SUPPORT ACCREDITED BUILDERS OVER BACKYARD BUILDERS

Small “Mum and Dad” building companies are doing it tough at the moment and it does not help when they are undercut and undermined by Backyard Builders.

In 2004 the Government introduced the Building Act to clearly lift consumer confidence in the building profession and that required Builders to be accredited, qualified, experienced, insured and undertake professional development every year. But the absence of effective laws to regulate Backyard Builders means that we have consumers being deceived about who is a qualified builder and who is not and we have qualified builders being driven out of the state as they are undercut by Backyard Builders.

Tasmania is the only State in Australia that has virtually no restrictions on Backyard Builders and as a consequence over 27 per cent of all building work in the state is done by Backyard Builders under the guise of Owner Builders.

In other states where Backyard Builders are properly regulated the volume of Owner Builder work sits around 8 per cent.

Let’s be clear we are not talking about legitimate Owner Builders that want to strap on a nail belt and build their own home or shack.

We are talking about the non-accredited Backyard Builders running around the state offering to knock up everything from a deck to building entire family homes without building qualifications, experience, insurance or accountability.

It needs to be kept in mind that the exposure for consumers by Backyard Builders is not just the actual building work the Backyarder is doing that is at risk but the collateral damage to the rest of the house in the process.

Accredited Builders are held accountable for their work by the Housing Indemnity Act and by WST and they can lose their right to accreditation and to build as a consequence.

There is no such recourse for consumers against Backyard Builders.

So if a consumer engages a Backyard Builder to do building work and the project goes pear shape there is no recourse against that person under the Building Act. In this case the consumer is left with the prospect of trying to recover damages through the court system and in most cases the legal costs make it not worth pursuing.
So the consumer is left out in the cold with no recourse.

HIA Recommendation: HIA wants tighter control on Backyard Builders so we can have a professional Construction Industry in this state where the public can have confidence those persons who hold themselves out to be Builders are accredited and have the appropriate apprenticeship, skills, qualifications, insurance and experience and are held accountable for their work.