

# Media Release



Government of South Australia

Office of Consumer and  
Business Affairs

2 July 2010

## Unregistered Whyalla gas fitter fined

A Whyalla plumbing contractor has been convicted and fined for operating unregistered as a gas fitter, following a prosecution by the Office of Consumer and Business Affairs (OCBA).

In the Whyalla Magistrates Court yesterday, Clifford James (Jim) Higgins pleaded guilty to one count of breaching the *Plumbers, Gasfitters and Electricians Act 1995*, and one count of breaching an assurance given to the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs under the *Fair Trading Act 1987*.

The defendant was convicted on both counts and fined a total of \$3,500, with costs of \$800.

“This sends a warning to other unlawful workers to never take risks with consumer safety,” said the Commissioner for Consumer Affairs, David Green.

OCBA prosecuted Mr Higgins after the Office of the Technical Regulator reported evidence suggesting that he failed to properly install a gas stove, potentially creating a dangerous situation.

“Higgins’ gas fitting work has previously failed to meet Australian gas safety standards and his company Jim Higgins Master Plumbers Pty Ltd, has never held a licence or registration to perform gas fitting work,” Commissioner Green said.

Jim Higgins Master Plumbers Pty Ltd is licensed to contract for and perform plumbing work.

“Higgins repeatedly ignored warnings relating to non-compliant gas fitting work and continued to perform such work without appropriate training, licence or registration,” the Commissioner said.

“These actions show a blatant disregard for the licensing system and put other people’s safety at risk.

“The licensing and registration system is in place to protect consumers, particularly from incompetent and dangerous tradespeople.

“Always put safety first and check a trader’s licence card to make sure they are actually qualified to do the job you are engaging them to do.”

OCBA and the Office of the Technical Regulator continue to work together to address concerns about the standard and safety of work as well as tackling unlicensed operators in the gas fitting industry.

To find a licensed builder, electrician, plumber or gas fitter, consumers are encouraged to visit the Licensing Public Register which is available at [www.ocba.sa.gov.au/licensing/](http://www.ocba.sa.gov.au/licensing/)

For more information contact: Peter Adams 08 8207 2293