

media statement



6 February 2012

Brisbane mediator fined for lying

A professional mediator was fined \$15 000 in the Brisbane Magistrates Court last week (1 February) for falsely claiming she was affiliated with the Queensland Law Society.

Ms Lauren George of Moggill was found guilty of breaching the Australian Consumer Law for promoting to potential clients of her business, Mediation Works, that she was a member of the Queensland Law Society when she was not.

The court heard that Ms George's business website carried the claim despite having her membership revoked in August 2010.

Following a complaint by the Queensland Law Society, the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) ordered Ms George to remove the false claim of affiliation from her website, which she failed to do.

No conviction was recorded.

Acting Director of OFT's State-wide Operations Robert Brumm said it was inappropriate for businesses to make false representations about affiliations they did not have.

"Affiliations and endorsements can influence consumer confidence in a trader and the services they provide," said Mr Brumm.

"Industry bodies such as the Queensland Law Society work hard to build a reputation of excellence over many years and have strict conditions and requirements of their members.

"When consumers are told a business person is a member of a peak industry body they naturally assume the person meets their high standards.

"Consumers have the right to expect that any claim a business makes is legitimate.

"This case serves as a warning to other traders who try to flout the law that the Office of Fair Trading will not tolerate businesses misleading or deceiving Queensland consumers."

For more information visit www.fairtrading.qld.gov.au or call 13 QGOV (13 74 68).

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Media contact: Ben Armstrong, 3247 5970

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