



## Tradies accused of 'ripping off the elderly'

Steve Marshall 7/08/2018

An impromptu puppet show, references to Ned Kelly and a promise to make a hundred-thousand-dollar donation for sick kids.

*A Current Affair's* investigation into one of the country's fastest growing plumbing companies swings from the bizarre to the bullish as the owners of the Plumbing Detectives defiantly dispute allegations they are ripping off pensioners.

*A Current Affair* can reveal NSW Fair Trading is investigating several customer complaints against the Plumbing Detectives, which also operates in Melbourne and Brisbane.

Peter Navan claims the Plumbing Detectives charged his mum, Mary close to double the amount she should have paid to repair her backyard pipes.

© A Current Affair People have accused the fast-growing Plumbing Detectives of ripping off the elderly.

"They (Plumbing Detectives) came out on Friday to give a quote of five grand to do some work," Peter said.

He said he questioned the price after his friend's nephew, a qualified plumber, looked at the job.

"He said, 'You are looking at \$2500 to \$3000 at the most'," Peter said.

"I just think these people here are ripping off the elderly," he said.

Peter then led the *A Current Affair* camera crew to where the Plumbing Detectives' tradies were working in his mum's yard.

© A Current Affair Plumbing Detectives co-owner Mahmoud Sayadi denied the claims.

"We've actually under quoted the job," Plumbing Detectives co-owner Mahmoud Sayadi said, responding to questions on behalf of upset customers.

"When a plumber comes into our job which has already been taken by another plumber, straight away he's going to tell the customer I could have done it for cheaper."

Mr Sayadi is so confident his tradies are doing the right thing by pensioners that he's willing to put his money where his mouth is.

"If you bring me one (Plumbing Detective) tradie who will come to you and tell you, we as bosses have

hospital," Mr Sayadi said.

The bold promise represents a surprise turnaround from Mr Sayadi, who initially hid from the camera crew and waved an action figure doll from the depot second floor office window in an impromptu puppet show.

© A Current Affair Broadcaster Ray Hadley said Ned Kelly would be

"Well, I tell him, old mate Mahmoud, start writing the cheque now because I will give you a dozen of them (tradies)," radio talkback host Ray Hadley said about Mr Sayadi's donation promise.

Mr Hadley has been a vocal critic of the Plumbing Detectives since the company hit the tradies complaints register with 16 grievances in January, more than some of our major airlines.

"Ned Kelly would be embarrassed at their behaviour. Poor old Ned would be embarrassed at what this mob is doing to older people," Hadley said.

Plumbing Detectives are hitting back by filming their own testimonial videos starring satisfied pensioner customers such as Max and Rose from leafy Turramurra on Sydney's northern suburbs.

"We wouldn't recommend anybody else and a big thanks to Mac who did all that heavy, heavy work," Rose beamed on the plumber's camera phone.

© A Current Affair Plumbing Detectives is one of the fastest-growing tradie companies in Australia.

Plumbing Detectives director Belal Dassouki says there are bound to be complaints given his company is servicing more than 3000 jobs a month.

"100 percent confident, if I wasn't confident I wouldn't be speaking to you right now," Mr Dassouki told *A Current Affair*.

Mr Dassouki also says he has answers to satisfy Fair Trading investigators.

"We are actually charging less than our competitors. I can prove it," he said.

© A Current Affair Hiring a tradie you've never used before can be nerve-wracking, and it's even worse when you realise you've been taken for a ride.