

## Corkman demolition fine reduced, developers still guilty

The developers responsible for the illegal demolition of the Corkman Irish Pub in October 2016 have had their \$1.325 million fine for illegal building works reduced to \$720,000 by the County Court of Victoria.

The chief executive of the Victorian Building Authority, Sue Eddy, said the VBA was extremely disappointed by today's outcome, and that the Court's decision to reduce the developers' financial penalties did not lessen their guilt.

"Today's decision does not change the fact that Mr Stefce Kutlesovski and Mr Raman Shaqiri illegally demolished the Corkman Irish Pub in October 2016," said Ms Eddy.

"They did not have a building permit, had not applied for a building permit, and took it upon themselves to carry out dangerous demolition work without giving any regard to the state and local laws that exist to keep Victorians safe.

"With the building industry currently under intense scrutiny, it is vitally important to send a clear signal to all builders and developers that the VBA – and the community – will not tolerate illegal building work of any kind. The VBA is concerned that today's outcome promotes non-compliance as an optional cost of doing business for those who flout the rules."

During the appeal, barrister Nicholas Papas, QC, acting for the developers, requested the Court reduce the developers' sentence, taking into consideration their acceptance of wrongdoing.

Today, Judge Trevor Wraight said the illegal demolition was a "serious example of breaches" of Victoria's building and planning laws.

"There can be no other explanation – and none was provided – for the hasty conduct of demolishing the Hotel illegally but for the potential to rebuild on the site and therefore make a profit," Judge Wraight said.

Yet, the Court chose to impose a lesser fine.

### Background

Stefce Kutlesovski, Raman Shaqiri and their company, 160 Leicester Pty Ltd, were convicted and fined \$1.325 million by the Magistrates' Court of Victoria in February, after pleading guilty to multiple charges relating to their illegal demolition works.

The Corkman, once located at 154–160 Leicester Street, Carlton, was illegally demolished by the pair over two days in October 2016.

Mr Shaqiri was registered with the Victorian Building Authority as a demolisher (low rise) and a domestic builder (unlimited) at the time of the demolition works. He has not been eligible to work in the industry since December 2018.

Neither Shaq Industries Pty Ltd nor Mr Kutlesovski were ever registered with the VBA.

ENDS

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