

Media Release



Government of South Australia

Office of Consumer and
Business Affairs

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Itinerant bitumen layer targeting elderly consumers

Consumers in the North-Eastern suburbs are warned to be on the lookout for itinerant traders offering substandard bitumen laying at inflated prices.

Reports to the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) indicate a group of 3 or more men are behind the latest incident.

One of the men is described as tall and in his late twenties with short reddish-brown hair and having an American or Canadian accent. The men were seen driving a white 2002 Mitsubishi Utility.

The traders claim to be bitumen layers with left over material from a job and are targeting elderly consumers, offering to bitumenise their driveway at low cost. The resulting job is poorly done and requires extensive repair work.

Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, David Green, says it's the same old line and the same results.

"What consumers end up with is a hastily completed job that is overpriced and needs significant repair."

"What's worse is consumers can't even seek redress as these 'fly-by-night' traders disappear once the money has changed hands, leaving consumers to foot the repair bill."

Consumers are asked to contact OCBA if they are approached by these traders or can provide any information about their conduct or whereabouts.

"OCBA would like to speak to these traders as it is likely they are not conducting their business correctly under Fair Trading law."

Under the door-to-door provisions of the *Fair Trading Act 1987*, consumers are entitled to a 10-day cooling off period during which the trader cannot provide any goods or services or accept any payment.

Consumers are reminded to check the trader's builder's licence and seek written contracts before engaging their services.

Traders who breach Fair Trading regulations face penalties of up to \$10,000. Undertaking unlicensed building work carries penalties of up to \$20,000.

To report itinerant traders or for more information, consumers can call OCBA on 8204 9777 or 131 882 for regional callers, or visit the website at www.ocba.sa.gov.au.