

# Media Release

**The Hon Melissa Horne MP**

Minister for Consumer Affairs, Gaming and Liquor Regulation

Minister for Ports and Freight

Minister for Fishing and Boating



Wednesday, 23 December 2020

## **AVOID BEING RIPPED OFF THIS CHRISTMAS – KNOW YOUR RIGHTS**

With thousands of Victorian shoppers set to hit retail stores late into the night for last minute Christmas gifts, the Andrews Labor Government is warning people to know their rights and not get ripped off this festive season.

Minister for Consumer Affairs Melissa Horne said Christmas time was an important reminder that guarantees provided under the Australian Consumer Law require a product to be of acceptable quality, matching the description or sample, and fit for purpose.

If someone identifies a problem with a product they have purchased or been gifted, they may be entitled to a refund, repair, or replacement under the law, regardless of any individual store policies.

The number of complaints about refund and return rights received by Consumer Affairs Victoria almost doubled last year – with more than 7,000 people making contact about their rights in 2019-20 compared to around 4,000 contacts in 2018-19.

With shops having limits on patron numbers, and more people choosing the convenience of shopping from home, we're also likely to see more Victorians doing their Christmas shopping online than ever before.

When buying from an Australian online store, you have the same consumer rights as you would in a physical shop, such as a refund or replacement if an item is faulty or never shows up.

When purchasing something on eBay, Gumtree, or Facebook Marketplace, you may be buying from a private seller and not someone who is operating a business, meaning your rights under consumer law do not necessarily apply.

Consumers should also remember that although individual store policies may differ, they do not have the automatic right to return a product if they simply change their mind, ordered the wrong product, or find a better product elsewhere, so choose your gifts wisely.

After the year that's been, it's more important than ever that Christmas shoppers keep the following tips in mind:

- make sure you're familiar with store policies so you know your rights if something does go wrong
- keep the receipt or proof of purchase to make the process of returning an item smoother
- read up on your refund, repair and return rights by visiting [consumer.vic.gov.au/consumerguarantees](https://consumer.vic.gov.au/consumerguarantees)
- remember to stay safe, maintain 1.5 metres distance, wash your hands regularly and wear a mask where required.

Visit [consumer.vic.gov.au/products-and-services](https://consumer.vic.gov.au/products-and-services) for more information on your rights when shopping this Christmas and Boxing Day.

### **Quotes attributable to Member for Consumer Affairs Melissa Horne**

*"Late night Christmas shopping has become one of the great traditions for Victorian retailers and consumers – but a last-minute rush doesn't mean you don't still have your consumer rights."*

*"Even if you've left your Christmas shopping until the last minute, you should still get what you paid for – be aware of your rights, always keep the receipts, and get in touch with the retailer if something is wrong with your purchase."*

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