

Media Release

The Hon Melissa Horne MP

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

Minister for Ports and Freight

Minister for Fishing and Boating



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VICTORIANS URGED TO BE WARY OF FAKE TRADIES

With warmer weather approaching, Victorians are being reminded to make sure any building or maintenance work they're seeking to undertake is completed by a legitimate, qualified tradesperson.

Consumer Affairs Victoria received more than 129 reports of fake tradies during the past financial year. Consumers lost money in more than 70 per cent of the reported fake tradie cases, with the total amount of financial losses being more than \$660,000.

Fake tradies knock on doors of homes and small businesses, or send flyers out offering to complete maintenance work, driveway resurfacing, painting or roof repairs at a cheap rate. Fake tradies are also known to advertise their services online, usually through third-party websites.

Doug from Newport is one of the hundreds of Victorians who lost money after he was scammed out of \$400 when engaging the services of an individual who marketed themselves as a skilled tradesperson.

The fake tradie requested an upfront payment directly into his bank account before commencing the work of replacing the decaying weatherboards on Doug's home. After transferring the funds, the fake tradie quickly became uncontactable, and Doug is yet to recover the funds.

Another Victorian found what he thought was a legitimate business to do some carpentry work at his holiday house. After making contact and agreeing on a price, the tradesman demanded a deposit of \$10,000 to buy materials.

The tradesman then found continuous excuses not to start the work – which stretched into weeks, then several months, with no work ever being completed. He hasn't been able to contact the tradesman since.

If you're considering having work done on your property, seek out more than one quote, use established tradespeople who provide written quotes, ask for contact details of previous clients to check references and ask for the full name and registration or licence details (if applicable) so you can check with their industry.

The warning comes as Consumer Affairs Victoria takes criminal action against an unregistered builder for advertising cheap building services and taking payment for work he never started, left incomplete, or completed below standard.

Victorians should report any interactions with suspected fake tradies to Consumer Affairs Victoria's dedicated fake tradie hotline on 1300 133 408.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation Melissa Horne

"Be wary of tradies who approach you at home or online and pressure you to accept their offer or pay cash upfront – a legitimate tradie will give you a quote and time to consider their offer."

"If an interaction with a tradie doesn't feel right - it's probably not."

"I urge Victorians to report any interactions with suspected fake tradies to the authorities so we can get these dodgy scammers off the streets and avoid more people being cruelly ripped off."

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