

PUBLIC DEFENDER



with
Wes Hosking
publicdefender@heraldsun.com.au

West is worst for home feuds

Wes Hosking

MELBOURNE'S outer west has claimed the dubious title of being Victoria's capital for building and renovation disputes.

The Brimbank Council area, taking in Sunshine and St Albans, has topped the list for problems during domestic renovation or building projects, with 190 complaints lodged with Consumer Affairs Victoria last year.

The growing Whittlesea, Casey, Wyndham and Hume council areas were also major trouble spots.

A Consumer Affairs Victoria spokeswoman said the most common disputes were over contract issues and project delays.

Other sticking points included products different from those specified in contracts, defective or incomplete work and budget blowouts.

"Building or renovating a home is a serious financial commitment," the spokeswoman said.

"For many families, it will be the biggest investment they will ever make."

Since July last year Consumer Affairs has been involved with nine court actions against builders, with courts ordering

HOW TO AVOID A BUILDING NIGHTMARE

- Compare at least three quotes from different contractors
- Ask for and check references
- Make sure they are part of an industry association
- Don't pay more than a 10 per cent deposit for work costing less than \$20,000 or 5 per cent for bigger projects
- Check the contractor is registered for work costing more than \$5000.

MOST COMPLAINTS

| | |
|------------|-----|
| Brimbank | 190 |
| Whittlesea | 170 |
| Casey | 165 |
| Wyndham | 145 |
| Hume | 105 |



Source: Consumer Affairs Victoria.

they pay a total \$83,000 in fines and more than \$135,000 in compensation to consumers.

Master Builders Association of Victoria executive director Brian Welch said householders could reduce their risk of a building nightmare by using a registered builder who was a member of an

industry association. Mr Welch said rogue operators were a problem.

"It reflects poorly on the industry and the people who work in it when they have done nothing to justify that," he said.

For dispute advice phone Consumer Affairs on 1300 558 181.

Know your WorkCover rights

THE Victorian WorkCover Authority introduced the WorkCare scheme in 1985 to provide compensation to employees for injuries sustained during their work.

Over the years millions of dollars have been invested to drive the message home to workers and employers about the need for a safe workplace.

While safety is sold as a joint responsibility, employers have a duty of care to all employees.

WorkCover numbers suggest about 30,000 claims are made each year, with more than 60 per cent from males.

Many workers have little idea

ANDREW DIMSEY

Principal lawyer,
Maurice Blackburn



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of their rights when injured on the job. Some groups are more vulnerable than others, such as young and poorly trained workers who may not want to make a fuss by asking questions.

Workers from non-English speaking backgrounds can also be vulnerable because they may

not understand safety requirements and safeguards. Accessing your entitlements under WorkCover can be complicated.

Have you been injured at work and would like to know your rights?

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

Product Safety Recall

FÖRSTÅ coffee/tea maker

Available in two sizes, 0.4L (SN 00163209) & 1L (SN 60163211), was sold at IKEA stores worldwide between February–December 2010.

Defect Pressure from the metal holder on the glass pot can cause it to break unexpectedly.

Hazard The glass breaking poses a burn & laceration hazard to the user.

What to do? IKEA kindly asks customers who have a FÖRSTÅ coffee/tea maker to immediately stop using the product and return it to any IKEA store for full refund.

IKEA does not compromise on product safety and recommends that all customers return the FÖRSTÅ coffee/tea maker for a full refund. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause.

Contact Details For more information, please visit www.IKEA.com.au or contact IKEA on: Homebush Bay, NSW (02) 8002 0400, Richmond, VIC (03) 8416 5000, Logan, QLD (07) 3380 6800

See www.recalls.gov.au for Australian Product Recall Information

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