Media Release
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Builder suspended after demanding early payment

A builder has been reprimanded and had his registration suspended for four months after he demanded payment for the frame stage before the work was completed, and also failed to complete the building work in the agreed timeframe.

Domestic builder Peter Hall, of Bella Haven Homes Pty Ltd, was hired to build a house and garage in Craigieburn for a total cost of $267,000. After commencing the work, he sent the homeowners an invoice for the frame stage, which they paid. However, the frame stage was not completed and approved until five months after the payment was made. Work on the project then stalled when a number of defects were identified, and the owners weren’t able to move into their new home until almost six months after the completion date agreed in the contract.

After the homeowners made a complaint about Mr Hall and the building work, the VBA inspected the home and conducted an investigation. The VBA then referred the matter to the Building Practitioners Board for an inquiry into Mr Hall’s conduct.

Mr Hall was found guilty of demanding and receiving a payment for the frame stage before it was completed, and of failing to properly manage, supervise and control the building work and to ensure that the work progressed in a timely manner. Mr Hall was reprimanded, his registration as a domestic builder was suspended for four months and he was ordered to pay costs of $1058.

VBA Compliance and Performance Director Kate Despot said there is legislation in place to protect building consumers and all building practitioners have obligations they must meet regarding building contracts and progress payments. A written major domestic building contract must be in place for building work where the contract price is more than $5000.

“In most cases under a domestic building contract, builders can only request payment for a stage of building work after that work has been completed and approved. Homeowners should check that the building surveyor has inspected and approved the relevant building work before making the progress payment for that stage of work,” Ms Despot said.

Homeowners can visit the VBA website at www.vba.vic.gov.au/consumers for information about hiring a builder and domestic building contracts. Information about domestic building contracts and payments for building work is also available from the Consumer Affairs Victoria website. Visit www.consumer.vic.gov.au

ENDS

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