

PETITION

Number: 654

Sponsored by: Ann-Marie Hermans

Directed to: Minister for Police

Tabled on: Thursday, 5 February 2026

Grievance:

The petition of certain citizens of the State of Victoria draws to the attention of the Legislative Council a major scam being perpetrated every day across our state by overseas criminals posing as locksmiths, costing unsuspecting Victorians millions of dollars each year.

The scam targets people, often lone females and elderly people, who have locked themselves out of their homes, quoting cheap call-out fees then adding fake charges ranging from many hundreds of dollars to more than \$2,000. Furthermore, the criminals often destroy the lock and door, forcing customers to pay even more to have this repaired by a legitimate locksmith. Many victims have also reported threats and standover tactics to pressure them to pay, and they do so out of fear.

These criminal organisations operate in plain sight, setting up legitimate looking websites offering emergency 24/7 locksmith services at low prices. The websites feature fake addresses and often have fake reviews. They spend huge amounts of money on Google Ads to ensure maximum exposure. Victorian authorities are aware of this scam however current legislation makes it impossible for these criminals to be brought to justice. The petitioners seek to provide more power to authorities and end these scams.

The petitioners therefore request that the Legislative Council call on the Government to insert a definition for 'locksmith' into the Private Security Act 2004 which defines a locksmith as a current financial member of a recognised locksmith industry association, where the association can demonstrate minimum entry and ongoing membership requirements, and has the capacity to audit and enforce compliance with the membership requirements.

Reply:

The safety of Victorians is the highest priority for the Allan Labor Government. Instances of fraud have profound effects on the community and on individual victims and these matters are taken seriously by the Government and Victoria Police.


Victoria Police is monitoring locksmith-related crimes, and I can confirm that several incidents have been assessed and investigated. Civil complaints concerning overcharging and low-quality work have also been made to the Master Locksmiths Association and the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

These issues are not only occurring in Victoria. Incidents have been identified by police across the country. Law enforcement agencies, including Victoria Police, are urging people to remain vigilant to warning signs of potential scams.

Warning signs to consider may include an unexpected offer, a request for personal information, or the imperative to act quickly. Additionally, it is recommended to verify the offeror's identity by asking for credentials and conducting further research on the person or service.

Those affected by a scam or fraud should report the incident to Scamwatch, as well as any other relevant authorities. Victorians can also notify the Master Locksmiths Association via its website.

Victoria Police should also be contacted and a report made where a criminal offence occurs as part of a scam or fraud. This will enable them to conduct further enquiries. Where there are immediate safety concerns, Victoria Police should be contacted by calling Triple Zero (000).



The Hon. Anthony Carbines MP
Minister for Police
Minister for Community Safety
Minister for Victims
Minister for Racing
Leader of the House