



Media Release

Thursday, 21 April 2022

“Cunning thief” penalised for impersonating builder

A Victorian woman has pleaded guilty in the Melbourne Magistrates’ Court to pretending to be a registered builder and has been fined \$8,000.

Ha Thi “Miki” Nguyen also pleaded guilty to deception offences brought by Victoria Police and was fined a further \$3,000. Together with compensation orders of \$9,571, she has to pay \$20,571. Convictions were recorded for all offences.

The VBA’s Regulatory Operations Executive Director David Brockman said this was a blatant breach of the Building Act and Regulations, and a breach of consumer trust.

“Most Victorian practitioners do the right thing, and when individuals break the trust of the community in cases like this, it undermines that trust and damages the reputation of the industry as a whole,” Mr Brockman said.

“We want all Victorians to know to check the registration of a potential builder or plumber before they engage in any work. Failing to do so could result in severely compromised work, loss of funds and serious risks to safety.”

The VBA was made aware of the offending when a registered practitioner who was subcontracted for concreting on one of the sites, raised concerns over Ms Nguyen’s qualifications.

In his sentencing remarks, Magistrate John Hardy said the matter was “hugely concerning” and that Ms Nguyen had displayed “the behaviour of a dishonest, cunning thief”.

Magistrate Hardy noted that Nguyen had failed to complete any promised building projects in Wheelers Hill and Mornington, Victoria.

Magistrate Hardy said that the consumers that Ms Nguyen deceived had “suffered hugely, both financially and emotionally.”

Mr Brockman said he encouraged Victorians to know the rules and know their rights.

“We will not hesitate to take action against any person or company who puts consumers at risk,” he said.

Ms Nguyen has never been a registered builder in Victoria and the Court heard she has failed to repay any of the money taken from her victims.

Consumers need to use a registered builder for most domestic building work worth more than \$10,000, including parts and labour.

The VBA has an online [consumer resource portal](#) with information for anyone who experiences issues with builders or plumbers.

Victorians can visit vba.vic.gov.au/check to make sure their builder or plumber is registered or licensed.

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