licensed or registered tradesperson in their local area. OCBA also encourages consumers to ask to see a licence or registration card and read any conditions shown on the card.