

# Media Release

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## UNLICENSED BUILDER FINED \$12,500

South Australia's consumer watchdog has welcomed the \$12,500 penalty handed down in the Adelaide Magistrates Court to a man who admitted breaching South Australian and national consumer laws.

36 year old Port Willunga man David James Jackson pleaded guilty to breaches of the *Building Work Contractors Act*, the *Australian Consumer Law* and the *Fair Trading Act*.

The Court heard that Jackson had accepted a deposit of \$9630 to construct a pergola on a property in Mount Gambier and never actually started the work.

Jackson had also accepted a \$6000 deposit to build a veranda at another Mount Gambier property, and again failed to begin work.

He also failed to deliver materials paid for by the consumers.

The court heard that, in the first matter, Jackson had only repaid \$2900 while in the second matter, Jackson made an initial series of repayments following a civil claim and order, but then defaulted on further repayments.

Magistrate Bennett indicated that – were it not for Jackson's guilty plea and inability to repay a significantly larger penalty – Jackson would have been fined \$30,000.

Instead, the Magistrate fined him \$12,500, and made a compensation order for Jackson to repay \$7550 to one of his clients.

A civil order is already in place ordering Jackson to repay the other client.

Commissioner for Consumer Affairs Dini Soulio said Jackson did not hold any building licence at the time of the offences.

“Our licensing system is a way of ensuring consumers can have confidence in the people they hire to carry out building work,” he said.

“I'd encourage anyone to check the public register before engaging a builder to ensure they're licensed to do the job.”

To check whether a builder is licensed, visit the Consumer and Business Services website at [www.cbs.sa.gov.au](http://www.cbs.sa.gov.au). To report any concerns about a builder or contractor, contact CBS on 131 882.