

Media Release

Contact: **Tanya Berryman**
Phone: 8204 9507
0417 815 800



Education and Information Services

Level 1 Chesser House
91-97 Grenfell Street
Adelaide SA 5000

GPO Box 1719
Adelaide SA 5001

Telephone (08) 8204 9516
Facsimile (08) 8204 9509
www.ocba.sa.gov.au

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Unlicensed builder gained work dishonestly

Stephen West Langford portrayed himself as a building work contractor just to earn himself a quid. Langford knew he wasn't licensed and that he couldn't obtain a license.

The District Court Judge Boylan disqualified Stephen Langford from being licensed or registered under the Building Work Contractors Act 1995 for a period of 3 years and prohibited him from being a director of a body corporate that is a building work contractor for a period of 3 years.

Langford pleaded guilty to 10 counts of carrying on business as a building work contractor when he was not authorised to carry out such work. He had undertaken construction work on 3 townhouses at Mawson Lakes and 7 home units at Mitchell Park.

The Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, Mark Bodycoat warned consumers to always use a licensed tradesperson.

"If they're not licensed to do the work then they are in clear breach of legislation. Trades people are only licensed to do certain work after they have demonstrated that they are suitably qualified and capable of doing so."

To be eligible to obtain a building work contractors licence, an applicant must not have been bankrupt for any period of time during the past 10 years. Langford was discharged from bankruptcy in 1996 and therefore is not eligible to be licensed as a building work contractor until 2006.

Without a licence Langford in his own right could not obtain building indemnity insurance as required by law. This insurance provides important protection for consumers if a builder becomes bankrupt, dies or disappears during construction or within the 5-year warranty period.

"The Office of Consumer and Business Affairs conducts random visits to building sites and checks advertisements to detect those working either unlicensed or outside the scope of their licence."

Mr Bodycoat said, "Builders and trades people need to understand that the licensing system is in place for consumer protection. If they do work that they are not licensed to do then they risk being caught and facing disciplinary action."

To check whether a person holds a licence, or to verify someone's licence details, visit the Licensing Public Register at www.ocba.sa.gov.au or telephone 8204 9686 or 131 882 (country callers).



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