

The Hon Nick Staikos MP
Minister for Consumer Affairs

Consumer Affairs

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

10 JUNE 2025



Government
Services

Consumer Affairs Priorities

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The Consumer Affairs portfolio is committed to ensuring **a fair, safe and competitive marketplace in Victoria**



Reforms to deliver provide better protections for Victorian consumers and renters

Government is delivering reforms through the Housing Statement and other avenues by creating:

- fairer renting
- fairer and affordable housing
- strengthening building regulation



Services and supports for Victorians, especially with the cost of living

Supporting Victorians is a key priority for government and it is delivering:

- financial hardship support
- help with renting
- community advice and assistance



Effective regulatory and compliance actions to address risks of harm to the community

Government is reducing harm to the community by:

- delivering strong compliance monitoring and enforcement, including through dedicated Taskforces on renting, underquoting and machetes
- rolling out communication campaigns
- conducting product safety inspections

Key achievements for 2024-25

Reforms that minimise harms and deliver better consumer and renting protections

Fairer renting

→ Delivered the **Housing Statement** renting reforms as well as **new renter protections**, including:

- banning all 'no fault' evictions; and
- banning all types of rental bidding.

Fair and affordable housing

→ *Retirement Villages Amendment Bill 2024* introduces a range of increased protections for residents of **retirement villages**, including:

- standard form contracts
- more timely exit entitlement payments
- better pre-contractual disclosure; and
- a complaints and conciliation scheme supported by an industry Code of Practice and stronger powers for the regulator.

→ New rights and obligations of parties to a **residential park** agreement to ensure these are clear at the outset.

→ Setting new standards for **rooming houses** to enhance residents' safety and comfort.

Strengthening building regulation

→ Progressing reforms to the *Domestic Building Contracts Act 1995* to provide stronger protections to Victorians **building or renovating their homes**

→ Supporting the establishment of the new Building and Plumbing Commission to ensure a strong new regulator with the powers to protect Victorian homeowners.

Key achievements for 2024-25

Support for Victorians doing it tough with the cost of living

Financial hardship support

- The new **Financial Counselling Funding Round** will deliver extra funding of \$15 million over 3 years
- We're investing \$19.26 million in 2024-25 into Financial Counselling to support Victorians experiencing financial hardship through financial counselling services available state-wide
- \$6.8 million over four years for specialist financial counselling help for victim survivors of family violence provided in the 2024-25 budget

Help with renting

- 2939 clients have been assisted through the **Rental Stress Support Package** at 31 March, with \$4.1 million allocated to community organisations in 2024-25
- A total \$10.15 million for **Renter and Retirement Housing** assistance and advocacy services supporting 9849 people in 2024-25 (at 31 March)

Community advice and assistance

- 170,240 phone services and responding to 65,690 online or written contacts (at March 31) through the DGS Contact Centre
- \$1.0 million for the **Consumer Assistance and Advocacy Program** to support financially disadvantaged Victorian consumers, supporting 199 clients in 2024-25 (at 31 March)

Key achievements for 2024-25

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Compliance and enforcement focused on the most significant risks of harm to the community

Taskforces

- The **Renting Taskforce** has issued more than 90 official warnings and over 70 infringements totalling more than \$620,000 in fines.
- The new **Machetes Taskforce** is enforcing the interim ban on the sale of machetes in Victoria that started midday 28 May 2025, to dry up the supply of machetes ahead of the legislated permanent ban on their possession, use and sale. As at 6 June the Taskforce has conducted 330 retailer inspections – both in store and online.
- We made the **Underquoting Taskforce** permanent in August. It has monitored 500 sales campaigns, attended 67 auctions, issued 64 official warnings and 29 infringements totalling more than \$338,000 in fines in 2024-25 (as of Q3)

Other priorities include:

- Our new Fundarentals communications campaign ensures both renters and rental providers know their fundamental renting rights and obligations
- 540 product safety inspections to remove unsafe products, especially for kids
- 218 rooming house inspections, ensuring minimum standards are met
- 15 new court and tribunal outcomes secured (at Q3) and 9 new court proceedings initiated to address serious breaches of the law

Regulatory activities by year end

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Services to consumers, businesses and organisations



Regulation, compliance & enforcement

505,000+ rental bond transactions



370,000+ information and advice services



7 million+ website visits, plus proactive education campaigns



4,000 victim survivors of family violence assisted with financial counselling



5,000 rent or repairs investigation cases for renters



109,000+ licensing and registration transactions



1,400+ compliance inspections conducted



940+ court and administrative actions



including 870+ infringements or official warnings

Forward look to the next 12 months

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The Victorian Government is progressing a range of programs and regulatory reforms to support safe, fair and affordable housing options for Victorians and ensure a fair and competitive marketplace for consumers and businesses



Supporting Victorians with the cost-of-living crisis

- Launching the **Fair Fuel Plan** to empower motorists to make informed decisions about when and where they fill up, through a new price monitoring tool and a 24-hour price cap that provides consumers with greater certainty.
- Addressing unfair practices in **motor car trading**
- Establishing the **Portable Rental Bond Scheme**
- Conducting **rent increase** investigations and introducing more powers to stop excessive increases



Assistance for Victorians experiencing vulnerability in the marketplace

- \$21.7 million provided to community agencies to continue to deliver **financial counselling** services; including support for victim survivors of family violence
- \$11.4 million to continue our supports to vulnerable Victorians through **renter assistance and advocacy** services
- Additional \$4 million investment over four years to **Mortgage Stress Victoria** in the 2025-26 Budget to provide further support to Victorians



Continuing to protect the rights of all Victorians

- Launching **Rental Dispute Resolution Victoria** to provide free, fast and fair dispute resolution for rental issues
- \$6.2 million for the continued operation of the **professional engineers** registration scheme and a statutory review of the *Professional Engineers Registration Act 2019*
- Commencing a review to assess the effectiveness of **Owners Corporations Act 2006** reforms
- New laws to make buying properties fairer and lift **property professionals'** education and standards
- Introducing more **fair renting** reforms