

Media Release

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TASKFORCE TO CRACK DOWN ON DODGY RENTALS

The Allan Labor Government is establishing a new renting taskforce to crack down on rental providers and estate agents who do the wrong thing.

More than 130 rental reforms the Labor Government introduced in 2021 increased protections for renters while making it easier for owners to manage rental properties, but some rental providers are still trying to get away with poor conduct.

Minister for Consumer Affairs Gabrielle Williams today announced a dedicated taskforce to send a clear message to rental providers that rental offences will not be tolerated – cracking down on offences like false advertising, renting out properties that don't meet minimum standards, and not lodging bonds.

Backed by a \$4 million investment, the renting taskforce will operate in a similar way to the successful underquoting taskforce, using intelligence and market analysis to boost monitoring of rental campaigns, conduct targeted inspections and act on identified breaches. It will scale up operations throughout 2024.

The taskforce will be embedded within Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) and will employ extra intelligence analysts, inspectors, investigators and lawyers. CAV will also build on its existing services and make it easier for the public to report potential unlawful conduct to its intelligence team and upload evidence like photos through its website.

The rental minimum standards include things that people would reasonably expect in a home – like a functional kitchen, lockable external doors, and being structurally sound and waterproof.

Letting a new renter move into a rental property that doesn't meet these standards is a criminal offence, with maximum penalties of over \$11,000 for individuals and over \$57,000 for companies.

The renting taskforce builds on the work being done through the Labor Government's Housing Statement, including banning all types of rental bidding, restricting rent increases between successive fixed-term rental agreements, and extending the notice of rent increase and notice to vacate periods to 90 days.

The Government is also establishing Rental Dispute Resolution Victoria and delivering a Rental Stress Support Package to support tenants doing it tough.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Consumer Affairs Gabrielle Williams

"Most rental providers and estate agents do the right thing – today's announcement is about sending a clear message to those trying to get away with rental offences."

"It's been almost three years since our landmark package of over 130 rental reforms took effect, and today we are making the rental market fairer for everyone by establishing the renting taskforce."