

Friday, 7 December 2007

RAINWATER TANK SCAM

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Jennifer Rankine, is warning people not to have any business dealings with unlicensed contractor Maurice Robinson.

“I don’t take the decision to name Mr Robinson lightly, however Consumer Affairs is aware of him undertaking a range of works while unlicensed and despite pursuing him on these matters he still appears to have little regard for the law,” Ms Rankine said.

This morning, Mr Robinson failed to appear in the Supreme Court where he was due to answer allegations of contempt of an injunction. Chief Justice John Doyle consequently issued a warrant for Mr Robinson’s arrest.

The 57 year-olds latest foray involves offering cheap deals on rainwater tanks and requiring a deposit from potential customers before manufacturing takes place. What then follows is a barrage of excuses for delays in delivery.

“To date, Consumer Affairs isn’t aware of any people who’ve actually received a rainwater tank and staff suspect no tanks are ever likely to be delivered to customers,” Ms Rankine said.

“This scam is particularly concerning given the State is in the midst of a serious drought and the fact that this person has devised a ploy to exploit unsuspecting South Australians who are trying to do right thing towards water conservation is particularly abominable.”

Robinson has previously been prosecuted by Consumer Affairs for unlicensed building work. He currently resides in Port Augusta, but is placing advertisements in metropolitan Adelaide newspapers advertising rainwater tanks.

“Given Robinson’s previous conviction, people must be warned about his latest enterprise and are entitled to know about the kind of person they are dealing with. We strongly suspect anyone who places an order with Robinson for a rainwater tank is likely to lose their hard earned money,” Ms Rankine said

People are being urged to exercise caution when dealing with an unknown person through classified advertisements.

“It is always risky to pay in advance for goods or services, so for their own protection people should do their research on the business and only pay a small deposit to reduce the risk of being out of pocket if the goods or services are not supplied,” Ms Rankine said.

Anyone who’s paid a deposit and is experiencing unreasonable delays in the delivery of a rainwater tank should contact Consumer Affairs on 8204 9777.