



## Media Release

Monday, 19 February 2024

### **VBA issues immediate suspension to Montego Homes director**

Following the appointment of administrators to Montego Homes Pty Ltd, the Victorian Building Authority (VBA) has suspended the registration of the company's nominee director, Mr Todd Searle (DB-U 60627) pending a show cause process relating to the causes of the administration and the company's operating practices.

The VBA issues an immediate suspension to protect consumers while a disciplinary process is completed.

The VBA is concerned that almost \$900,000 may have been received by Montego Homes Pty Ltd by way of deposit or otherwise, in relation to 64 sites where there had been no domestic building insurance obtained, as required.

These allegations call into question the company's operating practices regarding deposits and insurance and influenced the VBA's decision to immediately suspend Mr Searle.

The VBA is currently investigating these deposit taking practices within the powers we have under the *Building Act 1993* (the Act).

Nominee directors are expected to act professionally and also have a statutory duty to ensure their companies comply with the *Act* and regulations.

These are the reasons for proposing disciplinary action against Mr Searle personally.

Mr Searle has been invited to show cause why the proposed disciplinary action should not be taken by making either a written or oral representation in response to the notice received.

Mr Searle may apply to the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal for review of the immediate suspension.

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