



Building Services Authority

MEDIA RELEASE

18 December 2007

From a dream to a nightmare: written contracts for building work

The Building Services Authority (BSA) in Mackay is concerned that some homeowners are leaving themselves open to dodgy contractors because they are having building or renovating work performed on their home without a written contract in place.

BSA general manager Ian Jennings said BSA had found that some homeowners in the Mackay region were undertaking considerable renovations or alterations engaging various contractors, but had no written contracts with their tradespeople, or they sometimes did not even have written quotes.

“If you lodge a complaint with BSA about defective work performed by a contractor, without the correct documentation it can be very difficult to resolve the problem,” he said.

“BSA offers Queenslanders some of the best Home Warranty Insurance available in Australia, which insures work valued in excess of \$3,300 and performed by a BSA licensee. Making a claim for this insurance without thorough documentation can be very difficult.”

If you are engaging contractors to do work on your home, BSA offers the following advice:

When choosing a contractor you should follow five simple steps.

1. Using the Yellow Pages, newspaper ads and referrals from friends and family, find local contractors that are willing and able to do the job.
2. Make sure the contractor is licensed by asking to see their BSA licence card.
3. Write down the contractor's licence details and double-check them with BSA (call 1300 BSA BSA, or visit www.bsa.qld.gov.au) to make sure the licence is current and appropriate for the work you want performed.
4. Get at least three written quotes from contractors and remember that the cheapest is not always the best.
5. Ask the contractor for details of past work they have done and speak with their previous clients.

Once you have chosen a contractor you should:

- Ensure all details of your agreement with the contractor are *written down* in a contract (or in a detailed written quote if a small job) and that you have a copy.
- Make sure the contractor gives you copies of all documents supporting the contract, including plans and specifications, soil tests etc.
- Monitor the contractor's work carefully and advise the contractor immediately of problems, both verbally and in writing.
- Never pay the full amount up front, don't pay too big a deposit, don't pre-pay or over-pay the agreed progress payments and never pay for incomplete work.

299 Montague Rd, SOUTH BRISBANE Q 4101

POSTAL ADDRESS: Private Mail Bag 84, COORPAROO D.C. QLD 4151

MEDIA CONTACTS: Justin Coomber 3404 3027, 0407 130 287, Justin.Coomber@bsa.qld.gov.au
Heidi Jones 3225 2996, Heidi.Jones@bsa.qld.gov.au

- Always check the work fully before making your final payment.
- Don't rush into a decision. Take time and seek advice. The *Domestic Building Contracts Act 2000* gives you a "cooling-off" period of five business days to consider your decision and change your mind.

"Your home is likely to be your greatest investment so be very careful who you hire to work on it as this decision can determine whether the project runs like a dream or a nightmare."

"If you have any questions about building or renovating, or find yourself in dispute with a contractor, please contact BSA on 1300 272 272 or visit www.bsa.qld.gov.au."

299 Montague Rd, SOUTH BRISBANE Q 4101

POSTAL ADDRESS: Private Mail Bag 84, COORPAROO D.C. QLD 4151

MEDIA CONTACTS: Justin Coomber 3404 3027, 0407 130 287, Justin.Coomber@bsa.qld.gov.au
Heidi Jones 3225 2996, Heidi.Jones@bsa.qld.gov.au