



The Hon Anthony Roberts MP

Minister for Fair Trading

MEDIA RELEASE

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DON'T RISK USING UNLICENSED TRADESPEOPLE

Minister for Fair Trading Anthony Roberts today warned of the dangers of using an unlicensed tradesperson, with new research finding 90 per cent of people are putting themselves at risk by not using the free tradie licence check on the Fair Trading website.

Mr Roberts said homeowners who do not check whether a tradie is licensed risk damage to their property or a substandard job by unskilled workers, which could leave them with a hefty bill.

"Last financial year there were 37 prosecutions of unlicensed tradespeople across NSW," Mr Roberts said.

"During the same period, Fair Trading received 204 complaints or enquiries about unlicensed home building tradespeople.

"In one case, a Sydney family paid an unlicensed tradesman \$76,000 for renovations on their home but the man forged the details of a licensed tradesperson. He was found guilty and fined in court."

A Fair Trading survey of 1000 NSW homeowners who hired a home building tradesperson in the past 18 months also found:

- Only 13 per cent think it is essential to check that a tradesperson is licensed, despite 93 per cent being aware it means a tradesperson is registered with the appropriate authorities;
- Under 50 per cent knew that plasterers, painters, floor tilers or fencers need a licence; and
- Nearly 50 per cent said they would use an unlicensed tradie recommended by someone they trust.

Mr Roberts said the survey marks the launch of Fair Trading Week 2013 and the 'Check your tradie, check your rights' campaign.

"All people have to do to protect themselves is run a free licence check on the Fair Trading website, because without a licence, the work is uninsured.

David Bare, NSW Executive Director of the Housing Industry Association (HIA) urged consumers to use the free licence check on the Fair Trading website.

"A valid licence ensures that the person carrying out the building or trade work is appropriately skilled and qualified to do so," Mr Bare said.

"The ability to check that tradespeople are licensed is a very important consumer protection mechanism introduced by Fair Trading."

Brian Seidler, Executive Director of the Master Builders Association NSW (MBANSW) said checking a tradesperson is licensed gives you peace of mind the person has the right qualifications.

"It provides you with important consumer protections and keeps unlicensed and poor quality work out of the industry," Mr Seidler said.

“There are four golden rules to follow before you hire a tradesperson, check their licence on the Fair Trading website, get at least three written quotes, ask for references and have a written contract if the work is over \$1,000,” Mr Roberts said.

To check a licence or to see the full results of the survey go to: www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au

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