

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2006

## **ROOF PAINTING SCAM**

The Minister for Consumer Affairs, Jennifer Rankine, today warned consumers to be on their guard when itinerant tradespeople come knocking.

The Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) has been alerted by Western Australian authorities that two dodgy roof painters may be touting for work in South Australia.

Darren Warrilow and Jimmy Yelding are known interstate for their involvement with travelling gangs of con-artists taking money from unsuspecting consumers for shoddy painting and roof work.

“Itinerant con-artists tend to target older consumers, offering repair and maintenance services. Unfortunately history has shown that many of these people are not licensed for the work they do, they significantly over-charge consumers, and the work is often of very poor quality” said Ms Rankine.

Warrilow was fined in 2005 for fleecing older consumers over painting and roof work. Yelding has also spent time in jail after pleading guilty to theft and attempted fraud charges after conning elderly women.

Consumer Affairs is concerned about a recent claim that a pensioner in Port Augusta had been defrauded \$20,000 by itinerant painters. This complaint, along with other intelligence gathered, suggests that these two have been operating in the Iron Triangle area.

“When an itinerant trader knocks at the door consumers should think carefully before agreeing to any work. Don’t be pressured by claims that the ‘special’ price is only available for today. The special price may not be such a bargain after all if the work is not up to standard.”

Itinerant tradespeople often make false claims or use stand over tactics to encourage consumers to agree to the work. The tradespeople may claim that the work can be done cheaply using materials supposedly left over from another job, or they may offer a large discount if the consumer pays cash.

“Consumers should always check that a tradesperson is licensed to do the work. Ask to see their licence card as proof, or contact Consumer Affairs to verify the licence details. It is also important to compare quotes and ask advice from friends or relatives about tradespeople they would recommend.”

“I urge anyone who has been approached by an itinerant tradesperson to contact Consumer Affairs. Your information will assist investigations by consumer protection agencies across Australia who are concerned about Warrilow’s and Yelding’s activities.”

Consumers should contact OCBA on 8204 9777 or for regional callers phone 131 882 for the cost of a local call.