



## Media Release

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### Consumer and Business Affairs

6 October 2006

#### **ITINERANT BUILDER RIPS OFF DARWIN CONSUMERS**

Commissioner of Consumer Affairs Richard O'Sullivan has issued a warning to Darwin residents about the activities of an itinerant builder Mr John Julius Oltmans.

Mr Oltmans has entered into contracts to undertake building work with at least 3 Territory home owners, who paid him substantial amounts of money for the work that has not been completed nor met the requirements of the Territory's Building Code.

Mr Oltmans has recently advertised that he is a builder who can build new homes and carry out additions and renovations.

Mr O'Sullivan warns consumers that Mr Oltman is not a registered builder under the *Building Act* and could therefore be misrepresenting his services to the public in relation to building new homes.

He said "As a result of Mr Oltmans' activities Consumer Affairs are investigating a number of recent complaints from consumers for work undertaken, and two of these consumers are seeking court action to recover their losses".

"In the past many Territorians have been caught out by itinerant traders who provide poor quality workmanship, ask for money to be paid upfront, and when the trader skips town, the consumer is left with uncompleted work and no opportunity for redress".

The Commissioner urges consumers NOT to pay substantial amounts upfront for work to be undertaken; progress payments should only be made when works have been completed to an acceptable standard.

Mr O'Sullivan said "If consumers are planning for work to be undertaken, they should check the bona fides of the person and if possible contact previous customers before entering into a contract.

"The cheapest job isn't always the cheapest in the long run as itinerant traders and handymen usually work out of the back of a ute or van, and redress for defective products and/or poor workmanship is almost impossible" he said.

Consumer Affairs are also investigating motor vehicle and finance dealings involving Mr Oltmans.

Consumer Affairs would like to hear from any consumers who have had dealings with Mr Oltmans.

Consumers requiring further information are urged to contact Consumer Affairs on 1800 019 319.

#### **Media Contact:**

**Consumer Affairs Commissioner Richard O'Sullivan 8935 7735 / 0401 116 844**

*The following consumers have agreed to be interviewed by the media*

**Terry Wilkins 89853945 / 0407603874**

**Stephen Rigney 89204620 / 0409543887**

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