



## Keep in Check with Building Permits

South Gippsland Shire Council is encouraging builders, tradespeople and handymen to double check building permit requirements before undertaking building work after the State Government amended the Building Act 1993 last month.

As part of the amendment stricter penalties have been introduced to deter people in the business of building undertaking work without a building permit. A Magistrate can now impose a fine of up to \$90,000, five years jail or both for individuals. For companies in the business of building a fine of up to \$450,000 can be awarded.

South Gippsland Shire Council's Manager Regulatory Services Matthew Patterson said that the changes recognise that undertaking illegal building work can have serious consequences. Whilst undertaking minor illegal building work can seem innocuous, it can have catastrophic consequences, such as the Carlton wall collapse in 2013 which resulted in three deaths. The subsequent investigation found a timber billboard attached to a brick wall without the required building permit, caused the wall to collapse on the public due to the additional wind loads.

Builders, tradespeople and handymen need to be aware of building permit requirements before undertaking building works as they could face significant fines or imprisonment if work they undertake illegally contributes to a serious injury or death.

A building permit is required for the construction of garages, carports, decks, farm sheds, re-blocking an existing house and retaining walls greater than one metre in height.

Exemptions for a building permit include:

- Construction of small sheds not more than 10 m<sup>2</sup> in floor area
- Demolition of sheds not more than 40 m<sup>2</sup> in floor area
- Repair work to a house providing the work is non-structural (bathroom/kitchen renovation)
- Unroofed pergolas not more than 20 m<sup>2</sup> in floor area and located at the rear or side of a house.

South Gippsland Shire Council's Manager Regulatory Services Matthew Patterson said that generally most building works require building permits.

"Building permits ensure that building practitioners are registered, carry the required insurance and that adequate documentation and planning is prepared to construct the building or extension. An independent review of the building documentation then takes place and key stages of the work are inspected," said Mr Patterson.

If you are unsure about whether you require a building permit please contact Council's Building team on 5662 9200.

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