

Media Release

From the Building Commission and the Plumbing Industry Commission

SHODDY SHEDS UNDER SCRUTINY IN THE NORTH WEST

22 MARCH 2010

The Building Commission and the Plumbing Industry Commission have launched an audit of recently built domestic sheds and garages in North West Victoria.

The audit has been launched in response to concerns that certain shed supply and installation companies have been advising clients to become owner-builders as a way for those companies to try and avoid the requirement for them to be registered building practitioners.

Deputy Commissioner Sarah McCann-Bartlett said that many consumers are in the dark when it comes to knowing the responsibilities of the parties involved.

“There are a number of regulations consumers and building and plumbing practitioners need to comply with depending on the size and value of the shed being constructed,” Ms McCann-Bartlett said.

“Most sheds and garages will require a building permit.

“If consumers employ a company to supply and install a new shed or garage valued at more than \$5000, then that company has to use a registered builder to carry out the work.

“On top of that if the overall cost of the work exceeds \$5,000 the company has an obligation to supply the customer with the protection of a building contract; and if the work exceeds \$12,000 domestic building insurance as well.

“Regardless of the size of the shed, any plumbing work carried out on the roof and gutters has to be done by a registered or licensed plumber. There are no exceptions.”

Ms McCann-Bartlett said thus far the audit has revealed people are trying to get around the rules.

“Some shed companies are telling consumers to become owner-builders when applying for a building permit and are then arranging for unlicensed or unregistered tradespeople to do the work for them.”

“Practitioners are registered to ensure standards are maintained and consumers are protected.”

This investigation follows on from a successful blitz in South West Victoria where a number of shed retailers have been investigated with a view to prosecution. Ms McCann-Bartlett said the Commissions are serious about cracking down on shoddy shed building in the North West as well as educating the community.

“At the end of the day the rules are there to protect consumers and the people who use the building,” Ms McCann-Bartlett said.

For information about their responsibilities consumers can access a fact sheet at www.buildingcommission.com.au or www.pic.vic.gov.au

ENDS

For further information contact Chelsea Toomey, Marketing and Public Relations Officer, Building Commission on (03) 9618 9296.