



Horror Stories and Their Lessons

Recently we have been fielding calls regarding some really dreadful happenings in the world outside of AFRA in the removal industry.

We thought you should know about them so you can use the information to assist in the selling of your product, especially in the storage area.

A Company has simply decided it is all too hard, closed its doors and disappeared, except for their storage. This is in containers in various yards around the city. However, no one knows what's in the containers, who's furniture is stored in them or any other records regarding the consignments.

Clients have been calling us for help. They want their goods delivered but no one can tell them where they are. There is no paperwork identifying what's in any of the containers. They have been paying their storage fees but have nothing to show for it. Some containers we know are in a bond store. No one can access them because they are under the

laws governing quarantine, even though these are simple domestic moves.

Worse still, there will be people out there, blissfully unaware that their goods are not where they expected them to be, and they continue to pay storage fees.

Another Company has also found it all too hard and has closed its doors. No one knows where the owner is, but we know they have disappeared overseas. This scenario is different however and much more sinister.

We heard about this through a plea from their client who had just returned from overseas and wanted us to help find her goods. She had been told her goods would be stored in a container and was under the impression that it was a container she was looking for. In the event, the goods were removed from her house and put into a self storage unit without her knowledge.

Our investigation discovered that this removalist had no storage containers

but removed everything he said he was storing for his clients into self storage units, and not all into the same one. These items were stored under the furniture removalists name not the clients name.

Unfortunately, while the clients were paying their storage, rather than pay the self storage company, the money didn't ever get there. The Self Storage Association guidelines for non-payment of storage is that to recover unpaid debts, the goods may be sold, 42 days after non-payment. (See Self Storage Conditions of Agreement.)

Sadly for this client, and we have discovered there are several others, we found where the goods had been stored, but they had been sold 8 months previously. Nothing was left except some personal items the self storage company didn't have the heart to dispose of.

The lesson here is - tell your prospective clients that using an AFRA member will keep their goods safe from this sort of result.