

Probe into building licences

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A HIGH-ranking figure in Victoria's beleaguered building industry watchdog is being investigated over allegations he helped facilitate the "hiring" of licences to unregistered builders.

A Victorian Building Commission spokeswoman yesterday confirmed an external investigation had begun after an anonymous complaint. The *Sunday Herald Sun* understands the senior official has been sent on extended leave.

Evidence was given to a 2010 parliamentary inquiry that the practice of licence hiring was common in Victoria, with unregistered builders paying as much as \$60,000 to use another builder's name on a contract.

A damning Auditor-General's report in December said the Building Commission had allowed "significant scope for collusion and conflicts of interest" in the building industry.

Building Commissioner Tony Arnel subsequently announced his resignation and from this week will be replaced by former plumbing commissioner Michael Kefford pending a permanent appointment.