

Media Release



Government of South Australia

Office of Consumer and
Business Affairs

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Information Services**

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CROOKED CABINET- MAKING COUPLE CONVICTED

A husband and wife duo have been ordered to pay fines and compensation totalling over \$14,000 by the Magistrates Court upon failing to complete building work after entering a contract and accepting large deposit sums from two sets of consumers.

JKM Cabinet Makers and its joint proprietors, **John Meyer** and **Karen Jennings-Meyer** failed to appear in Court in proceedings brought against them by the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) after breaching the *Building Work Contractors Act 1995*.

The Court was told how in 2008, a Paralowie couple sought and accepted a quote from the defendants to install a kitchen fit-out. The couple provided deposits of \$3,440 and \$688 to JKM Cabinet Makers, but at no time did the business perform the building work or refund the deposits that were paid.

A second complaint was also made from a similar occurrence in 2009 when the business entered a contract with a Parafield Gardens couple. The couple were provided a written quote under which the business agreed to deliver and install a "complete kitchen renovation as per client selections, standard bench tops, standard doors, bar handles as per selection".

The business accepted a deposit of \$1,900 but the consumers never received the kitchen or a refund.

OCBA launched an investigation following complaints lodged by the victims of the unlicensed business.

The investigation identified that the proprietors of the business were at no time licensed under Part 2 of the *Building Work Contractors Act 1995* to carry on business as a building work contractor.

The Acting Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, Anne Gale, advises consumers to be diligent in researching contractors before handing over any money.

"Consumers can protect themselves by checking a trader's licence card to make sure they are actually qualified to do the job you are engaging them to do," Ms Gale said.

"Such wrongdoing may not only incur significant financial loss to the victims but is also damaging to the industry as a whole through bad publicity and where honest competitors suffer commercial disadvantage."

"Unlicensed contractors practising without a licence will be caught. I urge South Australian consumers to report suspect builders to OCBA," the Acting Commissioner said.

JKM Cabinet Makers is no longer operating in South Australia, and the joint proprietors have moved to Victoria.

The defendants were ordered to pay compensation to the two sets of consumers who complained to OCBA being the full amount of their deposits. They were also ordered to pay prosecution costs of \$400 each as well as court costs and the Victims of Crime Levy.

To report concerns about suspected unlicensed builders, or to launch a complaint, contact OCBA on 8204 9777 or 131 882 for regional callers, or visit www.ocba.gov.au.

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