



the voice of the industry

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Backyard Builders Rife in North

Ordinary Tasmanians are falling prey to backyard builders in northern Tasmania as times get tough and people are trying to save a dollar.

HIA Executive Director, Mr Stuart Clues, said "Let's be clear we are not talking about legitimate Owner Builders that want to strap on a nail belt and build their own home or shack.

"We are talking about the non-accredited Backyard Builders operating in northern Tasmania offering to knock up everything from a deck to building entire family homes without building qualifications, experience, insurance or accountability.

"In 2004 the Government introduced the Building Act to clearly lift consumer confidence in the building profession but it has failed to do anything to stem the tide of Backyard Builders that misuse the loopholes.

"Tasmania is the only state in Australia that has virtually no restrictions on Backyard Builders and as a consequence over 27% of all building work in the north of the state is done by Backyard Builders under the guise of Owner Builders."

In other states where Backyard Builders are properly regulated the volume of Owner Builder work sits around 8%.

"The absence of effective laws to regulate Backyard Builders means that we have consumers being deceived about who is a qualified builder and who is not," stated Mr Clues.

"We have qualified builders being driven out of the state as they are undercut by Backyard Builders.

It needs to be born mind too that the exposure for consumers by Backyard Builders is not just the actual building work the Backyarder is doing that is at risk but the collateral damage to the rest of the house in the process.

Accredited Builders are held accountable for their work by the Housing Indemnity Act and by WST and they can lose their right to accreditation and to build as a consequence.

There is no such recourse for consumers against Backyard Builders.

Mr Clues said "So if a consumer engages a Backyard Builder to do building work and the project goes pear shape there is no recourse against that person under the Building Act.

"In this case the consumer is left with the prospect of trying to recover damages through the court system and in most cases the legal costs make it not worth pursuing.

"So the consumer is left out in the cold with no recourse."

***In order to assist address this problem HIA has called upon the Minister Nick McKim, to require full disclosure to a prospective home owner as "who built the house?" in the proposed new Residential Property Bill.***

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Unfortunately to date the Minister has shown no interest in highlighting building work done by Backyard Builders in his new proposed new laws.

The Bill is intended to provide buyers with crucial information about the home they are considering buying.

The new laws will require the vendors to disclose information relating to titles, deeds, relating covenants, easements and water and sewerage.

Whilst all this information is undoubtedly important it would be equally useful to know who built the house.

From this simple question the prospective buyer could draw their own conclusions about whether the house was constructed by an accredited builder with a good reputation or built by Backyard Builder.

This information is readily available from Councils and should be included in the disclosure of pertinent information.

***HIA would urge the government to ensure that the new Property Residential Act 2012 includes the requirement for Vendors to disclose who built the house and whether that person was an Accredited Builder or not.***

HIA want a professional construction industry in this state where the public can have confidence those persons who hold Builders Accreditation and have the appropriate apprenticeship, skills, qualifications, insurance and experience and are held accountable for their work.

**For further information please contact:**

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