

Public DEFENDER

1194

John Rolfe

Sydney houses sold at auction in August



email me at rolfej@dailytelegraph.com.au and join my blog at www.dailytelegraph.com.au

Please help!

I need some legal advice

Signed to the union without notice

WARREN writes: My employer joined me to the CFMEU without my knowledge. I only found out after I changed address and received a bill for the next six months' membership. My employer still hasn't told me what he has done. I do not want to be a member of the union and I know it's not compulsory. To resign, you must be paid-up six months in advance, which will cost me \$250. Am I legally required to pay the money to get out or is it illegal for someone to join you in a union without your knowledge?

Have your legal queries answered on our blog with Maurice Blackburn legal expert Rebecca Gilsenan at noon today



ONLY employees who wish to join a union can do so. Usually, this requires filling out a union membership form and thereafter paying the union dues. No one else can do that for you unless you authorise them to do so. All unions have a set of rules which deal with such matters and these can be accessed through the Fair Work Australia website.

Legal information is general in nature and not to be regarded as legal advice by Maurice Blackburn

Serious reservations

SARA EVANS forked out hundreds of dollars in inspection fees for a house she hoped she would buy — only to find the house's reserve was \$50,000 more than she was quoted.

At the first inspection on June 17, Ms Evans was told the property at Massie St, Ermington, would go for up to \$750,000.

This was in her price range, so the mum of two from Newington paid \$200 for a building report, \$150 for a pest inspection report and a few hundred more on legal fees.

Come auction day the reserve price was \$800,000 — \$50,000 more than the price guide — and the property eventually sold for \$928,000.

"The agent should have been more up-front," Mrs Evans said.

"They could have just told me it would be more than \$800,000 and I wouldn't have bothered getting inspection reports, paying a solicitor and wasting my time."

McGrath Epping real estate agent Kevin Dearlove refused to comment except to say: "The result was a record for the suburb."

A special investigation by *The Daily Telegraph* in July revealed more real estate agents are underquoting property values to lure buyers to auctions.

In an exclusive survey, nearly 50 per cent of buyers were quoted a price guide more than \$100,000 less than the reserve.

Almost 90 per cent said they were given an estimated price guide at least \$50,000 cheaper than what the house sold for.

After sustained lobbying by *The Daily Telegraph*, the NSW Government is finally revisiting a promise it abandoned early this year.

Yesterday the Minister for Lands held a public forum on whether sellers should pay for inspection reports instead of buyers, as they do in the ACT.



Up the garden path: Sara and Kristian Evans with children Soraya and Gabriel yesterday

Picture: Adam Ward



Reissue: Slavko and Roxana

Gift card that got a new lease on life

SLAVKO Sokalski asked Westfield to extend the life of a one-year gift card for his daughter Roxana, 7.

Westfield — whose gift cards have the shortest life of any major card — refused.

I asked Westfield to make an exception and they did.

"In this instance, a card is being reissued," a Westfield spokeswoman said.

Westfield should be more flexible, given its cards only

last half as long as competitor cards Myer and David Jones.

"My daughter would like to thank you. You have definitely put a smile on her face as the card will go to her," Mr Sokalski said.

Previously we have revealed that about \$360 million worth of gift card credit will go unused in 2010.

That unused credit is pure profit for retailers and a dead loss for consumers.



We fight for long-term solutions not just short-term assistance.

Your compensation agreement might just be numbers on a page to some people. But to you, it could mean the difference between having full-time support, or not. So we'll fight hard for that extra ten percent to make sure you get a long-term solution, not just short-term assistance. Because at Maurice Blackburn, we fight for fair.

We fight for fair.™

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