

9407-9393

SALES ZUCCALA - 545 McClelland rd
STRT MOUNTS!

3.30

Heartbreak homes



Shabby: Faults in new homes in Thirlestane Place include (top, left to right) uneven brickwork, gaps between walls and floors and mortar stains on walls.

FLOODED backyards, cracked floors, stained floorboards and faulty fire alarms have turned homebuyers' dreams into nightmares.

Residents in 10 new, near-identical houses built by Zuccala Homes say their Craigieburn homes are falling apart.

First-home buyer "Debbie", who asked that her real name not be published, bought a \$282,860 house/land package in Thirlestane Place, in Melbourne's north.

The three-bedroom house in Highlands estate was contracted to builder Zuccala Homes.

On completion day, December 5, 2008 — 15 months after she was told her home would be ready — a heartbreaking scene greeted the novice buyer.

"It was meant to look like a display home," Debbie said. "But it was disgusting — I certainly could not live there."

Her new home did not have a rangehood, oven or dishwasher, was littered with rubbish and covered in a layer of thick dust.

She moved in several weeks later and has found her backyard floods when it rains, cracks have appeared in her garage floor, her fire alarm is faulty and her garage brickwork is uneven and cracked.

Debbie's bedroom wardrobe (470mm instead of about

CAROLINE JAMES
Property editor

600mm) is so shallow her clothes protrude from it.

She estimated it would cost about \$20,000 to repair.

"I paid good money and it is quite obvious I got seconds of everything," Debbie said.

"This should have been my dream home, but I have had nothing other than trouble."

Neighbour Graeme Macauley's front door is bowed and needs replacing. He has waited three months for repairs.

His house also has bowed walls, cracking brickwork and too-shallow wardrobes.

"I am nowhere near the worst in the street — everyone has had issues," Mr Macauley said.

Company director Greg Zuccala said he had agreed to address Debbie's concerns and attend a meeting with a Consumer Affairs Victoria building inspector this month.

"Perhaps we have not been as quick in attending to all of her concerns," Mr Zuccala said.

"There is the odd resident that has had some issues and if the whole list she (Debbie) has drafted of her concerns needs attending, then that is what we will do."

The watchdog has received 50 inquiries and 25 complaints about Zuccala Homes Pty Ltd and Zuccala Holmes Pty Ltd since December 3, 2004.