

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **Commissioner of Consumer Affairs**

4 August 2011

#### **DODGY BITUMEN LAYERS TARGET TERRITORIANS**

Territorians are being warned to be careful when dealing with itinerant traders offering to lay bitumen driveways reportedly doing the rounds in the Katherine region.

Consumer Affairs Commissioner Gary Clements said people should be particularly on the lookout for a group using a white Hiace tipper truck.

“Generally these itinerant traders knock on the doors of unsuspecting residents and small businesses, particularly targeting the elderly and those in rural areas, offering bitumen left over from a previous job,” Commissioner Clements said.

“The traders usually advise that the work must be done immediately and demand payment on the same day.”

Commissioner Clements said these itinerant traders were breaching unsolicited goods and services legislation (door-to-door trading), and were attempting to charge high prices for a potentially sub-standard product and service.

“The people involved have a history of dodgy practices throughout Australia,” he said.

Under Australian Consumer Law, consumers who purchase unsolicited goods and services are legally entitled to a ten day cooling off period, during which the trader cannot provide any goods or services or accept any payment.

“If a trader breaches these regulations, consumers are entitled to have their money refunded and the contract cancelled,” Commissioner Clements said.

Consumer Affairs advises consumer to protect themselves by:

- Asking for proof of identification.
- Always getting written quotes for work.
- Not paying for work until it is completed.
- Demanding receipts and making sure they include the trader’s business name and registered business number.
- Always getting independent advice if unsure whether an offer is genuine.

Buying local is often the safest method as the trader is then available should something go wrong.

Consumers who have any information about these itinerant traders should contact Consumer Affairs on 1800 019 319.