

Minister for Fair Trading  
Minister for Citizenship  
Minister Assisting the Premier on the Arts

**Virginia Judge MP**



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**EMBARGOED** 13 September 2009

## **DODGY TRADERS FLEECE ELDERLY CONSUMERS**

Fair Trading Minister Virginia Judge is warning elderly consumers to be wary of dodgy traders masquerading as handymen.

Ms Judge said Fair Trading had received reports this week that door-to-door traders have been targeting elderly consumers in Sydney's south west.

"There are reports these rogue traders are charging exorbitant prices for minor household chores like weeding or tree lopping," Ms Judge said.

"Anyone who preys on elderly consumers is beneath contempt," Ms Judge said.

"These bogus traders have been representing themselves as legitimate handymen in a bid to make a quick buck.

"They offer residents cheap quotes to carry out jobs around the house and then, once the work is finished, demand significant amounts of money.

"One victim received a quote for \$60 but was forced to pay \$600. In another case, a trader charged \$200 to weed a garden bed for one hour.

"There have also been reports that traders have taken elderly consumers to the bank to ensure they withdraw the cash.

"This behaviour is despicable and I am amazed these people can lie straight in bed."

Ms Judge said Fair Trading had received 146 complaints about dodgy door-to-door traders in the 2008/2009 financial year – up 17 from the previous year.

"As Minister for Fair Trading I am very concerned at the number of people who continue to flout the law," Ms Judge said.

"It is important that consumers use their commonsense if they are approached by a door-to-door trader.

"Consumers should always shop around and compare prices before agreeing to a deal. Use local, licensed tradespeople who have a good reputation.

"By law, you have a five business-day cooling off period for sales of more than \$100 so traders can not demand any money from you for services supplied in that period.

"Any consumers who feel they have been harassed or stood over by a door-to-door salesperson should immediately contact the police or call Fair Trading on 13 32 20."

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