GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

CONSUMER PROTECTION WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Got a question? ASK US

Protection for Aboriginal consumers

If you have a question about your mobile phone contract, about your landlord, or if you feel you have been pressured into buying something you really didn't want, just ask us.

Protection for Aboriginal consumers

If you go shopping, rent a home, buy cars or pay tradespeople to do jobs then Consumer Protection has information to help you.

Many Aboriginal consumers are unaware of their rights and responsibilities when buying goods and services.

We're all protected by the Australian Consumer Law, whether you live in Western Australia or any other state or territory.

For people in remote areas, there may be a lack of competition for businesses and fewer consumer protection workers in the area. Aboriginal consumers can be particularly vulnerable and dishonest traders might prey on that.

Consumer Protection is committed to providing education and assistance to Aboriginal consumers. All you have to do is ask us.

We promise to respond promptly to any queries or complaints you may have and to act on information provided to us.

So pick up the phone for a yarn to one of our Aboriginal Community Education Officers, send us an email, or write us a note and put it in the post.

Unscrupulous traders including door-to-door sellers are a high priority with the National Indigenous Consumer Strategy (NICS) reference group.

They are currently conducting research into increased door-to-door sales to Aboriginal consumers, particularly in regional, remote and very remote areas and areas that have a high population of Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal Community Education team

Consumer Protection has dedicated Aboriginal Community Education Officers.

The team can help you to understand your rights and responsibilities when renting a place, buying cars or paying for them to be repaired, signing up for contracts, shopping for goods and services or operating as a business.

You may have heard of them, or know them already. They are often at Aboriginal community events handing out publications about your consumer rights and the issues affecting your community.

To focus on the issues and locations where education is most needed we have an Aboriginal Consumers Education Plan and work with the National Aboriginal Consumer Strategy.

You can read more at www.nics.org.au or www.consumerprotection.wa.gov.au

Consumer protection in your community

According to our Aboriginal Consumers Count Report (2004–05), the top issues causing problems for Aboriginal consumers are around tenancy and renting a home.

We regulate landlords and can help you to know where you stand when it comes to inspections, property damage, rent payments and ending a tenancy agreement.

Do you have a family member that has been pressured into buying something they don't want or have you had trouble getting an item repaired under warranty? We can help, give us a call.

The Department of Commerce can also provide information on safety at work and your pay and work conditions. Contact **Labour Relations, Wageline** on **1300 655 266** or **WorkSafe** on **1300 307 877** for more information.

Australian Consumer Law

Many Aboriginal consumers and businesses may not be aware of their rights and obligations when buying and selling goods.

Consumer Protection promotes and enforces the Australian Consumer Law (ACL). Under this law:

- unfair contract terms in standard form contracts (like take it or leave it deals offered by mobile phone companies) are regulated.
- all sellers must provide 'consumer guarantees' regardless of any other warranty on offer. This means that all goods and services sold must:
  - **be of acceptable quality (safe and durable);**
  - **be fit for the purpose and match the description, sample or demonstration model shown; and**
  - have a 10 day cooling off period for any unsolicited (uninvited) agreements, such as door-to-door or telemarketing sales.
- lay-by sales must be in writing and there are controls on any fees and charges.
- receipts must be provided for purchases over $75, but you can request one for purchases which are less than that amount.

Consumer Protection is committed to providing education and assistance to Aboriginal consumers. All you have to do is ask us.

Ask Us at Consumer Protection

Consumer Protection works with Aboriginal newspapers and radio stations across Western Australia to get messages out to people through the media.

There is collaboration between Consumer Protection and other consumer agencies to ensure Aboriginal consumers across the country are well informed and current issues are being addressed.

A specialist unit monitors Western Australia to help Consumer Protection better understand emerging trends relevant to Aboriginal consumers.

But you are our eyes and ears. We need the community to keep in touch with us to raise issues, report traders and make complaints.

FuelWatch

FuelWatch monitors petrol prices and can tell you where the cheapest place to fill up your car is: www.fuelwatch.wa.gov.au

WA ScamNet

WA ScamNet names scams targeting Western Australians: www.commerce.wa.gov.au/wascamnet

Ask us if you want to find out more about a specific situation or make a complaint.

1300 30 40 54

Regional Offices

Goldfields/Esperance	(08) 9021 9494
Great Southern	(08) 9842 8366
Kimberley	(08) 9191 8400
Mid-West	(08) 9920 9800
North-West	(08) 9185 0900
South-West	(08) 9722 2888

13 36 77 for the hearing impaired

askus@dmirs.wa.gov.au

Locked Bag 100 East Perth WA 6892

AskUsCP

@indigcp

There is a template of letters and official complaint forms on our website www.consumerprotection.wa.gov.au

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