ATTACHMENT A

NORTHERN TERRITORY
CONSUMER
AFFAIRS

Annual Report 2025–26

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Northern Territory Consumer Affairs acknowledges the Larrakia and Arrernte peoples as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live and work in Garramilla (Darwin) and Mparntwe (Alice Springs). We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging, and recognise their enduring connection to Country, culture and community. We extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the Northern Territory.

NORTHERN TERRITORY CONSUMER AFFAIRS

The Hon Marie-Clare Boothby
Attorney-General
Parliament House
DARWIN NT 0800

Dear Minister

Re: ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26

The 2025-26 Annual Report for the Attorney-General's Department includes performance reporting on Consumer Affairs in conformity with requirements of the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993 (NT)* and the *Financial Management Act 1995 (NT)*.

The Commissioner of Consumer Affairs is a statutory officer and is required to report to the Minister annually pursuant to:

- Part 5A of the *Building Act 1993 (NT)*
- section 14 of the *Business Tenancies (Fair Dealings) Act 2003 (NT)*
- section 20 of the *Caravan Parks Act 2012 (NT)*
- section 12 of the *Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading Act 1990 (NT)*
- section 15 of the *Residential Tenancies Act 1999 (NT)*
- section 11 of the *Retirement Villages Act 1995 (NT)*

In accordance with the requirements outlined above, I have the pleasure of presenting the Commissioner's Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2026.

Yours sincerely

Traci Keys
Commissioner
Northern Territory Consumer Affairs

29 September 2026

Table of Contents

Message from the Commissioner 6
Year in Review 8
2025-26 Highlights 8
MyFuel NT 8
Seafood Country of Origin Labelling 10
Customer service performance 12
About Us 14
Promoting Consumer Protection Awareness 16
Client services 16
Enquiries 16
Consumer conciliations 18
Conciliation stories 19
Outreach 20
Community engagement 20
Business engagement 22
Outreach in action 23
Education 24
Social media 24
NTCA website and publications 26
Media 29
Residential Tenancies 30
Building and Retail Tenancy Disputes 31
Residential buildings 31
Retail tenancies 31
Networks and Collaboration 32
Compliance and Enforcement 34
ACL 34
Residential tenancies 35
Price scan audit program 35
Other Statutory Responsibilities 36
Retirement Villages Act 1995 (NT) **36**
Retirement Villages Handbook 37
Caravan Parks Act 2012 (NT) 37
Appendix 38
Northern Territory Consumer Affairs – legislation and statutory offices 38

Message from the Commissioner

Throughout 2025-26 Territory consumers have remained at the centre of our work as we focused on education, dispute resolution, compliance and monitoring action to meet consumer needs. Cost of living pressures were a significant theme during the year which is reflected in the record high number of consumer conciliation requests, increasing fuel prices, and evidence of growing financial pressures on tenants and landlords.

During 2025-26, we received an increased number of consumer conciliation requests. Common issues included major and minor failures involving motor vehicles and caravans. Through the conciliation process we helped parties reach practical outcomes, including repairs, replacement or refunds where appropriate.

To help consumers make informed choices and avoid common vehicle-related problems NT Consumer Affairs developed a pocket size fold out brochure titled Buying a used car?

The brochure highlights common vehicle faults and provides tips on how to identify possible issues, including signs that may be detected through sound. While it is not intended to replace a professional mechanical inspection, it serves as a practical guide to assist consumers when assessing a vehicle.

To improve accessibility an audible version of the brochure is available in 5 Territory languages, Murrinh Patha, Eastside Kriol, Tiwi, Western Arrernte and Yolŋu Matha.

Fuel price accuracy became a significant focus during the second half of 2025-26, due to rising fuel prices associated with the conflict in Iran. NT Consumer Affairs responded quickly to this emerging issue by increasing fuel price monitoring from quarterly to weekly checks, commencing on 31 March 2026.

Weekly monitoring was undertaken in the Darwin/Palmerston region, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. Fuel outlets in the rural Top End locations were monitored monthly, while remote outlets were checked as part of our broader outreach program.

Compliance activity during the year resulted in the issue of 4 infringement notices against fuel outlets with total penalties of $75,832, reinforcing the importance of accurate fuel price reporting and consumer confidence.

On 25 April 2026, we also introduced a new 24-hour fuel price reporting scheme to improve access to consumers on information about cost to ensure Territorians can better plan their fuel purchases and have confidence in the market.

NT Consumer Affairs will continue to actively monitor fuel pricing and undertake compliance action in the new financial year, helping to ensure consumers can trust both the MyFuel NT web app and the fuel prices displayed at service stations across the Territory.

Cost of living pressures were also evident in the rental market. Some landlords are delaying minor repairs due to increasing costs, while some tenants, seeking to avoid higher rents, are accepting properties that do not meet expected standards.

NT Consumer Affairs continues to provide advice and assistance to both tenants and landlords to support compliance with the *Residential Tenancies Act 1999 (NT)*. Where necessary, compliance action is taken against landlords or their agents who fail to meet their legal obligations. NT Consumer Affairs also delivers targeted education and awareness activities for landlords and agents to promote understanding of the law.

Our outreach program in 2025-26 was extensive, with visits across the Top End and Central Australia to educate businesses about new Australian Consumer Law requirements for seafood country-of-origin labelling. Under these laws, all fresh seafood

sold in a hospitality setting must clearly identify whether a product is Australian, Imported or Mixed.

Businesses were receptive to the new requirements and welcomed the opportunity to engage directly with NT Consumer Affairs officers. This face-to-face support assisted businesses to understand and prepare for the changes which commenced on 1 July 2026.

Resource development was also a key focus during 2025-26. New posters were developed for remote communities to help consumers understand when and how to contact NT Consumer Affairs if they experience consumer issues. The posters will be distributed throughout the 2026-27 financial year.

A retirement villages handbook was also developed to support individuals considering retirement village living and to assist them in making informed decisions. I acknowledge and thank the Northern Territory retirement village residents for their valuable feedback, which helped shape this important resource. The handbook will be launched in the next financial year.

I would like to acknowledge the dedication and hard work of my colleagues. It has been an exceptionally busy year, and at times we have operated with staffing levels below full capacity. Despite these challenges, our team has continued to deliver high-quality services to Territory consumers and businesses.

I would particularly like to recognise our fair trading staff, who work tirelessly to assist members of the public and patiently guide them through often complex and stressful issues. I also acknowledge our compliance team, whose efforts were instrumental in implementing our enhanced fuel pricing monitoring and compliance response. Similarly, our education and outreach staff continued to deliver important information and support to communities across the Territory, often under significant pressure and in challenging circumstances.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my Deputy Commissioner, Rebecca Davey. Her professionalism, sound judgement and unwavering support have been invaluable throughout the year. I am grateful for her guidance and know I can always rely on her counsel as new challenges and opportunities arise.

Together, the commitment and professionalism of our staff have enabled NT Consumer Affairs to continue delivering strong outcomes for Territory consumers throughout 2025-26.

Traci Keys
Commissioner

Year in Review

2025-26 Highlights

MyFuel NT

NT Consumer Affairs (NTCA) administers the MyFuel NT scheme, providing Territorians with timely and reliable fuel price information to support informed purchasing decisions and encourage greater price transparency across the retail fuel market. With conflict in the Middle East escalating in late March 2026, the importance of fuel price monitoring significantly increased as oil prices rose amid uncertainty about global shipping routes and ongoing supply of fuel.

In response, the NT Government implemented enhancements to the MyFuel NT scheme from 25 April 2026 to strengthen regulatory tools and provide motorists with greater certainty when comparing fuel prices and planning purchases:

- Increased penalties for breaches of the MyFuel NT reporting obligations
- Introduced 24-hour fuel price reporting - fuel retailers must notify their scheduled fuel prices between 8.30 am and 2.00 pm on the day before the prices take effect. Once the reported price becomes active at 6.00 am the following day, retailers may only reduce the price during the 24-hour period.

To support the successful implementation of the reforms, NTCA worked with the Department of Corporate and Digital Development to upgrade the MyFuel NT web app and provided information to all retail fuel outlets to support them in meeting their new reporting obligations.

Responding to the increasing risk of consumer harm and the need for confidence in the market, NTCA also significantly expanded its compliance program from 31 March 2026, completing weekly in-person inspections at fuel outlets located in the Darwin region, and Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs. The program has so far identified a high level of compliance across the industry, with infringement notices issued where appropriate to address breaches of the legislation and reinforce the importance of accurate and timely reporting.

MyFuel NT Compliance and Enforcement Action 31 March to 30 June 2026

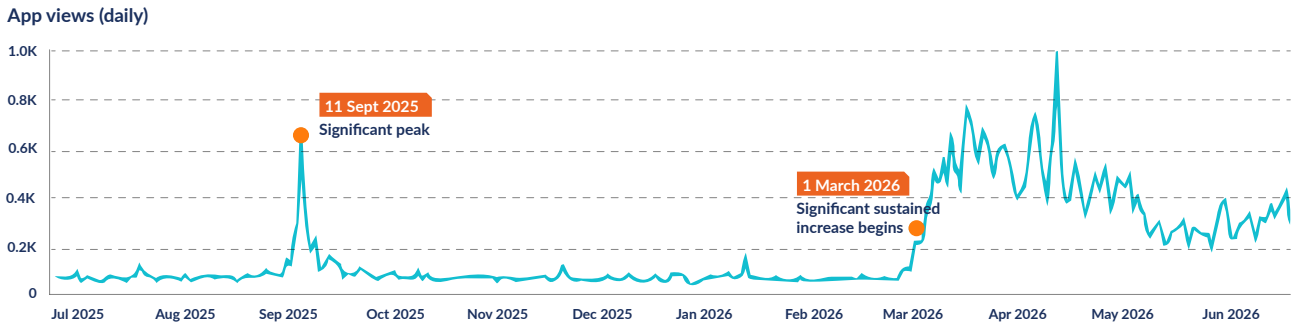
Fuel price compliance checks	1,188
Investigations of price mismatches reported by public	23
Show cause notices	8
Infringement notices	4

Engagement with the MyFuel NT web app historically peaks when there is upward movement in fuel prices or when there is significant supply vulnerability. Due to the impacts on fuel prices and supply following the war in the Middle East, there was a significant spike in Territorians and interstate travellers connecting with the web app from March 2026. This pattern suggests motorists actively use the service when fuel prices become a prominent consumer issue.

Fuel price check

MyFuel NT web app engagement

1 July 2025-30 June 2026



The MyFuel NT web app continues to be valuable for Territorians, with a total of 482,921 views during 2025-26.
Engagement was highlighted by a significant peak on 11 September 2025 and a sustained increase beginning 1 March 2026.

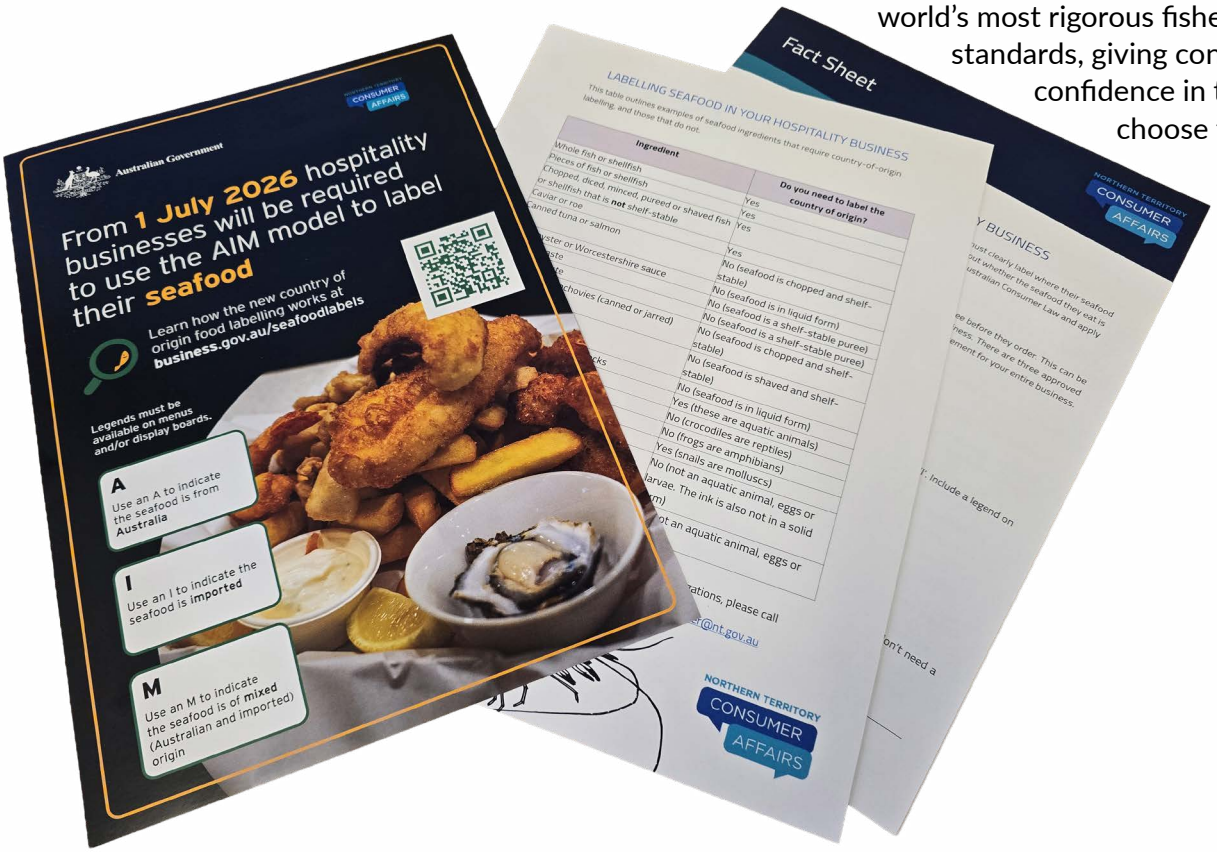
Increased use of the MyFuel NT web application, positive feedback from members of the public and strong compliance outcomes demonstrate growing confidence in the scheme. NTCA will continue to build on these achievements and monitor the effectiveness of these, and other planned reforms, to ensure the MyFuel NT scheme continues to deliver meaningful benefits for consumers.

Seafood Country of Origin Labelling

NTCA played a central role in supporting the implementation of Australia's new Seafood Country of Origin Labelling requirements for hospitality businesses. Introduced under the Australian Consumer Law and commencing on 1 July 2026, the new Information Standard requires restaurants, cafés, hotels, markets, clubs, takeaway outlets, food trucks and other businesses serving seafood for immediate consumption to clearly identify whether the seafood they sell is Australian (A), Imported (I) or a Mixture of Australian and Imported (M). The information must be displayed in a clear and accessible manner before customers place their order, enabling consumers to make informed purchasing decisions while increasing transparency across the hospitality sector.

NTCA undertook an extensive education and engagement program to assist businesses across the Northern Territory to prepare for the new requirements. Officers visited seafood retailers and hospitality businesses throughout Darwin, Palmerston, Alice Springs and Tennant Creek, while also travelling to several remote communities to provide practical guidance, answer questions and ensure businesses understood their obligations before the Information Standard commenced. The Commissioner met with industry groups including the NT Chamber of Commerce, Hospitality NT, NT Seafood Council and the Territory Business Centre, as well as contributing to NT Seafood Council newsletters and discussing the new laws on local ABC Darwin radio.

The engagement program was overwhelmingly well-received by industry and consumers. Businesses welcomed the opportunity to receive face-to-face advice and practical support, with many expressing strong support for the new requirements. Hospitality businesses serving Australian seafood recognised the new labelling system as an opportunity to clearly promote the origin of their seafood and distinguish locally sourced products from imported alternatives. Many operators also noted that the reforms provide an additional opportunity to highlight that Australian seafood is harvested under some of the world's most rigorous fisheries sustainability standards, giving consumers greater confidence in the seafood they choose to purchase.



SEAFOOD LABELLING EDUCATION PROGRAM REACH

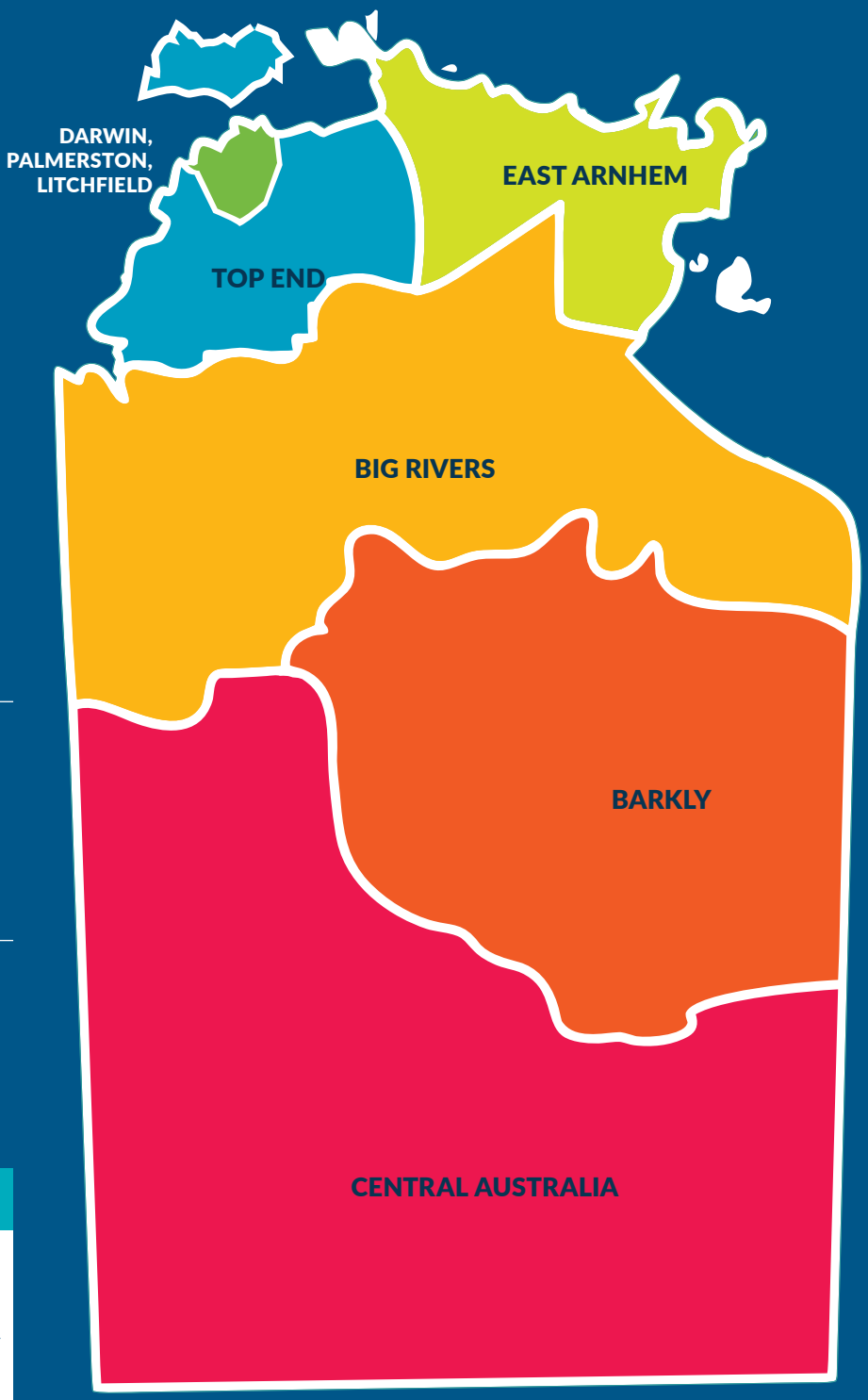
Across the Northern Territory

54
LOCATIONS VISITED
Across all major regions of the Northern Territory

527
HOSPITALITY BUSINESSES VISITED
Engaging directly with hospitality operators

10,000+km
TRAVELLED
Across the Territory to deliver education and support

REGIONS REACHED	LOCATIONS
DARWIN, PALMERSTON, LITCHFIELD	7
TOP END	9
EAST ARNHEM	2
BIG RIVERS	6
BARKLY	9
CENTRAL AUSTRALIA	21



During 2025-26, NTCA delivered education to hospitality businesses in 54 locations across the Northern Territory.

Our work reached urban, regional and remote communities from the Tiwi Islands and Arnhem Land to Central Australia.

Engaging with businesses to build an informed and responsible hospitality industry across the NT.

URBAN REGIONAL REMOTE

Customer service performance

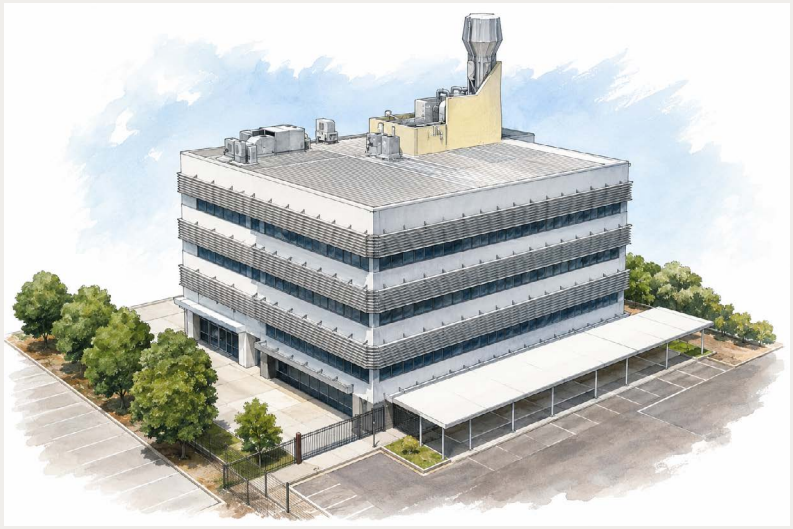
CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

Our commitment to timely, accessible and high-quality service for Territorians.

SERVICE STANDARD	OUR PERFORMANCE
Business education visits Perform 100% of scheduled educational visits to businesses	100%
Call centre wait time Average time customers wait to speak with an officer is less than 2 minutes	52 seconds
Fuel price compliance checks Complete at least one check per quarter on all outlets in Darwin and Alice Springs regions	100%
Consumer Conciliation Requests (CCR) 95% of CCRs processed within 10 business days	92%
Residential building dispute applications 100% of applications processed within 10 business days	100%
Retail tenancy dispute applications 100% of applications processed within 10 business days	100%
Written enquiries 100% of enquiries answered or acknowledged within 5 business days	100%

About Us

The Commissioner of Consumer Affairs is an independent statutory office holder appointed by the Attorney-General under the *Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading Act 1990 (NT)*. The Commissioner is responsible for promoting fair trading practices and protecting consumer interests, while also performing statutory functions as Commissioner of Tenancies, Commissioner of Residential Building Disputes and Commissioner of Business Tenancies.



NTCA operates with staff across locations in Darwin and Alice Springs. We administer and enforce consumer protection legislation in the Northern Territory, helping consumers and businesses understand their rights and responsibilities while promoting fair and confident participation in the marketplace. We do this by:

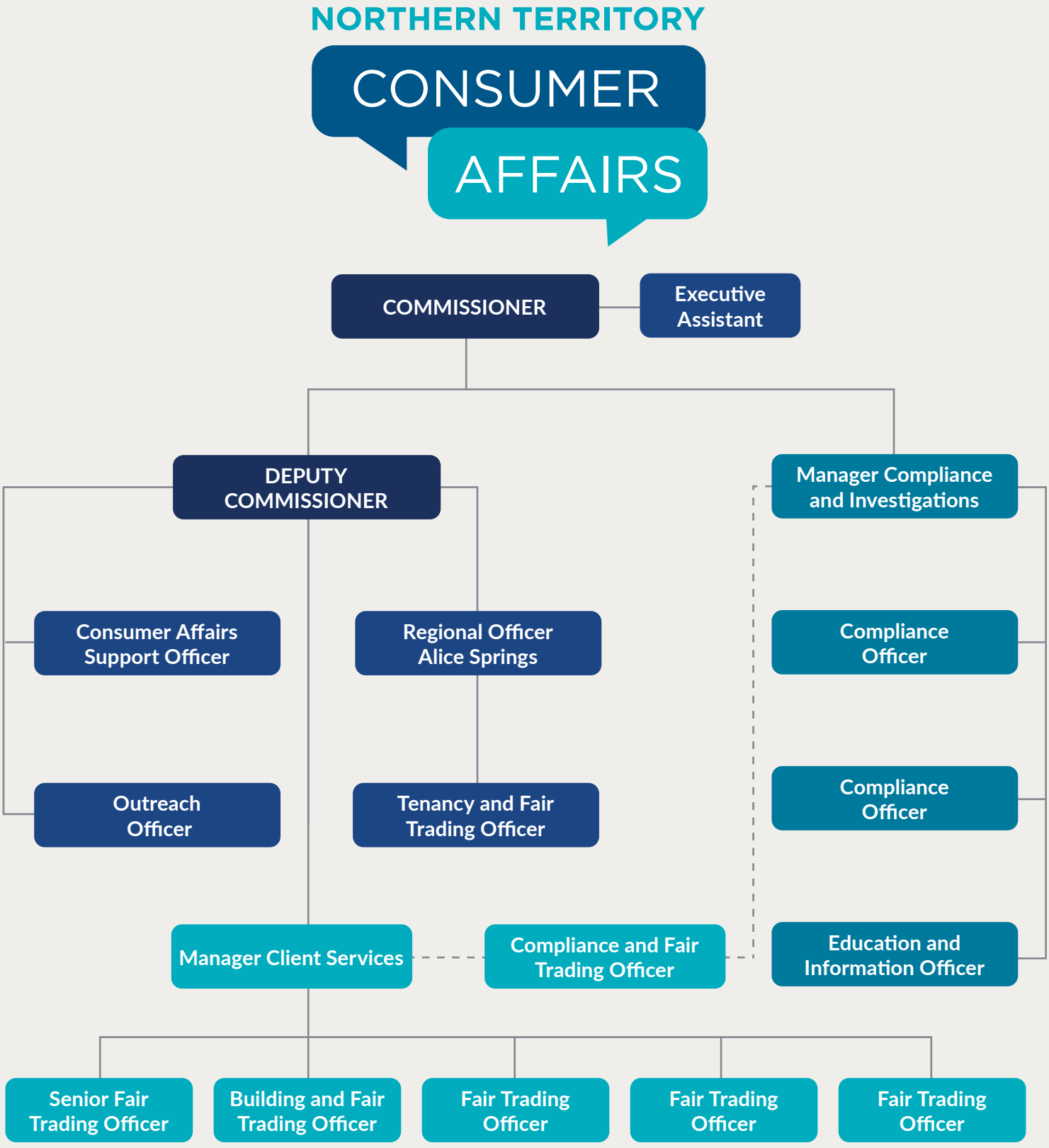
- Promoting consumer and business awareness
- Taking compliance and enforcement actions
- Responding to significant consumer policy issues
- Administering the MyFuel NT fuel price reporting scheme

A significant part of NTCA's work involves administering the Australian Consumer Law (ACL). We help consumers and businesses understand their rights and obligations in key areas such as consumer guarantees, misleading or deceptive conduct, and unfair contract terms. As part of the national consumer protection framework, NTCA works alongside regulators across Australia to support the consistent application of the ACL and respond to consumer issues of national importance.

NTCA also administers the *Residential Tenancies Act 1999 (NT)*, supporting Territory renters, landlords and real estate professionals to better understand their rights and responsibilities. Through providing education and information, we help parties navigate tenancy issues, promote compliance with the law and encourage positive outcomes across the Territory's rental sector.

A full list of legislation administered by NTCA is provided in Appendix A.

Organisation chart



Promoting Consumer Protection Awareness

Client services

Our clients are at the forefront of our work. Educating consumers and traders about their rights and responsibilities remains one of the most effective ways to strengthen consumer protection. NTCA's client service team empowers Territorians to seek remedies, encourages voluntary compliance and helps prevent disputes before they arise, reducing the risk of consumer harm across the Northern Territory.

Enquiries

Enquiries were received across telephone, email, and front office counters, supporting delivery of NTCA's information and referral services. Enquiries were handled in accordance with established service standards, with a focus on timely triage, assessment, and resolution of matters. Operational responsiveness was maintained despite fluctuations in staffing levels and enquiry volumes across the year.

ENQUIRIES RECEIVED

2025-26

A total of **12,127** enquiries were received across phone, walk-ins and email during the 2025-26 financial year.

Phone
5,227
(43.1%)

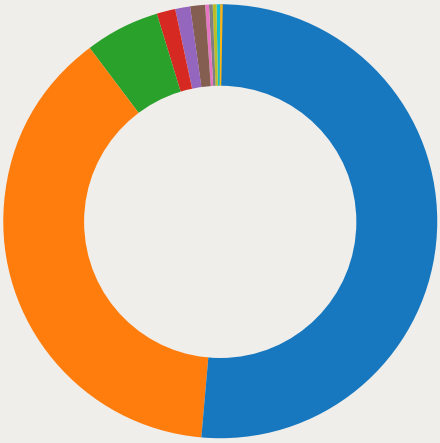
Walk-ins
262
(2.2%)

Emails
6,638
(54.7%)

While NTCA administers 12 Acts, an overwhelming majority of enquiries received in 2025-26 related to residential tenancy matters and the purchase of goods and services. Together, consumer issues under the ACL and the *Residential Tenancies Act 1999 (NT)* represented 89.79% of our enquiry service. Another 5.62% of enquiries received fell outside of the legislative responsibilities of NTCA. These matters were appropriately assessed and referred to relevant agencies to ensure clients were directed to the correct jurisdiction for assistance.

Emerging trends indicate that cost of living pressures continue to influence consumer expectations and may be contributing to increased dissatisfaction with goods and services. NTCA also observed an increased reliance on unlicensed, unskilled, or uninsured service providers, and the use of cash-based transactions, which may limit consumer protections available under the ACL.

Enquiries by topic



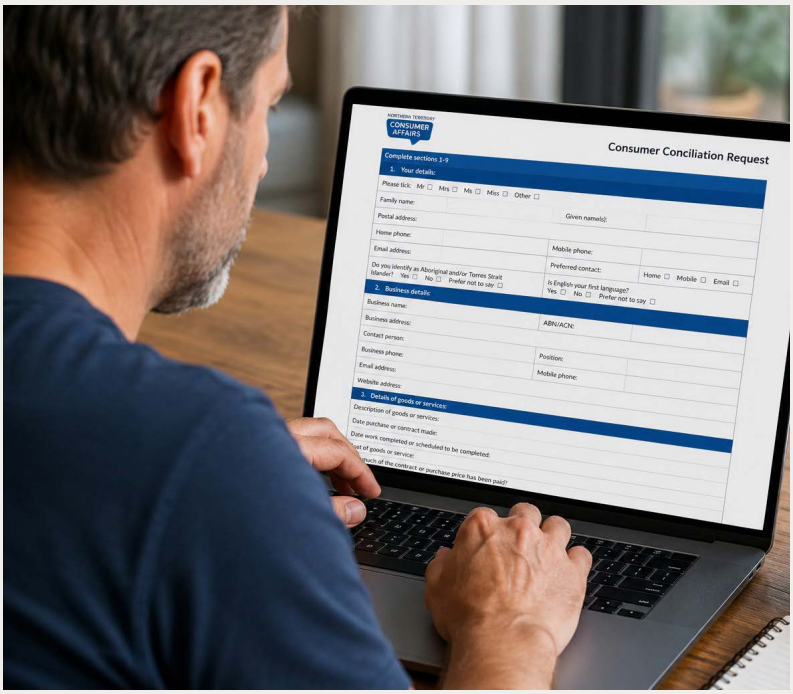
Residential Tenancy	51.5%
Purchase of goods and services	38.29%
Referral to other organisation	5.62%
Scams	1.47%
Residential Building	1.12%
Business Tenancy	1.08%
Other	0.29%
MyFuel NT	0.28%
Product Safety	0.18%
Uncollected Goods	0.15%
Retirement Villages	0.02%

Consumer conciliations

NTCA continued to assist consumers and businesses to resolve disputes through its consumer conciliation service, providing an accessible, cost-effective alternative to formal legal proceedings. During 2025–26, the service continued to achieve positive outcomes by facilitating fair resolutions in accordance with the ACL.

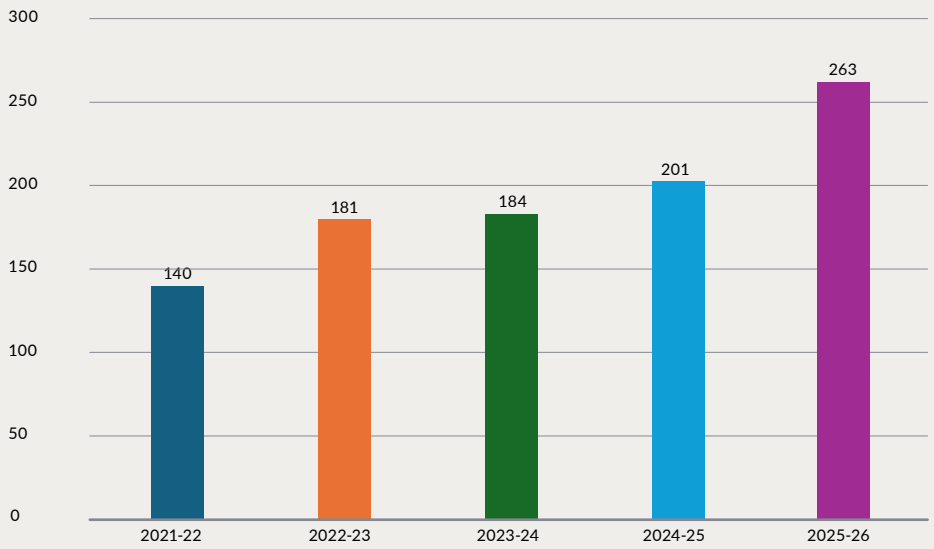
To improve accessibility and streamline the conciliation process, the Consumer Conciliation Request form was updated to better reflect the service and information requirements. An online version of the form was also introduced through the NTCA website, making it easier for consumers to lodge applications.

The number of Consumer Conciliation Requests has continued to trend upward over the past 5 years, which may reflect the challenging economic environment, with some businesses less able or willing to provide remedies despite their obligations under the ACL. The sustained increase has also placed growing pressure on available resources, as conciliation matters can require significant time to assess, progress and resolve. The updated form is intended to improve the completeness of applications and support more efficient and timely service delivery.



Conciliators successfully resolved a range of disputes involving goods and services, securing positive financial outcomes for consumers. The recognition of multiple minor failures as a major failure under the ACL was particularly relevant in some complex motor vehicle and caravan disputes, where repeated unsuccessful repair attempts were experienced by consumers.

Consumer Conciliation Requests



Conciliation **stories**

NTCA assisted a consumer who had paid an additional fee for the exclusive use of a shipping container to transport household goods interstate. When the consumer discovered that other freight had been transported in the container and personal belongings had been damaged, conciliators successfully negotiated a full refund of the exclusive-use fee together with compensation for the consequential loss.

A customer purchased a caravan that experienced a major flooring failure less than 2 years after purchase and contacted NTCA for help following multiple unsuccessful repair attempts. Our conciliator facilitated the return of the caravan and secured a full refund of more than $100,000 after independent evidence established the defect could not be satisfactorily remedied.

A consumer purchased an electric recliner that arrived damaged. Although the supplier initially agreed in writing to provide a full refund, the refund was not paid. NTCA facilitated the return of the recliner at the supplier's expense and secured a full refund of more than $7,000.

A consumer sought assistance after purchasing a new 4WD that experienced significant water ingress through the sunroof shortly after delivery. Despite several repair attempts, the defect remained unresolved, raising concerns about potential long-term damage to the vehicle's interior. Through NTCA's conciliation process, the matter was successfully resolved, with the manufacturer agreeing to replace the vehicle, providing the consumer with full redress valued at $110,000.

> *Once again thank you for all your work on this case without your input there is no way that the business would have given me the refund despite my ongoing issues with the machine.*

> *Thank you once again for your time, assistance, and the efforts undertaken by your office to facilitate a fair and professional conciliation process.*

> *Thank you and to other staff members in your office that assisted with advising along the journey. All my interactions with NT Consumer Affairs have been very positive.*

Outreach

A presentation about scams

Community engagement

Community education remained a cornerstone of NTCA's consumer protection strategy during the reporting period, delivering practical information and support to Territorians across urban, regional and remote communities including Arltunga, Batchelor, Katherine, Maningrida, Mutitjulu, Nhulunbuy, Tennant Creek, Wurrumiyanga, Yirrkala and Yulara. Building on relationships established over previous years, NTCA staff have developed a strong reputation as a trusted and valued source of consumer and tenancy information.

Community outreach activities focused on promoting consumer and tenant rights, and scam awareness through presentations, workshops and one-on-one engagement. Education sessions were delivered to a diverse range of audiences, including school students, seniors, multicultural communities and Aboriginal organisations. Content and delivery methods are reviewed and refined in consultation with stakeholders to ensure presentations remain practical, culturally

Larrakia Nation Aged Care Group

appropriate, accessible and responsive to the needs of individual groups.

Frontline engagement provides valuable insights into emerging consumer issues affecting Territorians. Increasing concerns were identified about harms caused by 'scambling' (online gambling platforms on social media and messaging apps that trick people to visit a scam website to gamble) among people experiencing vulnerability, with consumers reluctant to exercise their rights or seek assistance when problems arise.

COTA Seniors Expo

Nyangatjatjara School

Local Darwin business

Business engagement

NTCA recognises that many businesses, especially small to medium sized, struggle to keep up with the various regulatory responsibilities of operating a commercial organisation. That's why NTCA provides free, in-person engagement with businesses to help them understand their obligations under the ACL when providing goods and services.

In 2025-26, NTCA specifically identified small businesses operating without permanent shopfronts and worked to improve their access to information about the ACL through market organisers and other community distribution channels. NTCA also focused on hospitality venues, to inform them about the new national Information Standard for Country of Origin Labelling for Seafood.

Business Engagement 2025-26	
Visits to NT hospitality businesses	1,050

Outreach in **action**

Since its release in January 2026, NTCA's Buying a used car? pocket guide has been directly handed out to more than 1,000 Territorians through schools, expos and various stakeholders. Organisations were encouraged to request additional copies or download the guide from NTCA's website, significantly extending the reach of this practical consumer resource.

During a scam awareness presentation, a student disclosed that their family had fallen victim to a rental scam involving the sharing of identity documents belonging to several family members. This disclosure enabled access to appropriate reporting and support services. It also highlighted the importance of culturally and linguistically appropriate consumer education for vulnerable members of the community.

An established relationship with a local service organisation enabled NTCA to respond quickly when a student from a local migrant community became the victim of a scam. Immediate advice was provided to prevent further harm, and the matter was escalated to support timely consumer warnings and targeted communications within the affected community.

It was lovely to meet with you this week and thank you so much for coming to our Anglicare NT Breakfast program in Nhulunbuy, it's really appreciated.

Your contributions to the Palmerston Indigenous Network meetings have been valuable and consistent. Your updates are always clear, informative, and relevant to the network, particularly in keeping members informed about consumer affairs issues, outreach activities, and available supports within the community.

I spoke to one of your colleagues a year prior to find out our obligations and if we were to take on the tenancy ourselves and she was very encouraging and super friendly. NTCA has been nothing but helpful and it's appreciated to have such a wonderful service.

Thank you so much. You helped save a lot of money.

Education

In addition to our client and outreach services, NTCA delivers information to the community through a range of accessible channels, including social media platforms, publications on our website and media engagement. Together, these channels enable NTCA to reach a broad audience with timely, practical information that supports informed decision-making and compliance with consumer and tenancy laws.

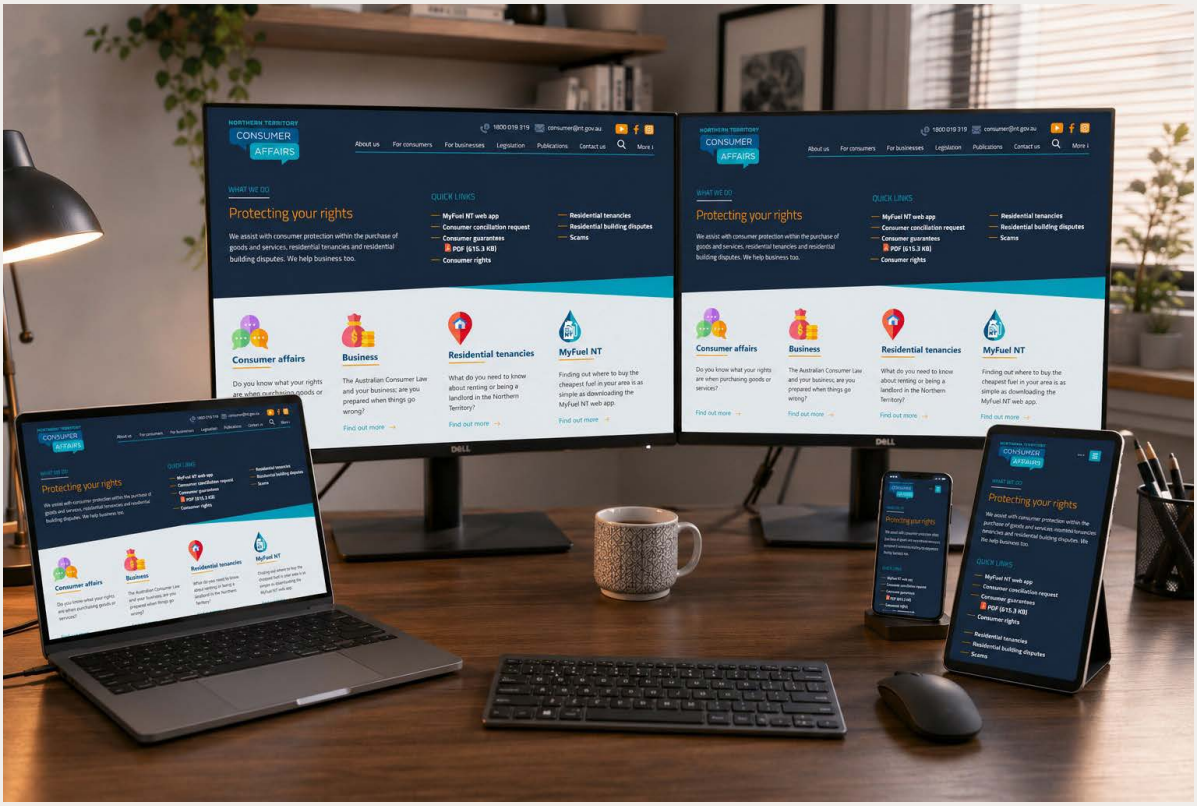
Social media

Social media continues to play an important role in helping NTCA share important information quickly, promote consumer awareness campaigns, and engage directly with the community.

During 2025–26, NTCA maintained an active presence on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube. Each platform supported different communication objectives, allowing information to be delivered in formats best suited to a broad range of audiences, including younger Territorians, older residents and people living in regional and remote communities.

Facebook remained our most widely used engagement platform, enabling us to share news, educational resources, scam warnings and updates on consumer and tenancy issues. The platform also provided opportunities for members of the public to ask questions, interact with our content and share important information within their own networks.

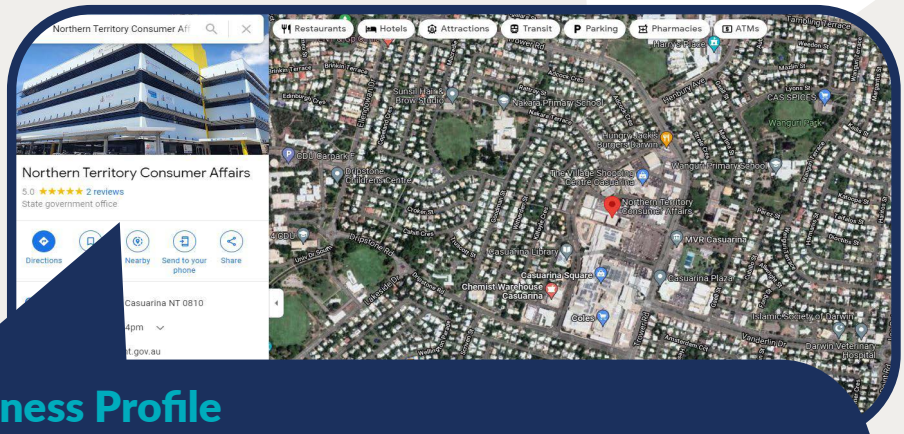
Instagram complemented these efforts by delivering concise, visually focused content designed to increase awareness of consumer rights and responsibilities. YouTube continued to host educational videos covering a range of consumer protection and tenancy topics, providing accessible resources that could be viewed and shared by individuals, community organisations and other government agencies.



NTCA website and publications

The NTCA website continued to serve as the primary online source of consumer protection information. Visitors can access publications, fact sheets, guides, forms, complaint information and educational resources, making the website an important self-service tool for consumers and businesses, particularly from regional and remote areas.

The website also continued to promote the MyFuel NT web app, providing motorists with up-to-date fuel pricing information to improve price transparency and help consumers compare fuel prices across the Territory. This was particularly critical when the Middle East conflict started to impact fuel prices significantly during the latter part of the financial year.



Google Business Profile

NTCA took active management of its Google Business Profile in 2025-26, improving the accessibility of the agency's services through Google Search and Google Maps. This has made it easier for consumers and businesses to find accurate contact details, office locations and opening hours, and includes a direct link to our website. It strengthens NTCA's online visibility and credibility, improves the customer experience, and provides another channel through which NTCA can communicate important information to the community.

Buying a used car? pocket guide

Purchasing a used vehicle is one of the most significant financial decisions many consumers make. To help consumers make an informed decision, NTCA developed the Buying a used car? pocket guide, based on a successful resource produced by WA Consumer Protection and adapted for the Northern Territory. Designed as a practical, easy-to-carry reference, the guide outlines 9 key mechanical checks consumers should make before purchasing a used vehicle, including the engine, transmission, brakes and exhaust. The pocket guide has two QR codes. One of these QR codes sends consumers to the Australian Government's Moneysmart website. The resource helps consumers make informed vehicle purchasing decisions by outlining the benefits and risks of buying from dealers, private sellers and auctions, and some of the financial considerations of car ownership. A second QR code links to the NTCA YouTube channel, where consumers can access the guide through videos in language presented in Eastside Kriol, Tiwi, Western Arrernte, Yolŋu Matha and Murrinh Patha.

Media

Throughout 2025–26, the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of Consumer Affairs continued to play an active role in engaging with the media to provide timely, practical and authoritative information to consumers across the Northern Territory. Regular media appearances formed an important component of NT Consumer Affairs' education strategy, ensuring the public had access to reliable advice on their rights and responsibilities while raising awareness of emerging consumer protection issues.

NTCA participated in a broad range of interviews and media engagements with metropolitan, regional and remote media outlets, including ABC Darwin, ABC Alice Springs, ABC News, ABC National, TEABBA, CAAMA and other community media. These engagements enabled consumer protection messages to reach audiences across urban, regional and remote communities, including Aboriginal Territorians through First Nations broadcasting networks. Interviews covered emerging topics of importance such as fuel price reporting and the new seafood labelling requirements, as well as seasonal consumer and tenancy risks.

ABC Radio DARWIN

ABC NEWS

ABC ALICE SPRINGS

TEABBA
TOP END ABORIGINAL BUSH BROADCASTING ASSOCIATION

CAAMA

Residential Tenancies

The residential tenancy sector continues to face significant challenges. Rising rental prices and ongoing housing demand have increased pressure on both landlords and tenants. NTCA observed that some landlords are delaying non-urgent repairs due to affordability pressures, while some tenants are accepting properties that may not meet expected standards because of limited housing availability.

Education and early intervention remain important strategies in promoting compliance and preventing disputes in this challenging environment. Questions about residential tenancy matters made up 51.5% of total enquiries to NTCA in the 2025-26 year, reinforcing the demand for NTCA's service.

Tailored tenancy training on the *Residential Tenancies Act 1999 (NT)* was delivered to a broad range of stakeholders across both Darwin and Central Australia. This included training for private landlords, real estate agencies, non-government organisations, the Department of Housing and Yulara Housing. These sessions focused on improving knowledge of legislative obligations, dispute prevention and best practice tenancy management. NTCA recognises that many private landlords remain unaware of the training and guidance available, and increasing engagement with this sector will remain an area of focus in the future.

To further strengthen education initiatives, NTCA developed a suite of training resources and presentation materials for organisations including the Department of Housing, Anglicare and the Mental Health Association of Central Australia. These resources support the ongoing delivery of consistent and practical tenancy education throughout the Northern Territory.

NTCA also investigated 6 applications to transfer residential tenancy security deposits to third parties, ensuring compliance with the requirements of the *Residential Tenancies Act 1999 (NT).*

Feedback received throughout the year highlighted the value of NTCA's advisory and education services, with stakeholders acknowledging the practical assistance provided to help navigate tenancy matters and comply with legislative requirements.

Building and Retail Tenancy Disputes

> *"I would like to sincerely thank you and your team for your time, support, and guidance throughout this process. Your assistance has been greatly appreciated in helping to resolve this matter efficiently and fairly."*

Residential buildings

NTCA is responsible for application of the Building (Resolution of Residential Building Work Disputes) Regulations 2012 (NT) in relation to residential building disputes. Amendments to these regulations and the Building (RBI and Fidelity Fund Schemes) Regulations 2012 (NT) commenced on 30 March 2026, contributing to the ongoing refinement and effectiveness of the regulatory framework for residential building disputes in the Northern Territory.

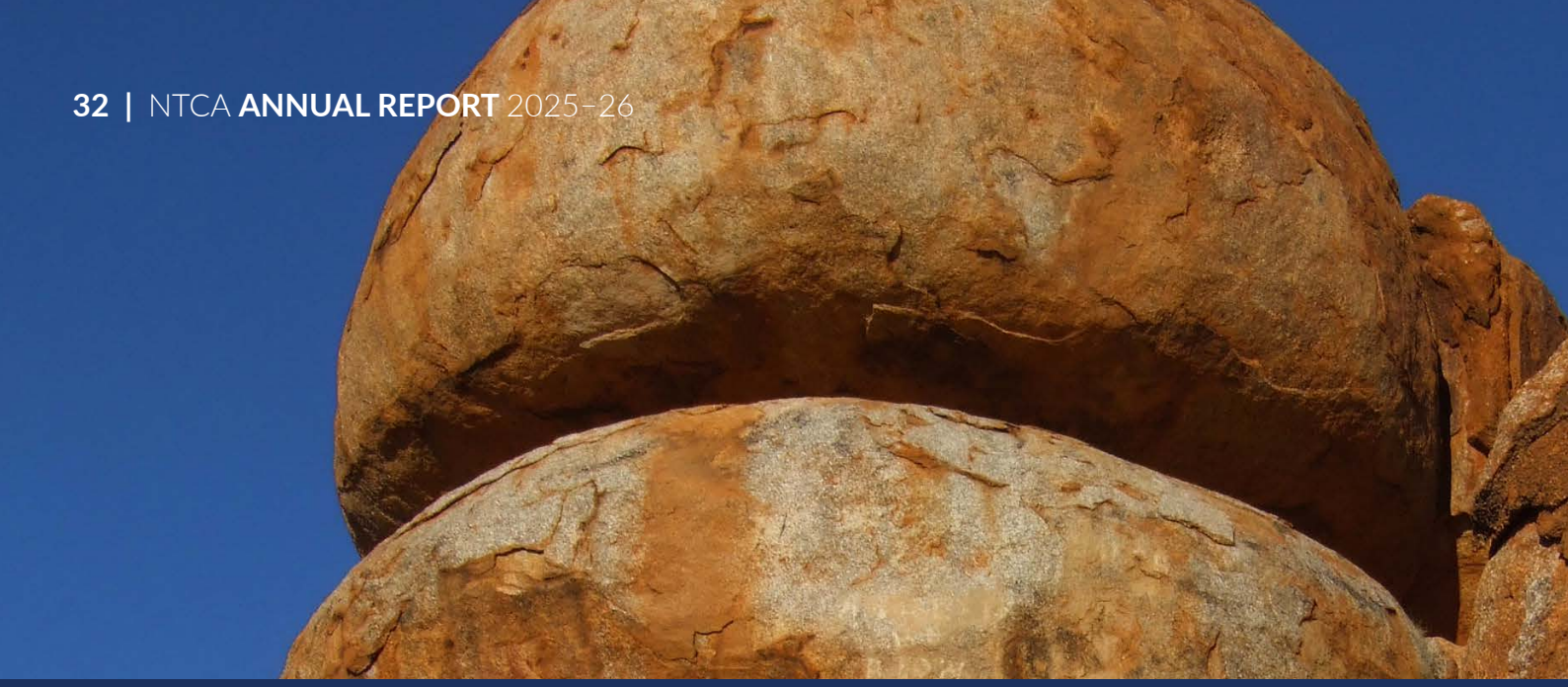
Emerging risks within the sector continue to reflect broader economic conditions, including instances of builders entering liquidation. This has resulted in situations where residential building projects remain incomplete or where costs increase after contracts have been executed, presenting potential financial and contractual risks for consumers.

NTCA received 61 enquiries about residential building issues during the 2025-26 year. As the Commissioner of Residential Building Disputes under the *Building Act 1993 (NT)*, the Commissioner of Consumer Affairs received 6 residential building dispute applications, providing an accessible pathway for parties to seek resolution of consumer guarantee disputes.

Retail tenancies

Like other consumer sectors, a challenging economic climate has led to increased financial constraints and retail business closures. These pressures highlight the impact of changing market conditions on both retail landlords and tenants, and the importance of accessible dispute resolution services.

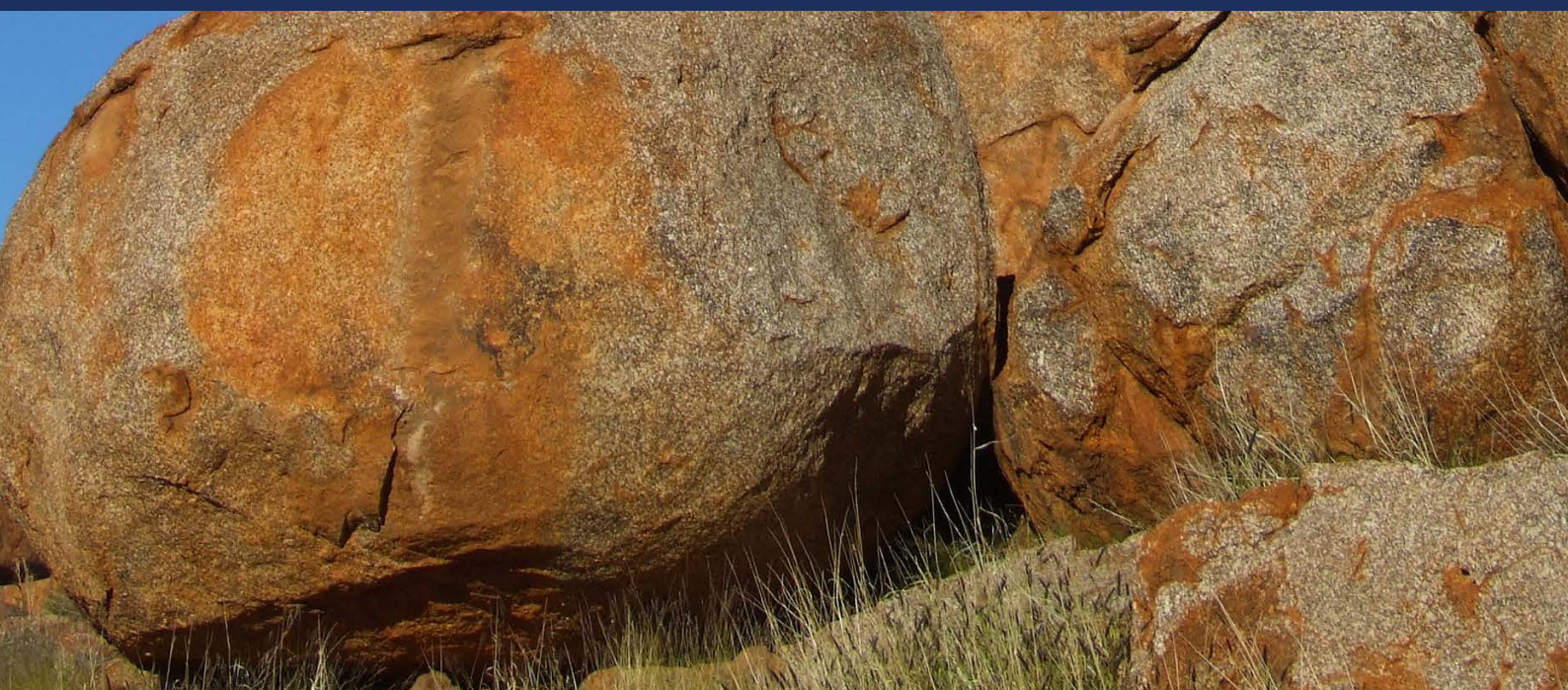
NTCA received 59 enquiries and 15 retail tenancy dispute applications during the reporting period, providing information and dispute resolution services to support landlords and tenants in resolving issues arising under the *Business Tenancies (Fair Dealings) Act 2003 (NT).*

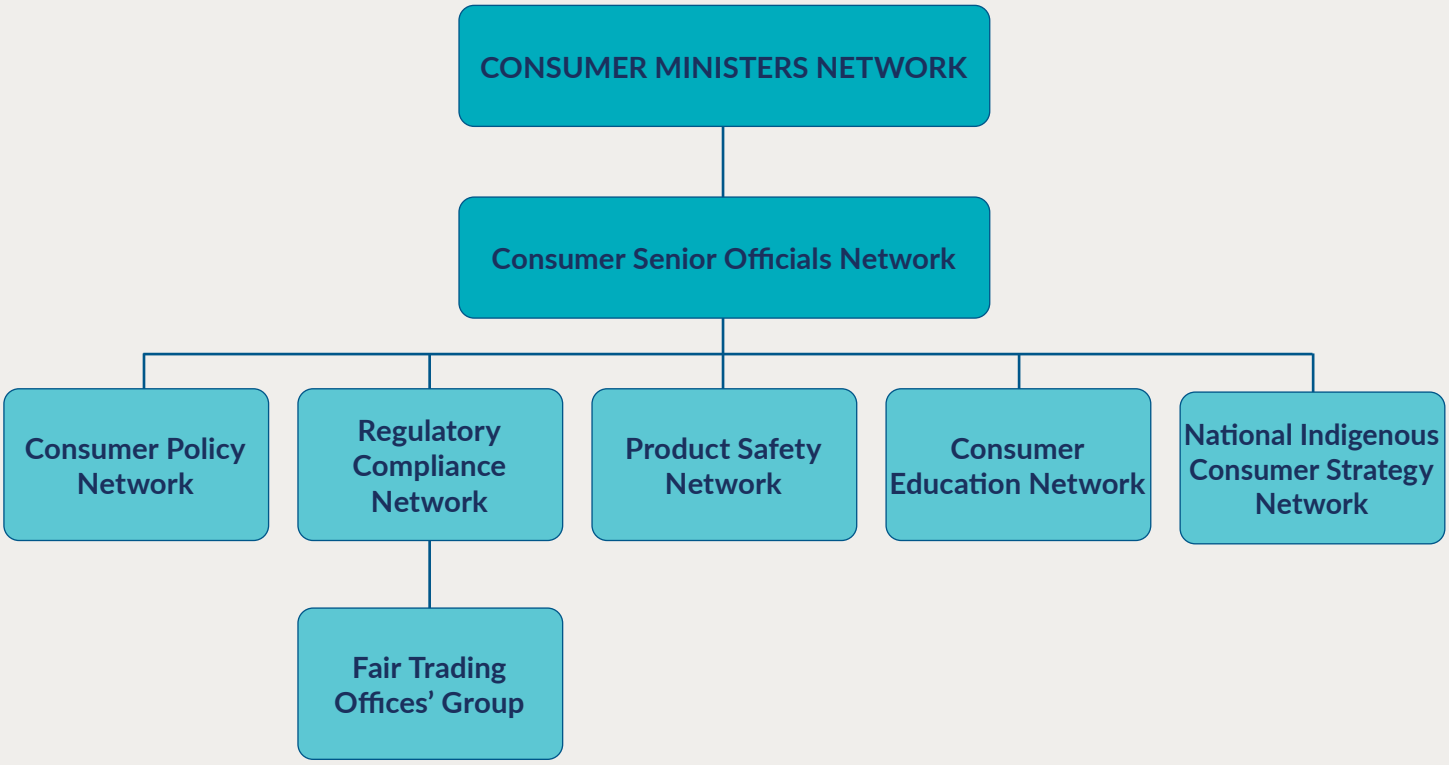


Networks and Collaboration

Under a multi-regulator model, the ACL is jointly governed by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) and all Australian state and territory consumer protection agencies.

Ongoing collaboration between responsible agencies is necessary to promote effective and efficient regulation of the ACL and respond appropriately to emerging risks of national importance. This is achieved through several networks across key streams of work, overseen by Ministers and senior officers responsible for consumer affairs.





One of the national collaborative networks in which NTCA participates is the Consumer Senior Officials' Network (CSON). The network plays a key role in progressing the national consumer policy agenda endorsed by Consumer Ministers. The Commissioner of Consumer Affairs represented the Northern Territory and was also the Chair of CSON in 2026, leading collaboration between jurisdictions to support nationally consistent regulatory and policy approaches.

Key matters considered included implementation of the national Seafood Labelling Information Standard, consumer protections for home battery systems, and payment redirection scams affecting the property sector.

Participation in national networks like CSON enables NTCA to benefit from shared intelligence, and coordinated compliance and education activities, while ensuring the Northern Territory's interests and experiences are represented in national decision-making.

Compliance and Enforcement

The Compliance and Enforcement team delivered a range of audit, investigative, and engagement activities aimed at improving compliance with consumer and tenancy laws and promoting fair trading practices.

A highlight for the year was initiating an investigation into a trader operating interstate and collaborating with the Queensland fair trading regulator and police on potential enforcement options. This joint compliance operation ultimately led to the commencement of a fraud prosecution. Although a small jurisdiction, NTCA works hard to provide a significant contribution to consumer issues across borders to ensure a fair outcome and prevent further harm to Australian consumers.

Another example of NTCA's cooperative capability was our rapid response to the fuel crisis arising in late March 2026. Within a matter of weeks, we led legislative reform to strengthen the MyFuel NT price reporting scheme, providing Territorians with increased transparency and planning capability for purchasing decisions.

NTCA worked closely with the Attorney-General's Department Legal Policy team and the Department of Corporate and Digital Development to make legislative changes and resulting enhancements to the MyFuel NT web app. We also supported fuel retailers to comply with the new requirements, and increased compliance efforts to ensure consumer confidence in the scheme.

Other focus areas for our Compliance team during the year included the following:

ACL

NTCA observes that most businesses seek to comply with their obligations; however, issues can arise where terms, conditions, or refund policies do not fully align with the ACL. Engagement with businesses in sectors

such as beauty and fitness during the reporting year resulted in amendments to refund and cancellation policies to ensure compliance and to better reflect consumers' statutory rights, including appropriate contract termination provisions.

In another matter, a licensed motor vehicle dealer sold a second-hand vehicle that broke down shortly after purchase. While consumer guarantees apply under the ACL regardless of any statements to the contrary, the dealer had advised the consumer that no warranties or guarantees applied. NTCA engaged with the dealer principal to clarify obligations, resulting in improved understanding and a strengthened working relationship that supported the resolution of additional matters.

Residential tenancies

Throughout the year NTCA engaged with a number of real estate agents and landlords, with a particular focus on the return of security deposits in accordance with the *Residential Tenancies Act 1999 (NT).* The most common issues related to lease break situations, particularly how loss or compensation is calculated and claimed by landlords or agents. In some cases, invoices were issued prior to actual losses being established. It was reinforced that any entitlements must ultimately be determined by the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

Price scan audit program

NTCA's price scan audit program was finalised in 2025-26, focusing on convenience stores in selected service stations across the greater Darwin and Alice Springs regions. At each location, 25 retail items were sampled, with shelf prices being compared with the prices charged at checkout. NTCA tested 375 products and identified pricing discrepancies at 12 of the 15 locations. A total of 70 discrepancies were recorded, including 33 products that were undercharged and 37 products that were overcharged at the checkout. Where significant differences were identified, follow-up checks were conducted to ensure issues had been addressed and corrective action was taken.

Other Statutory Responsibilities

Retirement Villages Act 1995 (NT)

NTCA continued to administer the *Retirement Villages Act 1995 (NT)*, which provides a regulatory framework to protect the rights and interests of retirement village residents in the Northern Territory. During 2025–26, the legislation applied to 3 registered retirement villages, including 2 operated by Greenfields Living in Durack and Tiwi, and one operated by Southern Cross Care at Pearl Retirement Village in Fannie Bay.

Only 2 compliance matters relating to retirement villages were reported to NTCA during the reporting period. The low level of compliance activity reflects the stable nature of the sector within the Northern Territory.

Retirement Villages Handbook

A key achievement this year was the development of a new Retirement Villages Handbook, scheduled for release in early 2026–27. The handbook has been designed to assist prospective residents and their families by providing independent, practical guidance on entering a retirement village, including key issues to consider, important questions to ask, and information to support decision-making.

The development of the handbook was informed by consultation with residents from the Greenfields Living and Pearl retirement villages in Darwin, whose experiences and insights helped shape the content to ensure it reflects the practical considerations faced by people exploring retirement village living. NTCA acknowledges and thanks the residents who generously contributed their time, knowledge and lived experience to the project.

Caravan Parks Act 2012 (NT)

As Commissioner of Tenancies, the Commissioner of Consumer Affairs is responsible for administration of the *Caravan Parks Act 2012 (NT)*, which establishes the rights and obligations of caravan park operators and long-term residents where lease arrangements are for 12 months or more.

During 2025–26, NTCA received one compliance matter relating to caravan parks and zero enquiries, representing a significant reduction from the previous year. The matter received was assessed and determined to fall outside the scope of the legislation.

The low level of activity indicates a balanced regulatory climate, with no emerging trends or systemic issues identified.

Appendix

Northern Territory Consumer Affairs – legislation and statutory offices

LEGISLATION	STATUTORY OFFICE
Accommodation Providers Act 1981 (NT)	
Building Act 1993 (NT)	Commissioner of Residential Building Disputes
Building Regulations 1993 (NT)	
Building (Resolution of Residential Building Work Disputes) Regulations 2012 (NT)	
Building (RBI and Fidelity Fund Schemes) Regulations 2012 (NT)	
Business Tenancies (Fair Dealings) Act 2003 (NT)	Commissioner of Business Tenancies
Business Tenancies (Fair Dealings) Regulations 2004 (NT)	
Caravan Parks Act 2012 (NT)	Commissioner of Tenancies
Caravan Parks Regulations 2012 (NT)	
Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading Act 1990 (NT)	Commissioner of Consumer Affairs
Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading (Fuel Retailers) Regulations 2017 (NT)	
Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading (Infringement Notice Offences) Regulations 2012 (NT)	
Partnership Act 1997 (NT)	Commissioner of Consumer Affairs
Residential Tenancies Act 1999 (NT)	Commissioner of Tenancies
Residential Tenancies Regulations 2000 (NT)	
Retirement Villages Act 1995 (NT)	Commissioner of Consumer Affairs
Retirement Villages Regulations 1995 (NT)	
Sale of Goods Act 1972 (NT)	
Trade Practices Amendment (Australian Consumer Law) Act (No. 2) 2010 (Cth)	
Uncollected Goods Act 2004 (NT)	
Warehousemen's Liens Act 1969 (NT)	