Annual Report 2023 24

CONSUMER AFFAIRS VICTORIA

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Letter to the Minister 4
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The Hon Gabrielle Williams MP
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I Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012, Credit (Administration) Act 1984 Veterans Act 2005, I
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30 J 2024.

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Nicole Rich
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Director’s foreword

In 2023–24 Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) supported Victorians facing cost of living, housing and rental pressures, while maintaining its activities directed at ensuring a fair, safe and competitive marketplace.

Our new 2023–26 strategic plan, launched in October, guided us in directing our resources to best help Victorians doing it tough, while ensuring that our regulatory oversight stayed robust and impactful. We reinforced many of our existing support services for consumers, renters and businesses, while delivering initiatives such as the underquoting and renting taskforces and stakeholder engagement activities.

We supported Victorians to exercise their consumer rights, providing advice and information through multiple channels. We ran several education and communications campaigns in 2023–24, including on underquoting, renting and domestic building, to increase people’s understanding and con dence in their rights and responsibilities and how to contact us for further help. In 2023–24 CAV’s contact centre answered 220,741 calls and responded to 80,040 online or written enquiries, and our CAV website received over 7 million visits.

CAV’s community programs played an important role in helping Victorians who are dealing with nancial hardship. CAV provided $16.7 million in funding to the Financial Counselling Program in 2023–24, enabling community service partners to support more than 19,000 clients get their nances back on track with free and independent nancial counselling services delivered across the state.

People experiencing family violence were supported through specialised nancial counselling services, provided to 4,164 Victorians. Flood nancial counselling services for Victorians impacted by the October 2022 oods were also extended.

We responded to Victoria’s rental market pressures with a slew of new initiatives and reinforced services. In March 2024 the Government announced a new renting taskforce within CAV, to detect and deter non-compliance with rental laws designed to protect renters’ rights. The renting taskforce uses a risk-based, intelligence-led compliance program to crack down on rental law offences but also engages with the community to promote compliance through public education and communications about rental rights and regulatory actions.

We provided information and advice on renting via our website and through phone and online enquiries. In 2023–24, CAV answered 66,231 calls in relation to rental enquiries, while the renting section on the CAV website received over 4.9 million visits. Demand for rent investigations also continued to increase and we responded to 7,469 rent investigation requests this year, up 37 per cent on last year, itself a 122 per cent increase on the year before. While growth in this service slowed, the continued increase re ects the ongoing challenges many Victorian renters faced with rent increases.

CAV also provided renters with help through

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Values, vision, outcomes, functions, regulatory approach, stakeholder engagement framework

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Our values

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Our vision

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Outcome-focused

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2023–26 Strategic Plan

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Our vision is for a fair, safe and competitive marketplace in Victoria
Victorians exe consumer rig nts
Consumers, rente and comm find, understand and use our information; we focus support and advocacy on the people who need it most
oviders do the right thing
providers understand and comply with their obligations with easy-to-use information an
CAV is a trusted regulator
purpose, respons and accounta take decisive action
Outcome indi utors
Increased confidence of consumers and rente e xer ing their rights
Decreased response time to non-compliance
Increased stakeholder as a regulator
Increased staff engagement
ategic directions
Supporting Victorians, especially those experiencing vulnerability, through inclusive and accessible services
ing digital technologies to improve our service the most our data and resources for the community
Better engagement to unde d serve our communities
Key focus ar
We will...
Be clear about what services we provide and prioritise Victorians experiencing vulnerability
compliance and enforcement responses to practices presenting the most serious ri rm
easier and faster systems and s for consumers, businesses and organisations
Deliver genuinely helpful and responsive services to meet differing needs in the community, including that our services are culturally safe for Aboriginal people and con unity
Improve how we listen and engage to better understand where con s are under threat, and how we can do better
Set and report on measurable outcomes ur work to ensure we are accountable for the impact of our activities
Build our capacity to provide tim consumer and renting support to communities impacted by emergencies
Commu n work and what we are seeing in the mark and community
respectful, diverse and inclusive and that supports our peo their jobs well

Regulatory priorities 2023–24

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Table: BP3 results

	Unit of Measure	2021–22 actual	2022–23 actual	2023–24 target	2023–24 actual
Quantity					
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Victorians exercise their consumer rights

Supporting Victorian renters

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Rental Stress Support Package

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Table: Information, advice and assistance provided to consumers

	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24
Information and advice			
C	245,141	206,025	220,741
L ,	63,325	75,797	80,040
Advice provided to resolve disputes			
D fr	6,709	4	C B

Table: Information, advice and service delivery to renters, rental providers and agents

	2021–22	2022–23	2023–24
Information and advice			
W	3,544,425	4,261,483	4,983,695
C	70,633	63,200	66,231
C RTBA	56,128	44,57SQ	1 0 0 1 538.83273

Businesses and rental providers do the right thing

Regulatory priorities

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Product safety regulation

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Underquoting Taskforce

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Table: Underquoting taskforce activity

Activity	2023–24
U	1,848
S	1,547
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F ($)	1,001,720
Off	128

Trust account auditing

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Professional Engineers Registration Scheme

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Table: Enforcement actions (incl public warning notices)

Public warnings issued in 2023–24

Legislation	Parties
Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012	B & P L / &
Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012	H J '
Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012	S P L / M A
Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012	A G P L / I
Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012	S M G P L / S M
Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012	GL4EVER / B D
Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012	F I / F S
Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012	U K D P L / U K & B
Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012	S I P L / CBD M

Court and tribunal matters finalised in 2023–24

Criminal prosecutions finalised

Legislation	Parties
Estate Agents Act 1980	DCAV J -N A P G
Estate Agents Act 1980	DCAV K R E
Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012	DCAV B P (N . 1)
Fundraising Act 1998	DCAV M S & R D A

Civil proceedings finalised (including disciplinary inquiry and appeals)

Legislation	Parties
Estate Agents Act 1980	DCAV G K O S P L
Estate Agents Act 1980	DCAV A I P L & P N
Estate Agents Act 1980	DCAV D M & D M R E P L

Ongoing court matters as at 30 June 2024

Criminal prosecution

Legislation	Parties
Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012	DCAV A V & S S A (V) P L (SSA (V) P L)
Australian Consumer Law and Fair Trading Act 2012	DCAV M S & RMS C
Estate Agents Act 1980	DCAV M S P L / B P M
Domestic Building Contracts Act & Australian Consumer Law	DCAV M R
Australian Consumer Law	DCAV C M
Estate Agents Act 1980	DCAV S & P G P L
Estate Agents Act 1980	DPP J S

Civil proceedings (including disciplinary inquiry)

Legislation	Parties
Estate Agents Act 1980	DCAV C L P L & H A
Estate Agents Act 1980	DCAV C K
Estate Agents Act 1980	DCAV J F & J F P P L
Estate Agents Act 1980	DCAV X S N
Estate Agents Act 1980	DCAV L H T
Retirement Villages Act 1986	DCAV P N & O
Estate Agents Act 1980	DCAV B P D P L
Estate Agents Act 1980	DCAV J A & J A E P L
Estate Agents Act 1980	DCAV E H R
Estate Agents Act 1980	DCAV T A

Table: Compliance, licensing and registration activity undertaken

CAV is a trusted regulator

Establishment within the new department

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Making compliance easier for community organisations

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Victorian Property Fund grants

T Estate Agents Act 1980

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Table: Grants in progress 2023–24

Recipient	Purpose	Total grant (ex GST)	2023–24 expenditure (ex GST)
T V	E ,	$865,000	$285,500
V C S S	E ,	$265,337	$88,434
A L P A A	E A P D P 2023 25	$269,404	$0
S C A (V)	B	$69,600	$29,600
T V	R D F D	$447,487	$178,994
C E H	S 6 8 W A , B	$4,292,573	$1,237,786
C H (V) L	S 23 C C , L	$2,800,000	$0
C H (V) L	S 64 68 A S , L	$2,967,102	$100,000
H V	B L H G P	$1,500,000	$0
D S C V	R T A D R P	$3,053,300	$1,141,900
A L P A A	E A P D P 2017 20	$174,340	$28,913
M A S P	S 52 54 T S , M	$2,025,000	$100,000
Rental Stress Support Package	$JEMC /T B /MC(S B	710)TJ 2	(C)10 ( )5 ( )

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Digital technology: Harnessing digital technologies to improve CAV services and make the most of CAV data and resources for the community

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Implementation

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Engaging with the community: Engaging with partners to better serve Victorian communities

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Raising awareness: Improving Victorians' trust in CAV as a regulator

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Table: Trust funds administered by CAV

Acts and regulations administered by CAV: passed, commenced, made and revoked in 2023–24

Consumer Affairs Victoria (part of the Department of Government Services) acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as the Traditional Custodians of the land. The department also acknowledges and pays respect to their Elders, past and present.

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November 2024

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