

Media Release



Contact: **Tanya Berryman**
Phone: 8204 9507

**Education and
Information Services**

1 March 2005

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

Unscrupulous painters - stoop to lowest level

The Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) issued an urgent warning to consumers after officers just missed catching two itinerant roof painters, who duped a 76 year old intellectually disabled man of Plympton into shoddy paint work costing him over \$2500.

Officers from OCBA were tipped off by a concerned friend and rushed to the man's home to try and catch the culprits. The officers even attended the bank where the man was driven by the offenders hoping to catch up with them but missed the culprits by less than an hour.

Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, Mark Bodycoat said, "These parasites are a danger to consumers. They drift from state to state offering to do minor maintenance and repair work and today is a graphic example of how they target vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers."

The distraught man told officers two young men approached him around 8.30am. They offered to paint his wooden window frames. The job was finished at approximately midday and once completed one of the painters drove him to the bank where he made a cash withdrawal to pay them.

"\$2500 for 3 hours work painting window frames with only one coat, which was also smeared over the glass and surrounding brickwork is outrageous. The paint job was of an extremely poor standard."

The consumer did not receive a receipt or a contract. OCBA suspects the men are working unlicensed and breaching door-to-door trading laws.

"Be very suspicious about traders who ask for payment upfront or put pressure on you to pay immediately. Door to door traders cannot take any payment or commence any service until the 10 day cooling off period expires. Be very suspicious if the only contact details they provide are a mobile phone number."

The only details available on the two men are that they are driving a white utility with New South Wales number plates.

Because these painters move on quickly, consumers can't call them back to repair the damage they've done, or get a refund, or get faulty work repaired.

"If you are approached at home by anyone about building-related work, you should ask them if they have a licence, and ask to see their photo licence card. Get a copy of the contract and the papers that deal with your cooling off rights. If they can't come up with these, don't let them start."

To report any concerns about itinerant traders contact the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs on 8204 9777 or 131 882 for regional callers.

Photos of the work are available from Tanya Berryman on 8204 9507.



**Government
of South Australia**

