

Media Release



Government of South Australia

Office of Consumer and
Business Affairs

28 October 2010

**Education and
Information Services**

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Little Pride in Unlicensed Work

Acting Commissions for Consumer and Business Affairs, Anne Gale advises that Mr Warren Victor Pearse, proprietor of Home Pride Design Service, has been fined following action instigated by the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) for operating without a licence and performing substandard work.

The Acting Commissioner said that “the Adelaide Magistrates Court fined Mr Pearse \$6,000 in addition to costs of \$1063, and awarded \$5000 compensation to three of his victims. Two other victims have already received judgements in civil actions brought against Mr Pearse.”

“This decision should serve as a clear reminder to builders and contractors that OCBA will not tolerate those who engage in business without a licence and breach building contracts. Compliance within the industry is not only in the interests of victims of incomplete or substandard work, but secures the confidence in the industry as a whole,” says Ms Gale.

OCBA received numerous complaints against Mr Pearse from clients of his roofing restoration business, prompting an investigation into his activities. The complaint laid against Mr Pearse in the Magistrates Court, related to his dealings with six separate building contracts.

In most cases Mr Pearse would carry out an inspection, prepare a report, sign a work order, secure a deposit, but then carry out little or no work. In the few instances where work was carried out, the quality was generally substandard.

“Such wrongdoing may not only place victims in a position where they face significant financial losses but it is also damaging to the industry as a whole through bad publicity. Honest competitors should not suffer as a result of the few who do not do the right thing by the public,” says the Acting Commissioner.

Last financial year, OCBA received 1241 complaints related to building construction and contracting. Fifty per cent of the complaints related to alleged defective building work, while the remaining complaints related to alleged breaches of building work contracts.

“Consumers need to be diligent in researching contractors before handing over any money in the form of deposits, and can consult the OCBA website to check if they are licenced,” said Ms Gale.

“Consumers can better protect themselves by asking to see the trader’s licence card to make sure they are qualified to do the job they are engaging them to do. Furthermore, all licensed builders are listed on the OCBA website,” she said.

To report concerns about suspect 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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