dodge and weave Cowboy builders

the threat of being sued or that there was room for imbeing identified because of Tony Arnel said he accepted and surveyors, but feared Building Commissioner collusion between builders ing the industry to be run

Many owners talked of work and they didn't." directed the builder to do said. "They could have done nothing," Mrs Zaitsen

assaulted by builders.

"The commission has

Board this year. Building Practitioners and will appear before the

visited the site in months ton 2.12 million, has not builder, who has so far been basement flooded. Its with timbers rotting and its exposed to the elements The house remains her builder.

pleted if she remained with years ago - would be comsince work degan on it two house — mired in problems Department to ensure her with her and the Planning of signing an agreement unprecedented step in June mission, which took the failed by the Building Com-Zaitsen said she had been CAULFIELD woman Lana

to dry tuo gand I've been

ority to intervene.

yet claimed it had little authwide powers as a regulator, said the commission had and conflicts of interest. He

the company to address a list

mission inspector directed

bedroom, two-storey house.

problems with their four-

building company rectify

with trying to have a major

consumed for three years

this week said they had been

legal bill higher than any

- often leaving them with a

\$100,000 to seek a resolution

forced to spend more than

VCAT, where owners can be

to Consumer Affairs and

intervene, handballing them

staff had often refused to

riddled with serious defects.

walked away from homes

sion when builders had

in dealing with the commis-

have told of their frustration

Heartbroken homeowners

They said commission

payout they may win.

A Caulfield North couple

Though a Building Com-

provement.

with little regulation.

the Government was allow-

emotional investment, yet

found home construction an

lective, said most owners

sure group the Builders Col-

powers they need. They just

ing Act they have all the

when you look at the Build-

they're a toothless tiger, but

it had no powers to enforce

said the commission told him

pany remain in a stand-off.

and the owners and the com-

bathrooms are unfinished

of 21 items 17 months ago,

Homeowner Geoff Thomas

"They give the impression

don't use them," he said.

the direction.

Phil Dwyer, head of pres-

with a high risk of collusion was largely unaccountable, the building permit system General Des Pearson said building surveyors. Auditor-

their untinished bathroom. Picture: NORM OORLOFF

Still waiting: Geoff and Rosemary Thomas, of Caulfield North, in

work of builders and private industry and monitor the for its failure to regulate the port by the Auditor-General was savaged in a recent re-The Building Commission

have been prosecuted. Queensland. Another 81 bers expelled in NSW and year — a fraction of the numjust four rogue builders a the licences off an average of Yet authorities have taken

home building projects. ates problems at one in six sud conmen whose work creinclude a host of cowboys builders and surveyors state's 21,000 registered Consumer groups say the

ers in the past three years. istered just 13 dodgy buildtry watchdog has dereg-VICTORIA'S building indus-

GRAEME HAMMOND

Sunday Herald Sun, January 1, 2012

NEMZ 33