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# Consumer Affairs

Public Accounts and Estimates Committee

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Government  
Services



# Purpose and priorities

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



## Citizen-centred services and supports

- Information and advice
- Dispute resolution services
- Rent and repairs investigations



## Effective regulatory activities and services

- Managing rental bonds
- Licensing and registration transactions for businesses, professionals and community organisations
- Compliance monitoring and enforcement






## Consumer focused policy reform

- Minimising harms through priority legislation and regulation reform
- In 2023-24, this includes:
  - Progressing key initiatives within the Victorian Government's Housing Statement
  - New rooming house minimum standards came into force
  - Remade regulations for incorporated associations and co-operatives

# Key achievements in 2023-24

## Citizen-centred services and support

In 2023-24, **\$23.15 million** has been invested into community support, assistance, advice and advocacy services

-  **Funding will support 32,000+ people**, spanning across consumer, renting, financial counselling and domestic building – including 4,300+ victim survivors through the specialist family violence financial counselling program.
-  Dedicated information and advice to support renters and others **impacted by disasters**, such as fires, floods and storms.
-  The **Liquidated Builders Customer Support Payment Scheme** is helping Victorians whose builder became insolvent without taking out insurance on their behalf.

**Helping Victorians understand and exercise their consumer and renter rights** is a portfolio priority.



# Key achievements in 2023-24

## Effective regulatory activities and services

A new **Renting Taskforce** was announced in March to crack down on rental law offences, such as renting out a property that doesn't meet the minimum standards.

A **rental minimum standards communications campaign** was launched in April to remind rental providers, agents and renters of their rights and obligations

Other priorities in 2023-24 have included:

-  **260+ rooming house inspections**, ensuring minimum standards are met
-  **6,900+ rent reviews**, to help ensure increases are not excessive under the law
-  **Six public warning notices**, responding to online shopping risks quickly and authoritatively
-  **120+ infringements for illegal underquoting**, with a taskforce cracking down on illegal pricing practices
-  **Seven new court and tribunal actions** commenced, to address serious breaches and non-compliance
-  **500+** product safety inspections, ensuring **products are safe**, especially for kids



# Key priorities for 2024-25



## Helping protect renters' rights

Building on key initiatives, such as our Renting Taskforce and minimum standards communications campaign, we will continue to deliver priority reforms from Victoria's Housing Statement to:

- **Restrict rent increases** between successive fixed-term leases
- **Ban all forms of rental bidding**
- Make **rental applications easier** and improve **privacy protections**
- **Extend notice of rent increase** and **notice to vacate periods** from 60 to 90 days
- **Tougher penalties** for real estate agents and sellers who break the law
- **Mandatory continuing professional development** for real estate professionals
- Introduce a **portable bond scheme**
- Establish **Rental Dispute Resolution Victoria** for renters and rental providers to resolve disputes quickly



## Supporting Victorians through market challenges

We will continue our focus on supporting the community with cost of living, housing and renting challenges, with initiatives such as:

- **\$6.8 million** to extend the Victorian Government's **specialist financial counselling** program for victim survivors of **family violence**
- **\$15 million** to boost **financial counselling** services supporting people experiencing **mortgage or rental stress**
- **\$8 million** for the Housing Statement's **Rental Stress Support Package**, helping community organisations to meet demand for rental assistance
- **Other reforms in priority areas**, including finalising proposed amendments to the *Retirement Villages Act 1986*.