

# Buying big ticket items

**When buying expensive goods, including fridges, washing machines and televisions, there are many options available to help you make these purchases.**

## Saving

If you know you're going to have to come up with a large amount of money in a few months to buy a new fridge, washing machine or television, it's always best that you save up to pay for it up front.

By saving for large purchases, you can avoid extra charges associated with borrowing the money, including interest and administration fees.

Some shop owners will offer discounts if you buy products using cash.

## Repairs

Before you start thinking about replacing expensive goods, such as fridges or washing machines, you should think about repairing your existing goods, as it can be cheaper to repair.

Most appliance repairers stock spare parts for popular models. You need to find out how much the repairer will charge, including a call out fee and how much the repairer charges for each hour of work. Make sure that a written quote is provided.

A good repairer will tell you whether it is worth fixing or not before going ahead with any repairs.

## Lay-bys

A lay-by can be an easy way of buying something without having to pay for it all at once. You must pay for the goods in full before you can take them home.

When agreeing to set up a lay-by the shop owner must make sure that the agreement offered to you:

- is in writing
- shows all terms and conditions, including dates when payments are due and termination fees
- is in plain English and easy to understand.

## Cancelling a lay-by

You may cancel the agreement at any time before receiving the goods. You must receive a refund of all money paid, less any termination fee that is shown in the agreement.

The termination fee must not be more than the shop owner's reasonable costs. This could include storage and administration cost. If the shop owner cancels the lay-by the termination fee can't be charged.

## Rent-to-buy

A rent-to-buy lease can seem like a cheap and easy way to buy expensive goods such as fridges, washing machines, televisions or computers.

A rent-to-buy lease is when you will rent goods from a shop owner for a period of time (e.g. 12 months) and have the option to buy the goods at a pre-determined price when the lease is finished.

You will not own the goods until the lease period is finished and you have paid the final price.

These deals can contain hidden fees, charges and conditions. It is important that you read the contract carefully and not sign anything until you fully understand all the terms, interest charges, administration fees and penalties.

## No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS)

There are many community groups and charities which offer No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS) loans to people on low incomes to help buy essential household items like fridges, medical equipment and furniture.

Most NILS loans are between \$800 to \$1,200 with no interest charged over the life of the loan. Borrowers must be on a low income, have a health care card or rely on Centrelink benefits to access the scheme. Loans must be repaid within 12 to 18 months and once the money is repaid it's loaned to another person who needs help.

- [www.wanils.com.au](http://www.wanils.com.au)
- (08) 9263 2199

## If things go wrong for you

If you think a salesperson is not dealing fairly with you, you should contact Consumer Protection on the numbers below. We have Indigenous officers who can help you make a formal complaint.

## Contact

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

Call: **1300 30 40 54**

National Relay Service: **13 36 77** for the hearing impaired

Email: [askus@dmirs.wa.gov.au](mailto:askus@dmirs.wa.gov.au)

Write to: Locked Bag 100 EAST PERTH WA 6892

 **AskUsCP**

 **@indigcp**

There is a template of letters and official complaint forms on our website [www.commerce.wa.gov.au/consumer-protection](http://www.commerce.wa.gov.au/consumer-protection)