

# Media Release

**The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC**

Minister for Employment

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy

Minister for Small Business

Minister for Resources



Tuesday, 1 February 2022

## RENT RELIEF FOR VICTORIA'S SMALL AND FAMILY BUSINESSES

The Victorian Government has introduced new regulations under the *Commercial Tenancy Relief Scheme* to support small and family businesses experiencing financial hardship due to the latest wave of the pandemic.

Eligible commercial tenants with an annual turnover of \$10 million or less who have suffered a decline in turnover of at least 30 per cent due to COVID-19 will be able to access the scheme. The new regulations operate from 16 January 2022 and run until 15 March 2022.

Commercial tenants need to demonstrate their decline in turnover by comparing January 2022 to January 2020. Landlords will be required to provide proportional rent relief to their commercial tenants in line with the reduction in turnover. For example, a business with a turnover of 40 per cent of pre-pandemic levels could only be charged 40 per cent of its rent.

Of the balance, at least half the rent must be waived, with the remainder to be deferred. The freeze on rent increases will continue.

The majority of landlords and tenants will negotiate in good faith to reach agreement. The Victorian Small Business Commission (VSBC) will continue to provide information and free mediation to tenants and landlords if help is needed for all parties to reach an agreement.

Many commercial landlords have already backed Victorian businesses by providing rent relief to commercial tenants.

Eligible commercial landlords will continue to receive support from the Victorian Government, with more details on a new round of the Commercial Landlord Hardship Fund to be announced shortly.

The Commercial Tenancy Relief Scheme was first launched in 2020 and reintroduced in July 2021. It has provided financial relief and rent protections for thousands of Victorian businesses.

Full details of the scheme including eligibility are available on the VSBC's website. Tenants and landlords can contact the VSBC for further information on 13 87 22 or visit [vsbc.vic.gov.au](http://vsbc.vic.gov.au).

### Quotes attributable to Minister for Small Business Jaala Pulford

*"Small and family businesses are going through a challenging period due to the Omicron wave and that's why we are extending the Commercial Tenancy Relief Scheme."*

*"The new regulations will help to ease the financial burden for many small and family businesses that are facing hardship caused by the pandemic."*

*"I would like to acknowledge and thank those commercial landlords who continue to do the right thing by their tenants during such challenging times."*

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