

Media Release



Government of South Australia

Office of Consumer and
Business Affairs

Contact: **Tanya Veldkamp**
Phone: (08) 8204 9512

17 October 2008

**Education and
Information Services**

Ground Floor
Chesser House
91-97 Grenfell Street
Adelaide SA 5000

GPO Box 1719
Adelaide SA 5001
DX 223

Tel: 08 8204 9516
Fax: 08 8204 9509

www.ocba.sa.gov.au

COURT ACTION SECURES PROTECTION FOR CONSUMERS

The Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA) has succeeded in a disciplinary action against a man who has twice failed in his efforts to run plumbing businesses.

Simon Blake Brownrigg, from Beaumont, has had his plumbing contractor's license cancelled by the District Court and he's also been banned from being the director of a body corporate that is a plumbing contractor until further order.

It is the third time that Mr Brownrigg, who previously traded as Brownrigg Property Services Pty Ltd, has been the subject of disciplinary action in the District Court.

The business became insolvent in 2000 because of unsecured debts amounting to over \$200,000. Mr Brownrigg was ordered by the District Court to undertake and successfully complete study in business management within 12 months.

However he failed to complete the study within the twelve month period and was subsequently fined \$1500. He was also prohibited from being a director of a body corporate that is a contractor until 25 May 2005.

Mr Brownrigg continued in the plumbing business as a sole trader but on 1 February 2007, was declared bankrupt, having accrued debts of over \$370,000.

The District Court has banned Mr Brownrigg from operating a plumbing business indefinitely. The court took into account that Mr Brownrigg has three significant contracts on foot and ordered that cancellation of his contractor's licence take effect from 15 January 2009, allowing him to complete those contracts. However, the District Court has prohibited him from taking on any new contracts.

The court acknowledged that there is no concern about the quality of his work as a plumber and he is still allowed to hold a plumbing workers registration, which means he is still able to be *employed* as a plumber.

The Commissioner for Consumer Affairs Mal Hemmerling has welcomed the District Court's latest decision, saying that the move should stop any more consumers or creditors from being harmed by Mr Brownrigg's lack of financial management skills.

"There was no issue with the quality of Mr Brownrigg's workmanship. He just didn't know how to run a business."

"This case shows that you can be an able tradesperson but if you're running a business and aren't equipped with the basic business sense to go with it things can go horribly wrong."

"Consumers should report any concerns about tradespeople to OCBA, so they can find out if the tradespeople are licensed and if indeed there are any grounds for concern."

Consumers can contact the OCBA on (08) 8204 9777, country callers 131 882 or visit the Licensing Public Register at www.ocba.sa.gov.au to check on a tradesperson's credentials.