

# MEDIA STATEMENT

17 February, 2015

## Irish gang member convicted of unlicensed contracting

A reported member of an Irish gang which performed unlicensed building work in southeast Queensland has been convicted and fined \$8,000 for unlicensed contracting.

Michael O'Brien failed to appear in Sandgate Magistrates Court, Brisbane, but in his absence was convicted and fined for quoting \$5,500 to repair a roof, despite being unlicensed.

If Mr O'Brien fails to pay the fine he faces 80 days imprisonment.

Commissioner of the Queensland Building and Construction Commission (QBCC), Steve Griffin, said the QBCC had been advised by the Queensland Police Service (QPS) that Mr O'Brien was part of an Irish gang which often targeted the elderly and vulnerable.

Mr Griffin said he was pleased that a conviction was recorded, as the Commission had urged the court to continue the prosecution despite Mr O'Brien's absence and that a penalty be imposed.

"We felt strongly that an example must be made of Mr O'Brien and that a significant penalty must be imposed as a strong deterrent to others contemplating a similar offence," Mr Griffin said.

He said the case was a great example of regulatory authorities working together, as the QBCC was assisted in the matter by Queensland, Victorian and West Australian police, and Australian Federal Police, who served the court summons on Mr O'Brien at Melbourne International Airport.

Mr Griffin said the Commission would forward details of Mr O'Brien's conviction to immigration authorities for future action should he return to Australia.

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