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Dear Sirs

I am writing to you to express my extreme dissatisfaction with your products and service, and to ask you to remedy multiple problems which have occurred, for which I consider you responsible.

In May 1999 I purchased two Davey XJ 70 pumps from Mount Barker Landscape and Irrigation in Mount Barker, SA. One was intended to run the household water service (we have no mains water), the other was intended to run the sprinkler system. Subsequent experience has shown that these pumps have neither the specification nor the reliability for the former task.

At the time of purchase, the house water supply was by a conventional pressure pump with an estimated maximum pressure of 120 kPa. We have a commercial dishwasher by Miele which requires a minimum supply pressure of 250 kPa, and for this reason we decided to replace the old pump, which had never given us any problems from a reliability perspective. On the advice of Mount Barker Landscape and Irrigation, and also with reference to various of your publications, we chose the XJ 70 series, which according to these brochures could deliver up to 420 kPa, and more particularly 250 kPa at flow rates of up to 55 l/minute, far beyond our requirements.

We took the pumps into service in August 1999. The house pump did not live up to the promise: the dish washer continually stopped and required restarting. On 1 September 2000, it failed altogether: the housing had cracked, and in the process drained our entire water supply of 75,000 litres. In addition, some of the bolts holding the pump body together had sheared off. We replaced it with the pump from the sprinkler system and sent the pump in for repair. At the time I also asked for an explanation as to why this pump should have failed in this way.

We received the pump back in November 2000 and put it into the sprinkler system. It was non-functional: the pressure control mechanism was defective. This was replaced by Mount Barker Irrigation.

On 14 July 2001, a pump failed again. This time the bolts holding the housing together had again sheared off, but the pump housing was intact. You can see a photo of this at

<http://www.lemis.com/~grog/diary-jul2001.html#14>

Again we replaced the pump with the one from the sprinkler system. I took the pump to Mount Barker Irrigation and again asked for reasons why this should have happened.

I heard nothing for a long time. During this period, I believe, a plumber had occasion to check the water system and found the bolts holding the pump housing to be loose, and that the pump was leaking. These are the same bolts which sheared off on the two previous occasions. He tightened them up and the pump no longer leaked. On 26 December 2001, the pump failed in the same manner as previously. You can see photos of this at

<http://www.lemis.com/~grog/waterpump-xmas-2001.html>

At this point my wife informed me that there had been a phone call from a certain Robert Young a few days previously. I called him and discovered that he does your repairs in Adelaide. He told me that the pump had been repaired “by accident”, and that although he would be in his workshop, I could not have the pump until the following day. I managed to persuade him to let me collect it the same day, and we discussed the possible causes of failure. Mr. Young had no doubt about the cause of failure: the pump had been installed incorrectly, specifically by connecting it to mains pressure. He also stated that the pump in question had a very ineffective non-return valve, and that in combination with a pressurized hot water heater this could cause the problems we have been seeing.

I have difficulty accepting Mr. Young’s claims and am not impressed by technical people who jump to conclusions. We have no mains water supply, so his first claim is obviously wrong. I also have difficulty understanding how the weakest point in the hot water system should be the pump, despite protection by two non-return valves (one in the hot water system, one in the pump). There are also two ball-valve controlled cisterns in the cold water system, and in the past we have had trouble with them not being able to handle even normal water pressures. The hot water system has a relief valve rated at 1 MPa. It seems unlikely that overpressure is the cause of the problems.

I discussed this matter with Mr. Young, who conceded that the problem was obviously not mains water. I described the water system as well as I could, and he could find nothing obviously wrong. He suggested that a Davey representative should come and examine the system. On this occasion I unfortunately forgot to mention the loose bolts which the plumber had found.

On the same occasion, Mr. Young told me that the XJ70 was unsuited to the task we were asking of it, since it would only supply a pressure of 210 kPa. He gave me a brochure with the corresponding specifications to back up this statement. In other words, based on the documentation available to your dealers and to me, we were sold a pump unsuited for the purpose (of supplying water at a pressure of 250 kPa).

On 10 January 2002 I visited Rick Babbidge of Mount Barker Irrigation and discussed the matter with him. He had never seen the brochure I had obtained from Mr. Young. He also presented me with Mr. Young’s repair bill for the pump, a total of \$337.15, including \$100 for pickup on Boxing Day, significantly more than 50% of the new price. Rick did

not charge anything for his own involvement. He promised to get somebody from Davey to come and investigate the site to determine the cause of failure. I pointed out that I would be overseas in early February, and he agreed that by that time the matter should be clarified.

In early February, at exactly the time I asked not to be contacted, my wife received a phone call from a Davey representative, who did not leave his name or number, but promised to call again as soon as I had returned. I have never received a call.

On my return, I visited Rick Babbidge again and reminded him of the problems. In view of the fact that the still unrepaired pump was not sufficient to the task, and that the repair bills were so exorbitant, we agreed not to repair the pump until I had heard from Davey, and he called again to arrange for somebody to call me. We also agreed to replace the pump with one that did deliver the pressure, an HS 60-08. Rick suggested that it would be better to replace it with a Davey pump in the hope that you might be prepared to give a refund on the other, unsuitable pump. I collected this pump on 2 March 2002, and it was installed on 4 March.

On 1 June 2002, less than three months after the pump was installed, it failed to start. I found it necessary to power cycle the pump before it would pump again. This problem has repeated itself several times since then, and is getting progressively worse. On 18 June I called Mount Barker Irrigation and discovered that Rick Babbidge no longer works there. I spoke to the new manager, Brad, surname unknown, who checked with Rick and with Davey, and gave me the phone number of Bill Sianis at Davey, who was unfortunately not reachable, a situation I recall occurring multiple times to Rick Babbidge. I left multiple messages, but have—as usual—received no reply.

I find this situation intolerable. In summary, in the course of less than three years, I have had:

- Four pump failures.
- Many hours of inconvenience.
- The loss of 75,000 litres of water.
- Excessive repair costs.

The outlook for the future is no better: if a pump can't survive for three months without giving trouble, what use is it? We are very dependent on pumps for our water supply; without them, we have no fresh water.

I therefore ask you to perform the following by 5 July 2002:

- Explain the cause of the failures. I consider it highly likely that there is something about our installation here which is triggering the problems, but I can't believe that it's causing them. In your own interests as manufacturers, you should want to know this information. I remind you that the previous pump had worked for many years (probably since the house was built, nearly 20 years earlier) with no problems.
- Explain the excessive delays in getting pumps repaired.

- Explain the excessive costs of the pump repairs.
- Comment on Mr. Young's claims that the non-return valve is ineffective, and that mains pressure or back pressure from water heating systems can damage the pump in this manner.
- Repair the currently malfunctioning pump, and provide me with reason to believe that it won't happen again.
- Refund me the cost of one of the XJ70 pumps, which were supplied due to inadequate technical information to your dealers.
- Refund me the \$100 surcharge for picking up the pump on Boxing Day. The only reason for this was because the pump had not been repaired in a timely fashion.

If you comply with these requests, I will undertake not to seek any further compensation for the problems I have had.

Sincerely
Greg Lehey