

NORTHERN TERRITORY
CONSUMER
AFFAIRS



Northern Territory Consumer Affairs Annual Report 2017-2018

BLANK PAGE

The Hon Natasha Fyles
Attorney-General and Minister for Justice
Parliament House
DARWIN NT 0800



Dear Minister

Re: ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

The Department of Attorney General and Justice 2017/18 Annual Report includes performance reporting on Consumer Affairs in conformity with requirements of the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act* and the *Financial Management Act*.

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

Section 12 of the *Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading Act*;
Section 15 of the *Residential Tenancies Act*;
Section 11 of the *Retirement Villages Act*;
Section 14 of the *Business Tenancies (Fair Dealings) Act*;
Section 20 of the *Caravan Parks Act*; and
Part 5A of the *Building Act*.

I have pleasure in submitting to you the Commissioner's report for the year ended 30 June 2018.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary Clements". The signature is written in a cursive style with some overlapping loops.

Gary Clements
Commissioner of Consumer Affairs
Northern Territory Consumer Affairs

October 2018

TABLE OF CONTENTS

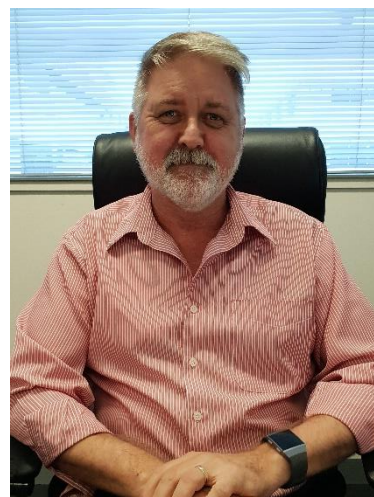
PAGE

Commissioner's Comments	5
Output Statement	6
Legislative Responsibilities	7
National Forums, Working Groups and Meetings	8
Media	14
Educational Activities	15
Outreach	17
Website	21
Social Media	23
Fair Trading	25
Dispute Resolution	28
Business Tenancies	31
Residential Building Disputes	32
Compliance	33
Alice Springs Regional Office	37
Retirement Villages Act	41
Caravan Parks Act	42
Other Statutory Responsibilities	42

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Northern Territory Consumer Affairs plays a vital and successful role throughout the Territory by safeguarding consumer rights while educating businesses on their rights and responsibilities across the broad range of legislation administered.

I am pleased to present this year's report, which highlights the outcomes we have achieved in a challenging year which has seen significant economic change across the Territory. I thank all of the NT Consumer Affairs staff who have put in a great effort over the past year providing a very high level of customer service to our clients.



Our role in educating Territorians continues to benefit those who gain a better understanding of the manner in which consumer protection improves competition and drives a fair market place. Over this year we significantly increased our outreach and trader visitation functions with positive results.

The Darwin based call centre and staff at the Casuarina and Alice Springs offices continue to assist significant numbers of Territorians contacting us by phone, walk ins and email, while our online information provided through social media and our website further informs and educates Territorians.

The commencement of the MyFuel NT web app on 1 November 2017 resulted from a significant effort by our Compliance staff who were integral in developing and testing the system in conjunction with the Department of Corporate and Information Services. At commencement all 196 Territory fuel retailers were registered and providing up-to-date information on fuel pricing. By 30 June 2018 over 20,000 users were utilising the site to find the cheapest fuel in their area.

NT Consumer Affairs staff also participate in a variety of national committees and working groups ensuring Territorians have a say on national policy and nationally targeted activities. These committees focus on education, compliance and dispute resolution, consumer protection policy and research as well as bringing together the heads of all Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading agencies and Ministers responsible for consumer protection.

Past national activities have proven very successful with the focus on travelling conmen resulting in few if any of these rogue traders visiting the Territory over the past year.

I would like to recognise the dedication and professionalism of all NT Consumer Affairs staff which enables us to achieve these excellent results across such a broad portfolio.

Gary Clements
Commissioner

OUTPUT STATEMENT

Provision of a regulatory framework where the community is informed on consumer rights and responsibilities and responsible business conduct is promoted.

PROGRAMS

Promote and regulate responsible business and industry conduct through administration of a regulatory system that protects community interests.

Inform consumers of their rights while assisting conflict situations through dispute resolution processes.

REPORTING STRUCTURE

NT Consumer Affairs is an independent office within the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice and reports to the Chief Executive Officer in regard to compliance with the *Financial Management Act* and the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act*.

The Commissioner reports directly to the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice under statutory appointments pursuant to the following Acts:

- Section 12 of the *Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading Act*;
- Section 15 of the *Residential Tenancies Act*;
- Section 11 of the *Retirement Villages Act*;
- Section 14 of the *Business Tenancies (Fair Dealings) Act*;
- Section 20 of the *Caravans Parks Act*;
- Section 6 of the *Price Exploitation Prevention Act*; and
- Section 54F (3) of the *Building Act*

LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

The following is a full listing of legislation that Northern Territory Consumer Affairs has responsibility for;

Accommodation Providers Act

Building Act – Residential Building Dispute Function

Business Tenancies (Fair Dealings) Act

Caravan Parks Act

Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading Act (including the Australian Consumer Law)

Partnership Act

Price Exploitation Prevention Act

Residential Tenancies Act

Retirement Villages Act

Sale of Goods Act

Uncollected Goods Act

Warehousemen's Liens Act

NATIONAL FORUMS, WORKING GROUPS AND MEETINGS

The Australian Consumer Law (ACL) is national law. Accordingly, all state and territory consumer affairs and fair trading agencies, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) along with involvement from the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) jointly administer and enforce the ACL.

It is vitally important that advice, information and guidance provided by the national regulators on this law is consistent Australia wide. To ensure this occurs, NT Consumer Affairs officers and representatives from other state, territory and Commonwealth agencies participate in a number of national committees, teleconferences, working groups and communities of practice to ensure uniformity in compliance and enforcement as well as the provision of advice. Regardless of where in Australia you call home, when contacting a fair trading agency for advice, the guidance and information received will be consistent.

A memorandum of understanding between all national regulators and the appropriate Commonwealth agencies ensures a close collaboration and exchange of data on recognised matters of national interest. This agreement will also result in a targeted approach by a single lead agency on behalf of other state and territory regulators. This approach is usually taken with bigger national businesses or manufacturers where significant consumer detriment is recognised across Australia.

This ongoing collaboration ensures that NT Consumer Affairs staff are kept informed of matters of national interest.

This year face to face meetings and teleconferences took place with the following committees and groups.

- Consumer Affairs Forum (CAF): members consist of all state and territory consumer affairs Ministers. The Commissioner of Consumer Affairs (NT) attended these meetings on behalf of Minister Natasha Fyles;
- Consumer Affairs Australia and New Zealand (CAANZ): members consist of heads from all consumer affairs and fair trading agencies as well as the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, the Australian Securities and Investment Commission, Commonwealth Treasury as well as a New Zealand representative;
- Compliance and Dispute Resolution Advisory Committee (CDRAC);
- Education and Information Advisory Committee (EIAC);
- National Indigenous Consumer Strategy (NICS);

- Scam Awareness Network (SAN); and
- the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals (SOCAP)

LEGISLATIVE AND GOVERNANCE FORUM ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS (CAF)

The Legislative and Governance Forum on Consumer Affairs (CAF) consists of all Commonwealth, State, Territory and New Zealand Minister's responsible for fair trading and consumer protection laws.

CAF's role is to consider consumer affairs and fair trading matters of national significance and, where possible, develop a consistent approach to those issues.

Victoria was chair of CAF this year, with a formal meeting held in Melbourne this reporting year. The communique from the CAF meeting can be found at the Consumer Law website (consumerlaw.gov.au)

CONSUMER AFFAIRS AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND (CAANZ)

CAANZ membership comprises the heads of State and Territory Fair Trading/Consumer Affairs agencies for Australia and New Zealand, Commonwealth Treasury, the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, the Australian Securities and Investment Commission.

CAANZ met face to face twice this year with a primary focus of each meeting being the review of the Australian Consumer Law (ACL). The NT Commissioner also participated in numerous teleconferences as a member of the ACL review steering committee. A significant amount of CAANZ work focused on the review of the Australian Consumer Law and the implementation of agreed changes to the legislation.

NATIONAL INDIGENOUS CONSUMER STRATEGY (NICS)

The National Indigenous Consumer Strategy (NICS) was released on 1 September 2005 after consultation with Indigenous consumers, government and non-government agencies that deliver services to Indigenous consumers, by the then Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs (now CAF).

Members of the NICS include commonwealth, state and territory consumer protection agencies as well as independent agencies such as the Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network (ICAN), all are committed to the following strategic directions:

- the promotion of basic consumer rights recognised by the United Nations for Indigenous people in Australia;
- to build knowledge, confidence and awareness for Indigenous people to action their consumer rights;
- to improve access to consumer protection services; and
- improving market outcomes for Indigenous consumers.

Bi-monthly teleconferences and a yearly face to face meeting are held to ensure that collaboration on current issues that Indigenous consumers face can be highlighted at a national level. The information from these meetings identifies the key priority areas for focus through the development of the NICS Action Plan. The National Indigenous Consumer Strategy Action Plan, 2017–19, carries the message of ‘taking action, gaining trust’ and can be found on the NT Consumer Affairs website <http://www.consumeraffairs.nt.gov.au>

Key priorities in the NICS Action Plan include addressing consumer issues for Indigenous communities, building agency capacity specific to Indigenous consumer issues and promoting NICS and broader Indigenous issues. These key priorities are addressed by NT Consumer Affairs in the day to day work of providing advice and assistance to all Territorian consumers as well as being a focus through our targeted outreach to Indigenous communities, both local and remote.

Every year there is an annual project that all members promote through their networks and through Indigenous community visitation. This year the key message was about scams and making people aware of the danger and how to avoid being caught. The ‘scams’ project has a number of key messages in relation to being careful with personal information, unsolicited contact, unexpected prizes and keeping banking details confidential.



Australian Consumer Law promotional material aimed at encouraging Australians to guard their personal information.

EDUCATION AND INFORMATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (EIAC)

The Education and Information Advisory Committee (EIAC) was established by the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs (MCCA).

Representatives from Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments form EIAC to ensure a coordinated national education and information approach on both consumer and business rights and responsibilities under the Australian Consumer Law. The committee members take part in monthly teleconferences to discuss emerging issues and other matters of national interest as well as having a face to face meeting once a year to plan campaigns for the year.

NT Consumer Affairs is an active representative of this group and has participated in a number of working groups for various educational campaigns during this year. These educational campaigns afford a national approach to address emerging issues where there may be a shortfall in knowledge to ensure a single national approach that agencies can use for their local promotion. During the year, nearly every month had a minor campaign to educate consumers, such as summer sales, Valentine's Day and ticket selling. Two of the major national campaigns that were developed this year are:

Paper Billing

This education campaign was developed as it is becoming increasingly more common for businesses to bill consumers electronically and to seek to charge consumers should they wish to receive a paper bill. Whilst electronic methods may suit many consumers who welcome receiving bills this way, there are those who would prefer to continue to receive paper billing. It was evidenced that increasing numbers of businesses were charging consumers to continue this service to ostensibly cover costs such as postage. This has the unfortunate outcome of disadvantaging those consumers without internet access who will have to pay more, such as seniors and those that live in regional or remote areas. This project aimed to inform consumers wishing to receive paper bills that there are exemption schemes available and to encourage consumers to apply for them, as many were not aware such schemes were in place. The campaign also encouraged businesses to cater for these consumers at no cost.



Educational campaign material encouraging consumers in investigate exemption schemes to avoid postage cost of bills

Sharing Economy Campaign

Uber and Airbnb are two business platforms that most people would be aware of are part of the sharing economy. These types of business models are becoming an increasingly popular way for consumers to receive a more convenient experience when hiring or purchasing goods or services online. Sharing economy platforms that provide goods or services through the online marketplace have to abide by the provisions of the Australian Consumer Law (ACL) the same as any other store. The same protections under the ACL apply for consumers using sharing economy platforms as those visiting a store front. Recent research has shown that half of the population in Australia use or are thinking about using a sharing economy platform and as such it is important that both traders and consumers are aware of their rights and responsibilities under the ACL. This national campaign produced a series of short videos that can be found on the NT Consumer Affairs YouTube channel. Editorials and information were also distributed through a number of media channels including social media and websites. The aim of the campaign was to bring awareness to both traders and consumers of their rights and responsibilities under the ACL.



An example of the Sharing economy campaign promotion material

COMPLIANCE AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CDRAC)

CDRAC holds a number of roles including the detection of emerging marketplace compliance and dispute resolution issues, initiating coordinated national responses to those issues of national significance; consultation with businesses and consumer representatives about compliance and dispute resolution issues and the coordination of joint operational activities including cooperative investigations where appropriate, to name a few.

CDRAC reports to and is under the direction of Consumer Affairs Australia and New Zealand (CAANZ).

Similar to EIAC, representatives from all national fair trading/consumer affairs regulators including New Zealand, as well as Commonwealth representatives form membership of this committee. A yearly face to face meeting as well as monthly teleconferences ensure collaboration and that matters of national interest are discussed to ensure a consistent approach to compliance and enforcement. NT Consumer Affairs is an active member of this committee to ensure the Northern Territory's unique perspective is highlighted.

During this reporting year, NT Consumer Affairs representative were active in a number of projects including a working group that aims to share training and professional development opportunities between jurisdictions.

NT Consumer Affairs was also an active participant in a project focussed on consumers with disabilities and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). This project was developed to provide education and information for consumers with a disability, with a focus on those purchasing goods and services through the NDIS as well as service providers. As the roll out of the NDIS has a staggered approach, it was considered very important to ensure a nationally coordinated approach in sharing information on education, information sharing and complaint handling. This project included collaboration with service providers, government agencies as well as non-government organisations that provide services through the NDIS. Two consumer guides were developed as part of this project as well as an agreed path for escalation of complaints relating to the services providers or goods and services in relation to the NDIS.

MEDIA

Getting advice and information out to Territorians is a key role for NT Consumer Affairs to ensure all Territorians, whether they are consumers or traders, understand their rights and responsibilities under the legislation administered. The Commissioner has a number of statutory responsibilities that include educating and informing the public of their rights as well as providing advice and assistance to consumers. As an Independent Office within the Department of the Attorney-General and Justice, the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner have the ability to speak with the media directly which ensures urgent warnings are relayed immediately to the public such as cases where travelling con men are selling dodgy stereos from the back of a van.



The NT Consumer Affairs Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner conducts a 30 minute radio talk back segment with ABC Darwin on a monthly basis.

The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner undertook 47 media interviews during this reporting period. These interviews were conducted for radio, newspaper as well as television on both a proactive and reactive basis. A monthly talk back session with the local ABC radio hosts provided a platform to offer information on the latest scams, general consumer and residential tenancy information as well as answering questions live on air. A number of text messages are usually received as well as callers, who often use this opportunity to ask questions directly of the Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The 2017 – 2018 financial year was another busy year for NT Consumer Affairs staff offering a range of information sessions, presentations and briefings to businesses, community groups and other interested parties.

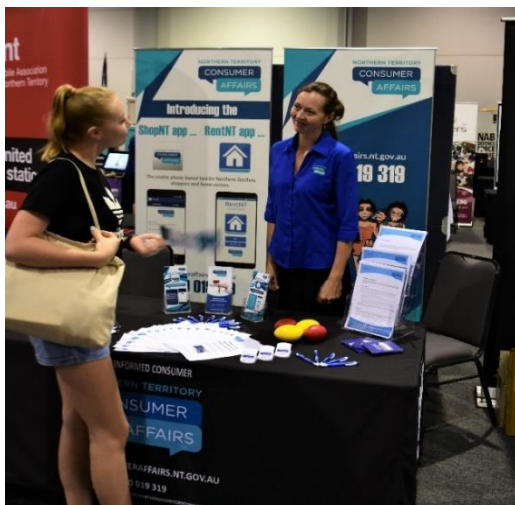
Organisations contact NT Consumer Affairs on a regular basis and request information sessions about our role and the legislation we administer. On other occasions NT Consumer Affairs will actively seek involvement in local events that are applicable to our role and messaging.

Below is an overview of some of the larger events that NT Consumer Affairs was involved with this year.

Darwin Defence Day Expo

The Defence Community Organisation, as part of the Department of Defence, conducts annual 'welcome expos' events across Australia to welcome and inform defence force families about the region they have just been posted to. These events are very well attended in Darwin, with several thousand service and family members attending. These expos are a great opportunity for NT Consumer Affairs to reach out to defence families and to communicate our consumer protection messages.

This year the Darwin expo was held on Saturday 10 February 2018 at the Darwin Convention Centre. We installed our outreach stand and two staff members were in attendance to answer the many questions we received. We provided a wide range of advice and information to 71 visitors throughout the day. A considerable amount of NT Consumer Affairs material was selected by defence families.



The NT Consumer Affairs expo display and the Australian Defence Force coat of arms.

Over 80% of visitors to the NT Consumer Affairs display were focused on the newly launched MyFuel NT scheme. Staff demonstrated how to use the web app and how useful it can be to locate the cheapest fuel, plan trips throughout the NT in respect of fuel types, location of service stations and distances between fuel stops. This was seen as an effective way of spreading the message and encouraging people that may have had reservations to download the web app. The response to MyFuel NT was very positive and most people were excited with the extra tool available to help them locate the cheapest fuel in the NT.

There was considerable positive feedback about our presence at the expo and this annual event is seen as an important outreach opportunity for NT Consumer Affairs.

Council of the Aging NT (COTA NT) Seniors Expo

The annual Council on the Ageing NT (COTA NT) Seniors expo was held on Friday 1 June 2018, on the lawns of the Museum and Art Gallery of the Northern Territory. This popular event attracts a very large number of seniors from across the Darwin region. It has always been a very valuable opportunity to engage with stakeholders in the senior age group.

This year's expo was an outstanding success, exceeding stall holder and attendees numbers of past years. Approximately 65 service providers attended. NT Consumer Affairs staff provided participants with a variety of information about the role and responsibilities of NT Consumer Affairs, including the Australian Consumer Law, the Residential Tenancies Act and other legislation administered.

304 people attended our information stand and engaged with our staff on a wide variety of consumer affairs subjects including information about warranties, vehicle servicing, scams and extended warranties. These events allow us to provide relevant and specific advice to senior Territorians about their consumer protection concerns.



Consumer Affairs officer with senior Territorians at the 2018 Council of the Aging NT (COTA NT) Seniors Expo.

OUTREACH

Northern Territory Consumer Affairs is dedicated to reaching out to the widest possible range of people throughout the Northern Territory. A large proportion of the Aboriginal people of the Northern Territory live on remotely located communities, far from the larger towns and Darwin. NTCA now has a dedicated Outreach Officer who devotes much of his time in engaging face to face with those that live remotely.



NT Consumer Affairs Outreach Officer with Traditional Owner at Borroloola.

Aboriginal Community Visitation

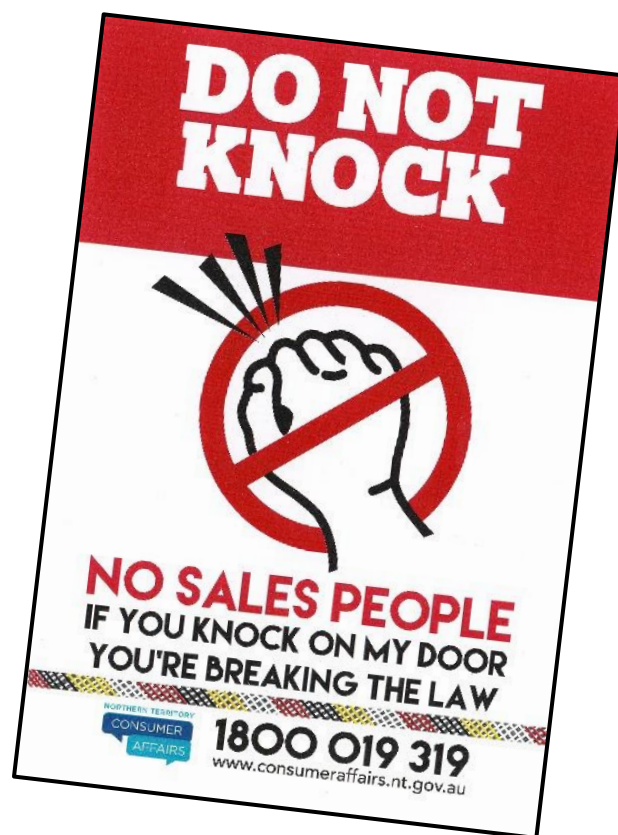
Our social media platforms, website and call centre can only do so much to inform Territorians, especially those that live far from our offices. To reinforce the Consumer Affairs message our Outreach Officer regularly travels to the larger remote communities where he sets up a display table in a prominent location (often adjacent to the remote store) and engages with locals. This is often with the support of Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation (ALPA), one of the primary managers for the outback community based stores.

This year the Outreach Officer traveled to a variety of Aboriginal communities including Kalkaringi, (twice), Lajamanu (twice), Kalano Community (Katherine), Borroloola, Gunbalunya, Jabiru, Bulman, Beswick, Barunga and Manyallaluk.

During these visits the Officer dealt with 515 enquires from local consumers and businesses. These enquires covered a wide range of issues but one was particularly common, issues around purchasing faulty vehicles without adequate support from the trader. Other issues raised included: general warranties, mobile phone plans, faulty phones, returning faulty goods, door-to-door traders, residential tenancy and various scams.

On communities that had repeat visits it was rewarding to hear that many locals were now well aware of the high prices charged for family photos and were confident to enforce their ACL rights. These visiting traders now often get little business from communities where this issue has been communicated beforehand.

One of the most pleasing signs on communities is community leaders and Traditional Owners dropping by and collecting pamphlets and information to spread throughout their community. We can never underestimate the importance or impact of creating consumer affairs advocates across remote Northern Territory.



The Do Not Knock stickers are particularly popular on Aboriginal communities. It is an offence for sales people to door knock premises displaying this sign. It is only one of many materials that we handout during outreach trips to remote parts of the Northern Territory.

Residential Tenancies Information Sessions

Our Outreach Officer provided residential tenancies information sessions to property managers and landlords in the Darwin and regional areas, including Katherine and Alice Springs during this reporting period.

The information provided covered landlords and tenants' rights and responsibilities under the *Residential Tenancies Act*, with a specific focus on sections of the Act that are most often raised by agents and landlords. The Tenancy Training sessions included 18 real estate agencies who were visited during the year and in total 97 agents attended the presentations.



Residential tenancies are particularly common in the Northern Territory and amount to over 50% of enquires to Northern Territory Consumer Affairs.

Private Landlord Training

Private landlord information sessions are offered for those landlords that manage their rental properties themselves. Three private landlord training sessions were conducted with a total of 12 attendees participating in the sessions this year.

Training was also provided for people supported by the Salvation Army Sunrise Centre in Darwin, which included;

- Two Tenancy Training presentations which were attended by 25 program participants and,
- Four Australian Consumer Law (ACL) presentations attended by 37 program participants.



Interdepartmental & Service Provider Meetings

The Outreach Officer participated in a range of meetings also attended by local service providers, legal community groups and other agencies such as the Ironbark Aboriginal Corporation. These meetings included the Darwin Priority Working Group (Chaired by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet), the Community Legal Education Network and the North Australia Aboriginal Legal Aid Service. These meetings provide an important opportunity for networking with groups that also attend Aboriginal communities offering their services to Aboriginal people as they allow agencies to understand the role that each of the members have in the community. They remain an important opportunity to connect with other agencies and learn about current local issues.

WEBSITE

The Northern Territory Consumer Affairs website is a comprehensive source of consumer affairs information for Territorian's. It includes information resource documents across the broad range of legislation that we administer. The website is an important resource, allowing both our call centre staff and our social media posts to direct people to more detailed information. It also allows the public to learn about their consumer rights while providing detailed information regarding residential and business tenancies and how the information applies to their specific circumstance, without having to call us.



NT Consumer Affairs website: <http://www.consumeraffairs.nt.gov.au>

The website covers 22 broad topics for consumers and 10 broad topics for businesses. Each of these topics have their own webpage which clearly explains the issue and then goes on to provide specific, detailed information to help solve the client's problem. Most pages also link through to PDFs with further information and resources. Many of these resources are comprehensive and stand alone as a complete resource on a certain subject, such as the Guide to Renting in the NT.

The major components of our website include topics such as Residential Tenancies, Consumer Rights, Scams, Motor Vehicles, Complaints and Disputes and much more. We also have

sections aimed towards Aboriginal Territorians, Senior Territorians and Younger Territorians, all who are often targeted by unscrupulous traders. The main aim of our website is help empower and educate Territorians about their consumer rights. The less you understand your rights, the less you have those rights.

The website is not a static resource, it is always being updated and new resources are often added. This is especially common with periodic emerging consumer affairs issue. We use our social media and call centre questions to drive changes to our website content.

Our social media presence on Facebook is an important tool to communicate directly to Territorians, especially after hours, straight into their homes. Our website resources are often utilised with many of our Facebook posts directing our Facebook followers to our website for more detailed information.

The Northern Territory covers a vast area with many people living remotely. Many of these people are Aboriginal people who are often multilingual but do not have English as their first language. Due to their friendly, trusting nature they are often specifically targeted by scammers and overpriced door to door salesmen. Many sections of our website are written in a simple, straight forward manner to ensure that the information can be understood by all Territorians, regardless of their level of English comprehension.

There is also a section that includes a host of 'Easy English' Fact Sheets written specifically for training providers and educators who work with migrants, refugees and Aboriginal Territorians who have English as their 2nd or 3rd language.

Finally the website acts as a portal to other online resources we have developed, including the MyFuel NT web app, ShopNT app, RentNT app, and our social media presence on Facebook and YouTube.



Pamphlets promoting the various apps provided by NT Consumer Affairs.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Northern Territory Consumer Affairs has two social media platforms, Facebook and YouTube. There are over 150,000 Facebook users in the Northern Territory, an incredible number considering our total population of 246,000 people. The high use of Facebook is attributable to the high proportion of Territorians with close family ties interstate and also the general remoteness of the Territory. Facebook helps reduce the feeling of isolation for many Territorians. These platforms provide a cost effective method for NT Consumer Affairs to connect broadly with many Territorians.



Facebook's chronological format allows us to post on trending consumer affairs issues, allowing Territorians to get accurate, up to date Territory specific information. We also use our social media presence to promote broad Australian consumer affairs campaigns. These campaigns include shared resources with other consumer affairs and fair trading agencies interstate as well as the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC).

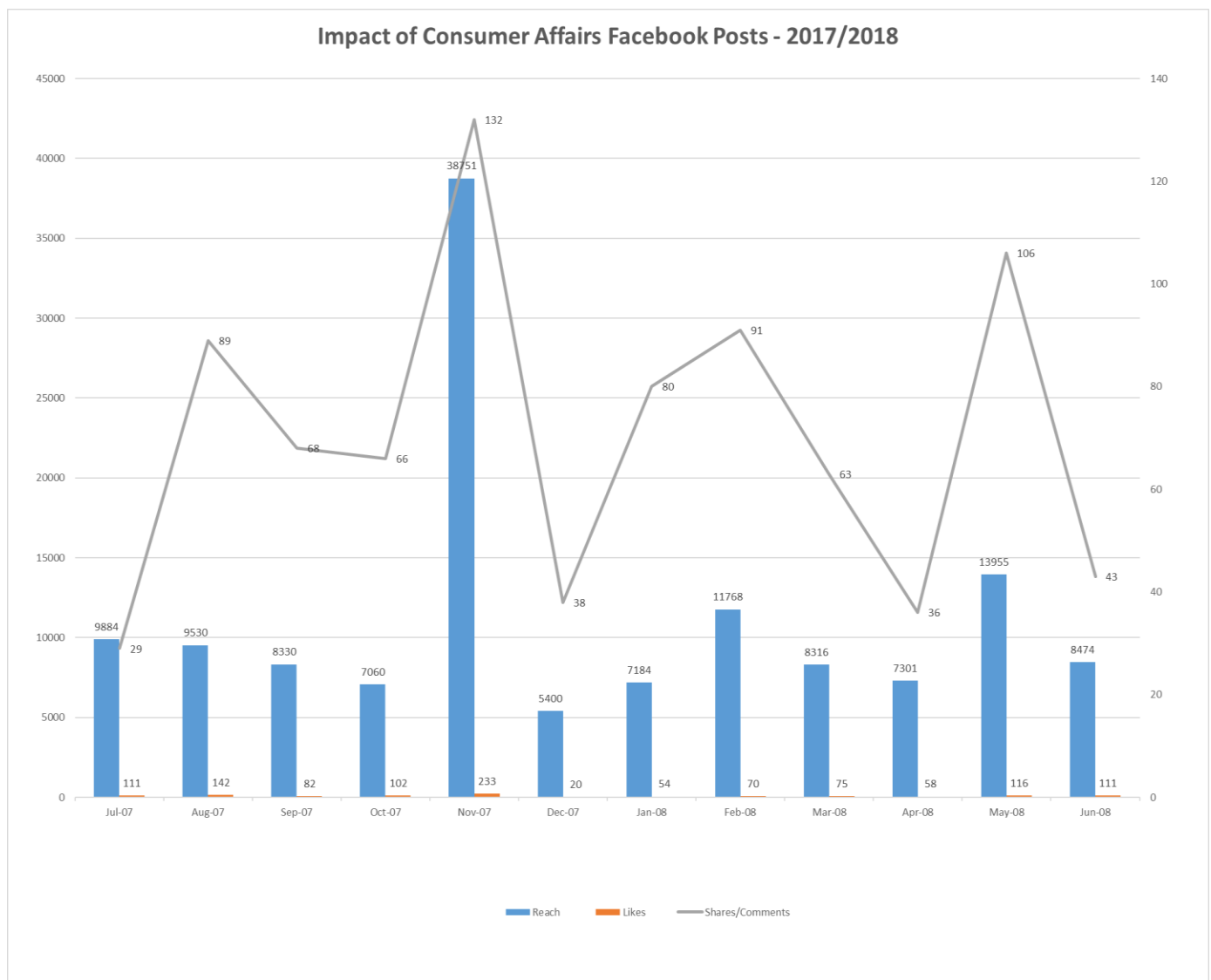
Information provided through the NT Consumer Affairs Facebook posts this year included, but were not limited to, subjects such as;

- Romance, taxation, phishing scams
- Advice about vehicle faults and vehicle purchasing
- Travelling con men
- Residential tenancy advice
- Door to door sales rip offs, especially those operating in Aboriginal communities, and
- General consumer advice.

Our Facebook page is only one facet of our engagement and we understand it only will ever have limited engagement. Therefore, our Facebook page is only one of many tools we use to engage with all Territorians. The page sits in partnership with our face to face outreach

program to more remote parts of the Territory, our office facilities in both Darwin and Alice Springs and our call centre.

A comprehensive summary of our Facebook statistics for 2017-2018 can be found below. Over the past year our Facebook followers climbed from 1378 to 1583, a total 205 additional followers. This year we placed 198 posts on Facebook reaching 135,953 Facebook followers, 1174 likes and 841 shares. We use this online engagement to quickly provide specific answers to Territorians however should the answer require a more complex response the enquirer is then referred to our call centre.



FAIR TRADING

Northern Territory Consumer Affairs is an independent office within the Department of Attorney – General and Justice that is the responsible body for administering 12 key pieces of legislation that ensures the rights and responsibilities of Territorians are upheld.

A small team of dedicated Fair Trading Officers are available to assist clients with queries and concerns relating to the legislation administered. Our offices are conveniently located in the Met building in Casuarina and the Green Well building in Alice Springs.

Among the services provided are a call center which is staffed Monday to Friday during the hours 8:30 am and 4:00 pm as well as a ‘walk in’ service that allows clients to speak with a Fair Trading Officer face to face. Clients also have the option of emailing or posting their enquiries to our office for a written response.

The call center is the first point of contact for the general public seeking assistance for all manner of issues that may or may not necessarily fall under the legislation administered. Fair Trading Officers are required to have a comprehensive knowledge of the current legislation and other available services in order to refer clients on to the appropriate channels for assistance.

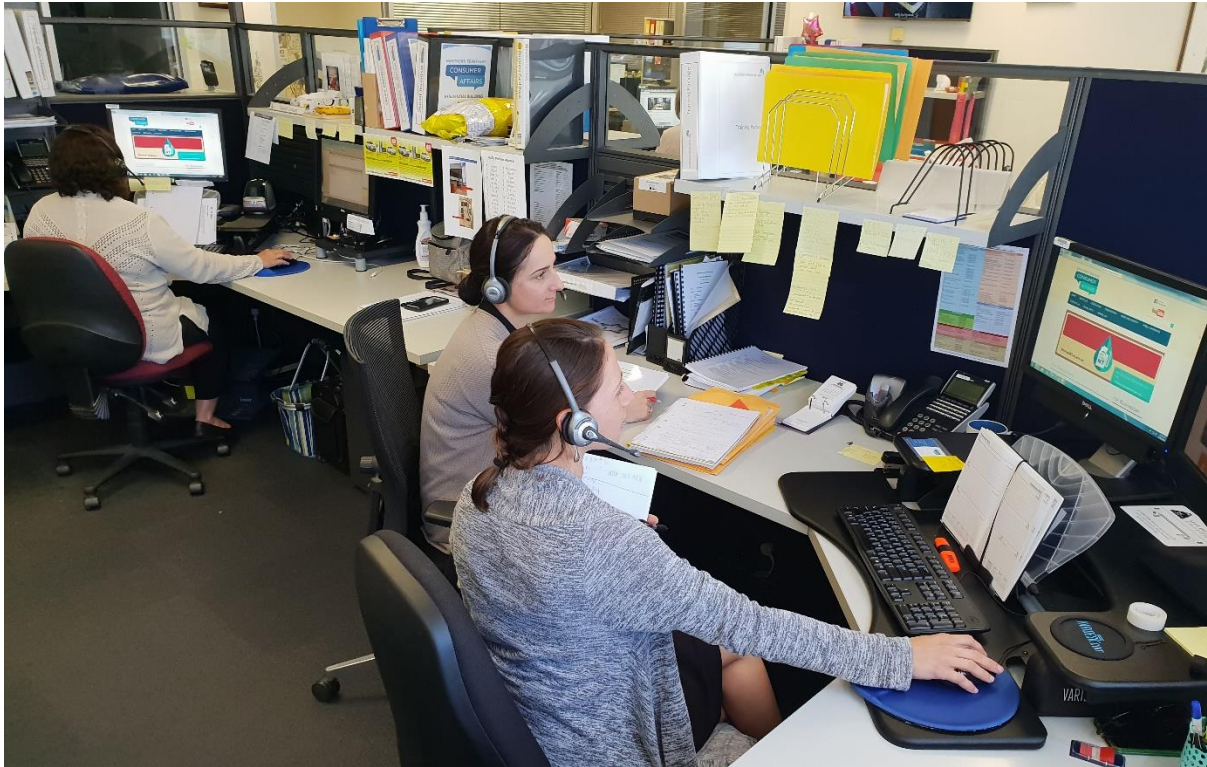
In addition to providing advice, NT Consumer Affairs also provides a non-binding conciliation service between consumers and traders in order to assist in resolving matters that are in dispute under the Australian Consumer Law. Consumers may lodge a Consumer Conciliation Request (a formal written complaint) with our office to request assistance with this process.

The Fair Trading Officer’s role is varied and includes promoting responsible business conduct by providing educational material and advice to local businesses engaged in trade or commerce by way of trader visits and written advice. They may also attend Community Expos to raise consumer awareness of their rights and responsibilities under the legislation administered. Fair Trading Officers routinely visit local Electoral offices to provide Members of the Legislative Assembly with informative material and an explanation of Northern Territory Consumer Affairs role within the community.

Telephone Enquiry Service

The Northern Territory Consumer Affairs call centre received a total of 10,436 calls in the last financial year with the majority of calls relating to the *Residential Tenancies Act* (approx. 54%) and the Australian Consumer Law (approx. 38%).

Fair Trading Officers take great care to gather as much information as possible about the situation being conveyed in order to provide accurate, appropriate and timely advice to the caller.



NT Consumer Affairs call centre staff operating our public (08) 8999 1999 or 1800 019 319 numbers.

Confidential records of all calls are logged for quality assurance, training purposes and marketplace monitoring. Where a spike in complaints surrounding a particular trader is observed, further investigation and education may take place.

In instances where the issue relates to legislation outside our jurisdiction, the client may be referred on to a number of other agencies for advice. Referrals made up just 3.5% of calls this financial year which would indicate our efforts to educate consumers of our role have been successful.

The call center in Darwin is staffed by three full-time staff and one part-time staff member. In the past financial year the abandoned call rate averaged 1.52%, well below the targeted 6% which demonstrates the efficiency and commitment by all staff to work together as a team to ensure a high level of service is maintained.

Trader Visits

Northern Territory Consumer Affairs staff undertake trader visits on a regular basis. This may be in response to an identified need for education based on data collected by our office, or as part of our focused engagement. Visits involve Fair Trading Officers attending a business, providing information and guidance including educational material such as fact sheets and industry specific guides on the Australian Consumer Law and refund signage. These visits also provide an opportunity to discuss any issues the trader may have about their statutory rights and responsibilities. While these visits primarily focus on the Australian Consumer Law,

business owners often have queries in relation to business tenancies, uncollected goods and other issues.

Face to face visits are also an excellent way of building rapport and explaining the extent of our services. We explain how our formal conciliation process works, acting as an impartial conciliator, should a consumer wish to engage our services to reach a resolution in relation to faulty goods or inadequate services.

During this financial year NT Consumer Affairs staff conducted 830 trader visits in Darwin, Palmerston, Katherine, Tennant Creek and Alice Springs as well as numerous regional and remote areas.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

NT Consumer Affairs offers a free formal conciliation service to consumers and traders who may be in dispute regarding matters covered under the Australian Consumer Law. Almost all Consumer Conciliation Requests (CCR's) are received from the consumer.

Consumer Conciliation Request applications may be completed online or a hard copy downloaded via our website for submitting via fax, email or by hand delivery.

It is a prerequisite that the consumer has attempted to resolve the matter in writing prior to lodging a Consumer Conciliation Request with our office. NT Consumer Affairs has sample letters available on the website that can be used as a guide when writing to a business to request a remedy.

Once a Consumer Conciliation Request is received, it is assessed for suitability in line with the legislation. In order for a request to be accepted, a number of conditions must be met and supporting evidence received such as;

- A completed and signed application form (CCR)
- Proof of purchase for the goods or services, and
- A copy of the letter sent by the consumer to the trader requesting a remedy and the traders' response, if any.

It is also recommended that the consumer attach any other evidence that may be of assistance such as the original quote, written reports in relation to the faulty goods or service and any photographic evidence available.

Once the matter has been assessed as falling within the guidelines of the Australian Consumer Law, the application is referred to a Fair Trading Officer for conciliation.

As part of the conciliation process, the Fair Trading Officer will contact the trader with the consumers' claims and request a written response to those claims. They may also bring to the traders attention any alleged contraventions of the Australian Consumer Law for their consideration. They will then attempt to reach a resolution that both parties can agree upon.

Where a matter cannot be resolved through the conciliation process, either party has the option of pursuing the matter further through the Northern Territory Civil and Administrative Tribunal's small claims process up to and including the value of \$25,000.

Throughout this financial year, our office received a total of 220 formal Consumer Conciliation Requests. This is an increase of almost 32% compared to the previous financial year which may be due to increased awareness by consumers in relation to our services.

Conciliation was successful in approximately 50% of accepted Consumer Conciliation Requests, where by a mutually agreeable resolution was reached between the parties.

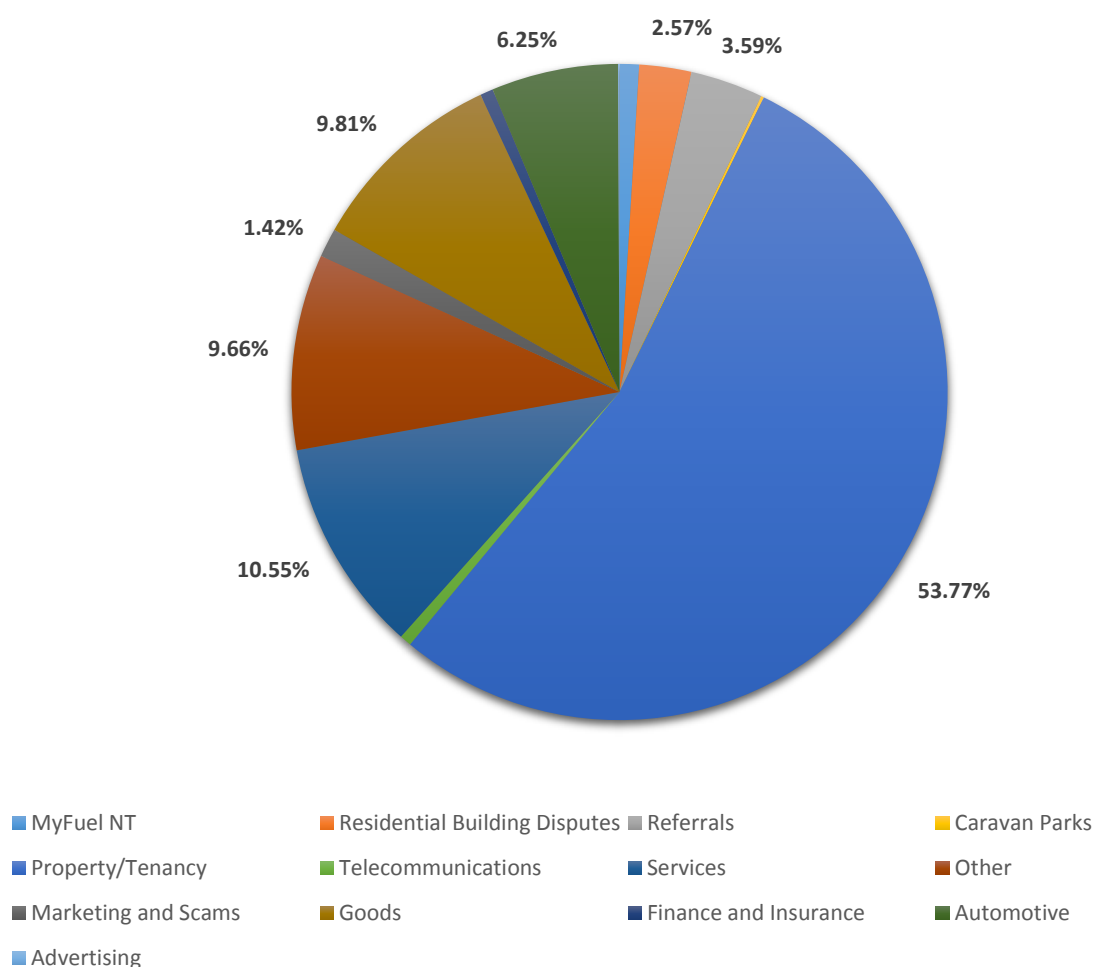
By the Numbers

The total number of enquiries received by NT Consumer Affairs received for the 2017-2018 financial year via telephone, email and in person combined increased by 243 to a total of 16,381 representing a slight increase in relation to the previous reporting year. The number of trader visits also increased significantly from 311 to 830 as did the number of Consumer Conciliation Requests received from 167 to 220. In addition, there was a further 8 enquires received via the NT Consumer Affairs Facebook page.

Telephone Enquiries

Telephone enquiries made up 10,436 of all general enquiries received. As was the case in previous years, the majority of calls related to residential tenancies. The chart below provides a breakdown of telephone enquiries received by type.

2017-2018 Telephone Enquiries by type



Walk-in Enquiries

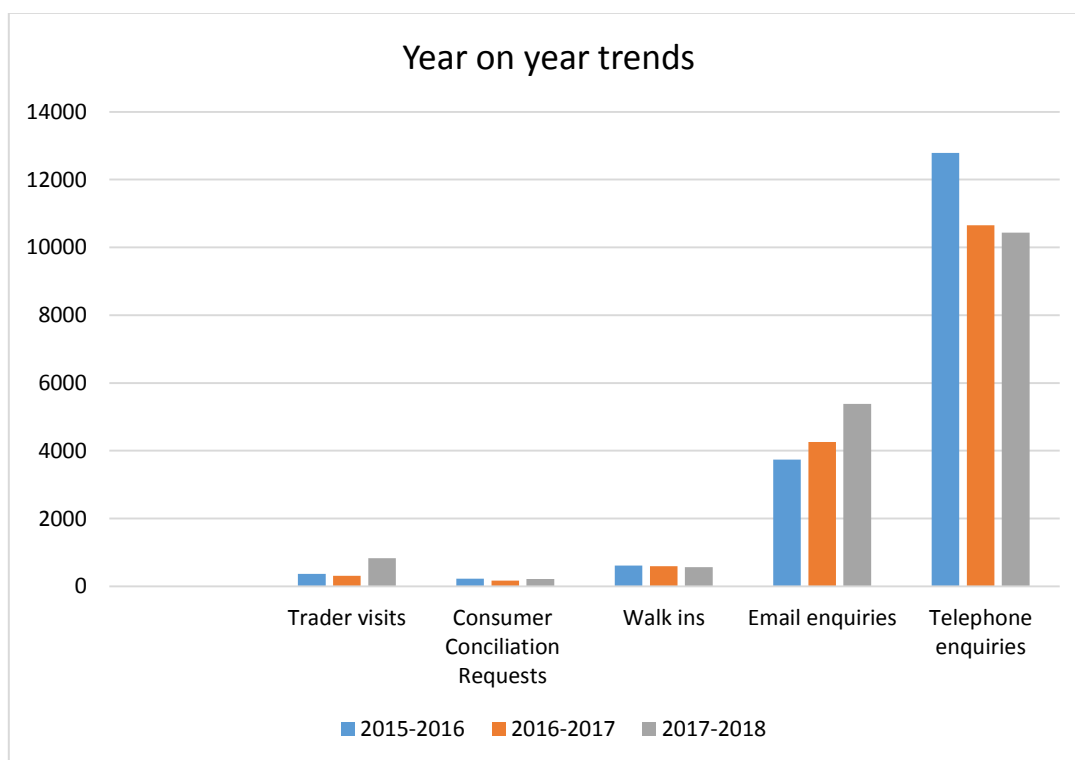
Some clients prefer speaking to a person face to face when seeking information and advice. NT Consumer Affairs caters to all consumers' needs and individual circumstances and offers a free 'walk in' service between the hours of 8 am and 4 pm. No appointment is necessary. The total number of clients who attended the offices in Casuarina and Alice Springs this financial year amounted to 565.

Email Enquiries

The number of email enquiries received this financial year totalled 5,380 representing a 26% increase compared to the 4259 received for the previous reporting period. The increase is not surprising as more and more people use email as a quick and simple way to ask questions or seek information. Email enquiries are the second most popular form of enquiry after telephone enquiries which is consistent with most previous year's trends. NT Consumer Affairs does on occasion receive enquiries via fax and general mail however this is becoming less common as more consumers embrace technology.

Overall trends

NT Consumer Affairs staff has had a steady workload throughout the year with a number of areas seeing an increase. Although the number of telephone enquiries have slightly decreased over the last few years, the number of email enquiries has steadily increased. The graph below shows the year on year trends for the last three financial years;



BUSINESS TENANCIES

The Commissioner of Consumer Affairs holds statutory responsibility for the *Business Tenancies (Fair Dealings) Act*. The Act provides a regulatory framework for landlords and tenants who hold leases mostly relating to retail tenancies.

Both landlords and tenants have rights and responsibilities under this Act that include;

- landlords having to provide prospective tenants a Tenant Disclosure Statement at least seven days before a lease is entered into,
- contributions by the tenant for any outgoings must be specified and agreed to in the lease, and.
- prohibitions on unconscionable behaviour by both parties.

Tenants and landlords should also be aware that the term of a retail lease must be at least five years, unless special steps are taken to waive this requirement. If the lease is required to be less than five years, there must be written certification by a legal practitioner.

Where a dispute arises between the landlord and tenant, the parties are encouraged to contact NT Consumer Affairs for advice. A voluntary conciliation provision is provided if the parties cannot come to an agreement in relation to the dispute. If this process is not successful or the parties refuse to take part, the Commissioner has the authority to issue a “Certificate of Failure to Resolve a Tenancy Claim” which enables the parties to settle the matter through a Court of competent jurisdiction.

This reporting period saw a significant increase in the number of business tenancy applications with a total of 14 applications received, the previous year was five. Of the 14 applications, eleven had Certificates of Failure to Resolve a Tenancy Claim issued, one negotiated an agreement between the parties themselves, one was closed due to requested information not being supplied and one was conciliated by NT Consumer Affairs with an agreement reached between the parties.



RESIDENTIAL BUILDING DISPUTES

Building your own home is a huge investment, not only in monetary terms but also emotionally and is often the biggest investment people will make in their lifetime.

When the relationship between a builder and the consumer fails it can be traumatic for both the consumer and the builder. A number of factors can be involved which include the builder failing to complete the work on time, not following the building plans or it could be that a home owner has expectations that are unreasonable.

NT Consumer Affairs provides advice and assistance to both owners and builders in regard to the Residential Building Dispute function and Regulations of the Building Act (Resolution of Residential Building Work Disputes) Regulations. In this respect, the role of the Commissioner of Residential Building Disputes (the Commissioner) as an impartial and independent umpire between builders and owners. The Commissioner may mediate or conciliate disputes as well as make binding determinations and rectification orders when a complaint is received from an owner who alleges residential building work is defective.

Only certain building types are associated with these applications and include Class 1a, Class 2 or Class 10 buildings. Applications for defective work can be in relation to structural defects, non-structural defects, non-completion of building work or a consumer guarantee dispute.

There are cases where a Negotiated Agreement process can occur through an application for mediation or conciliation where the matter can be discussed between the parties and a convenor. The purpose of these conferences is to resolve the dispute amicably.

During this reporting period a total of 217 calls were made to the call centre in relation to residential building matters. A total of six formal applications were received by the Commissioner. All six applications related to consumer guarantees.



COMPLIANCE

The compliance unit undertook a range of actions against regulated entities for unfair and illegal practices over the past year. A risk based approach is implemented to guide and influence the trading behaviour of businesses while making the best use of our resources. While our key objective is voluntary compliance, we will take enforcement action as appropriate to protect the interests of consumers and ensure a fair and compliant marketplace.

A highlight of activities undertaken and the outcomes achieved by the compliance unit during 2017-18 follows.

MyFuel NT Web Application

The Northern Territory Government introduced a mandatory retail fuel price reporting scheme by amendments to the *Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading Act* in May 2017 and the *Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading (Fuel Retailers) Regulations 2017* which came into effect on 1 November 2017.

This legislation provided for the publication of prices of prescribed fuels available for retail sale at service stations across the NT. Through the collaborative efforts of NT Consumer Affairs, the Department of Treasury and Finance, and the Department of Corporate and Information Services, a website and web application known as MyFuel NT was developed as a digital solution to provide reliable, real-time fuel price and availability data to the public.

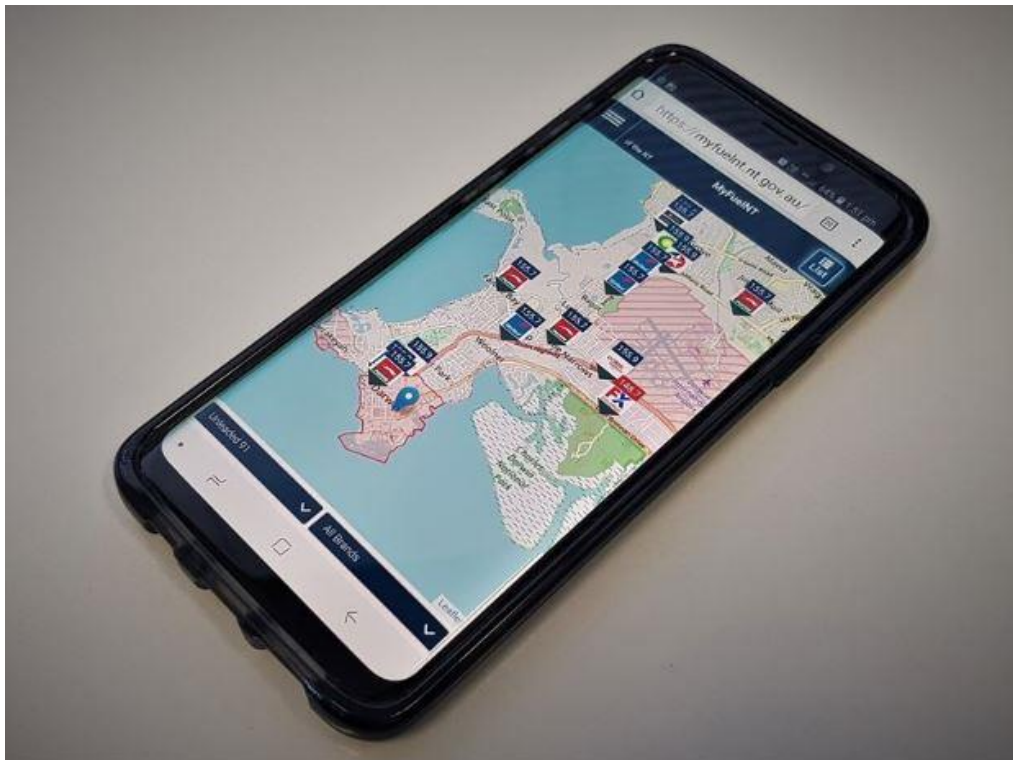
Under the administration of NT Consumer Affairs, 196 fuel outlets were registered and fuel price reporting online via the MyFuel NT website was facilitated resulting in the successful public delivery of the system on 1 November 2017.



One of the various promotional images used to promote the MyFuel NT web app.

The MyFuel NT system provides consumers access to real-time fuel pricing information from their desktop computer or mobile device connected to the internet, allowing price comparison to assist in making more informed decisions about where to purchase fuel anywhere in the NT. The website had over 20,000 users and almost 60,000 hits by the end of June 2018.

MyFuel NT also includes a function which allows consumers to report a price mismatch to NT Consumer Affairs if they encounter a fuel price at the bowser or on a price board which does not match the price as reported online by the fuel outlet.



The map function of the MyFuel NT web app displays the fuel outlets and current fuel prices.

Compliance officers assessed and investigated eleven My Fuel NT price mismatch reports lodged by consumers.

In one case, an Alice Springs consumer submitted a price mismatch report when charged 6 cents per litre more at the bowser than the price Coles Express had reported on the MyFuel NT website. The investigation of this case resulted in enforcement action when Eureka Operations Pty Ltd trading as Coles Express was issued an infringement notice for the sale of fuel at a price other than the reported price. The fine, paid by Coles Express, was the first issued for contravention of the Fuel Retailers provisions under the *Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading Act*.

In the period 1 November 2017 to 30 June 2018, 480 visits were conducted to check on fuel outlets' compliance with the scheme in the Darwin, Palmerston, Litchfield, Katherine, Top-End Rural, Barkly, Central Australia and East Arnhem regions.

In addition, 173 contacts were made with the more remote outlets through desk-top monitoring to promote and test scheme reporting compliance.

Colin Thompson permanently restrained from trading in the NT

An investigation into the business conduct of Mr Colin Richard Thompson who traded as Esoteric Mind Specialist and The Addiction Doctor, a case previously reported, reached a resolution this year.

Mr Thompson promoted himself as a mind communicator and claimed he had the ability to instantly and permanently cure a wide range of medically incurable ailments and addictions by communicating with a person's sub conscious mind. Mr Thompson had no medical knowledge or qualifications and was unable to substantiate the efficacy of his purported treatment.

On 20 July 2015 the Commissioner of Consumer Affairs issued a public warning to Territorians not to deal with Mr Thompson and action was taken to shut down his public website.

Legal proceedings were initiated in the Darwin Local Court on 15 June 2017 culminating in Court Orders on 6 November 2017 whereby Mr Thompson was permanently restrained from conducting business in the NT relating to mind communication and supernatural healing to cure medical conditions and addictions. The Court further ordered that Mr Thompson was restrained from making any representation to the effect that he has the ability to cure addiction and medical conditions by mind communication and supernatural healing, for a period of five years.

This case serves as an example of the action taken to prevent consumer harm by unfair practices which play on those at their most vulnerable.

Upholding Residential Tenancies Laws

Informing tenants, landlords and real estate agents about their rights and obligations under the *Residential Tenancies Act* is a key role for NT Consumer Affairs.

During this past year the compliance unit investigated potential breaches of the *Residential Tenancies Act* concerning the improper management of tenants' security deposits at the end of a residential lease. In response to findings of non-compliance in submitting unclaimed funds as prescribed, to the Tenancy Trust Account administered by the Commissioner of Tenancies, one long-term Darwin real estate agency acted to rectify the issues by implementing a raft of measures including:

- The adoption of additional measures and accountancy advice relating to trust accounting provisions of the *Residential Tenancies Act* and the *Agents Licensing Act*.
- Amendment of administrative procedures by the introduction of monthly reviews in relation to the status of security deposits to ensure that any unclaimed deposits are dealt with in accordance with legislative requirements.
- The real estate agency staff undergo further training on statutory obligations to ensure future compliance.

Travelling con men and white van scammers

The 2017-18 year has seen the lowest ever reported incidence of travelling con men activities in the Northern Territory.

Our previous efforts in working with industry and regulatory partners to implement strategies aimed to stymie the ability of travelling scammers to dupe Territory consumers, appear to have taken hold.

In the past year we received no reports of travelling bitumen bandits who offer cheap but dodgy bitumen laying work before moving on quickly to their next target.

In April 2018 we received information from NT Police about a report of white van scammers selling home audio equipment from a hired vehicle at two different locations. As is typically the case these incidents involved consumers being approached whilst stopped at traffic lights and in local shopping centre carparks with offers of a bargain of a lifetime. However, as our education campaigns encourage, the consumers involved were able to provide valuable details about the scammers, but no consumer detriment was incurred.

Statistics

Investigations conducted	23
Investigations concluded	22
Traders placed on notice	2
Investigations referred for legal action	1
Infringement Notices issued	1
Trader Engagement	2
Compliance education provided	8

ALICE SPRINGS REGIONAL OFFICE

The Alice Springs Consumer Affairs office oversees all functions of Consumer Affairs throughout the southern region of the Northern Territory. The office comprises two staff reporting to the Deputy Commissioner and Commissioner in Darwin.

Over the reporting year the Alice Springs staff were busy managing a range of activities across the region. A summary of some of the activities and achievements follows:

Community Engagement

The Alice Springs staff have visited all Electorate Officers for the Members of the Legislative of Assembly within the region providing details of NT Consumer Affairs services. This engagement included providing an updated folder of information about NT Consumer Affairs roles and responsibilities including information about the RentNT app, ShopNT app, MyFuel NT website as well as, Do not Knock posters, stickers and copies of our YouTube videos.

Other activities include setting up information stalls in both local shopping centres, at the Alice Springs Plaza and Yeperenye Shopping centre. These stalls were set up as a lead into the festive season. This time of year provides staff the opportunity to inform consumers undertaking their Christmas shopping of their consumer rights around, consumer guarantees, layby, gift vouchers and purchasing online. With the MyFuel NT web app commencing on 1 November 2017, a large number of consumers were shown how to use the app to benefit from information about the cheapest fuel prices in their area.

Information was also provided on tenancy and landlord issues under the *Residential Tenancies Act*, *Caravan Parks Act* and *Business Tenancies Act*. A total of 55 members of the public were given advice on those days.

The Alice Springs staff also undertake regular weekly fuel board/ bowser fuel price checks under the MyFuel NT scheme to report any anomalies to the Compliance unit for further investigation.

Residential tenancy information sessions were conducted in October 2017 to all seven Real Estate Agents in Alice Springs. These also included an information session for private landlords where seven new landlords attended; in total 40 people were informed of their rights and responsibilities under the *Residential Tenancies Act*.

Ensuring Real Estate Agents and private landlords are informed about their rights and responsibilities reduces the number of residential tenancy disputes and enquiries to our offices.

Residential tenancies advice continues to be a large part of our work with demand for advice and interpretation of the *Residential Tenancies Act*, from tenants, agents and landlords, remaining high.



Karlu Karlu / Devils Marbles Conservation Reserve, the major tourist attraction in the Tennant Creek region.

Trader visits Tennant Creek and Elliott region

The Alice Springs staff travelled to Tennant Creek and Elliott during this reporting period, conducting trader visits to outback stores, roadhouses and caravan parks along the way. During these face to face visits information packs relating to the traders rights and responsibilities under the Australian Consumer Law (ACL) were provided. Fuel price checks on the bowsers and price boards were also viewed to confirm that fuel outlets their compliance under the MyFuel NT scheme.

One fuel outlet operator advised that at first they were against the reporting requirements relating to the MyFuel NT web app, however they were now using the app to their advantage. Where they had previously travelled 100km either side of their outlet to check out the opposition's prices, they now use the app to view the prices of other retailers enabling them to make a decision whether to decrease their price to encourage consumers to stop and fuel up with them.

Trader Visits Alice Springs region

A total of 105 business were visited during the reporting year. Trader information packs were distributed to all business visited.

Alice Springs staff were invited to return to a local business to conduct an information session on the Australian Consumer Law Consumer Guarantees to their staff. The owners of the business advised NTCA that they considered it important that their staff were better informed of their rights and responsibilities as it would help them to eliminate consumer complaints. The information provided was focused around handling customer complaints, consumer guarantees, repair notices, refunds, warranties, quotes and estimates, proof of transactions, itemised bills and uncollected goods.

An information session was also provided to a local car rental agency at the Alice Springs Airport following an invitation from the manager. The information provided focused on the ACL Rental Cars industry guide, along with consumer guarantees, refunds, quotes and estimates and handling customer complaints.

Having staff on the ground in the Alice is essential to ensure we service our southern regional clients who may have differing problems to those located in the Top End.

The following are examples of conciliations we helped with this reporting year.

Visits were undertaken to Catholic Care and the North Australian Aboriginal Justice Agency (NAAJA) staff where they were provided with information about NT Consumer Affairs role and were also given brochures and information focussed on Aboriginal consumer awareness. 105 trader visits were conducted in the region, businesses were provided with a trader information pack, which included a number of fact sheets on the Australian Consumer Law and other legislation relevant to their businesses.

These businesses responded that they welcomed the visit by NTCA staff and advised that they while they didn't have a lot of consumer issues, as they tended to deal with the matters as they came to hand, they would contact NTCA in need.

Consumer Conciliation – Tour Company

A visiting consumer booked a 3 day tour with a local tour company for a tour traveling from Alice Springs to Uluru. A few hours into the trip, the consumer noticed hot air coming through the floor of the bus. The consumer leant over to investigate and their camera slipped from her lap and straight through onto the bitumen road, where the camera consequently totally destroyed.

On return to Alice Springs, the consumer visited the tour company's office to report the incident to the Manager. The consumer was directed to the company's terms and conditions stating they did not accept liability for loss, damage or stolen items. The consumer sought

assistance from NT Consumer Affairs, for the loss of the camera. The consumer was requesting for the camera to be replaced only.

The Fair Trading officer contacted the Tour Company stating although the Terms and Conditions indicated they do not accept liability for lost, damage or stolen items, the Company cannot waive the consumer's rights under the Australian Consumer Law. The company's attempt to deny liability effectively sought to waive the consumer rights. The consumer could not have anticipated that the camera would fall through the floor of the bus on to the road whilst on tour. The tour operator's lack of repair to the hole in the floor of the bus had created the problem and as such the company was liable to cover the consumer's losses.

The Tour Company agreed to provide the Consumer with a replacement camera to the same value of the lost camera.

Consumer Conciliation - Motorbike

An Alice Springs based consumer purchased a racing motorbike for \$12,000 from a business in Queensland. As part of the description at sale the trader had informed the consumer that the motorbike had competed in two race meetings. On arrival of the motorbike to Alice Springs, the consumer noted some anomalies with the bike including that there was no Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) stamped on the headstock and after racing the bike the consumer had encountered a number of mechanical problems. This indicated to the Consumer that the bike had endured a lot more hours racing than what the seller had indicated at the time of the sale. The consumer believed that he was misled at the time of purchase.

The consumer contacted the trader centred on the fact that the bike was not as described and if he had known of the problems and extensive past use he would not have purchased it. The trader responded that the bike was working at its full capacity as a super bike. After conciliating with the trader, he agreed to refund the consumer the full amount of the purchase price for the motor bike (\$12,000) plus \$800 for the cost of repairs.

After not receiving the refund from the trader as discussed. The Fair Trading officer wrote to the trader the consumer sought the assistance of NT Consumer Affairs. The Fair Trading officer wrote to the trader explaining the misleading and deceptive provisions of the Australian Consumer Law (ACL) when describing an item for sale.

The ACL provides protection against misleading advertising. Where an advertised item is described as something that it is not the (ACL) consumer guarantees contains provisions that goods sold must be of an acceptable quality, be free from defects and are fit for any disclosed purpose.

The trader finally arranged a full refund and arranged for the return of the bike to Queensland at no cost to the consumer.

RETIREMENT VILLAGES

There are three retirement villages in the Northern Territory that are regulated by the *Retirement Villages Act*. The Act and associated Regulations ensure the residents of these villages have peace of mind knowing that the operators of these villages have responsibilities that they must follow. The Regulations provide a Retirement Villages Code of Practice that outlines minimum standards that the village operators must practice. This includes convening a Disputes Committee to help resolve disputes between the operator and the resident/s.



Durack Gardens, a newly built retirement village in Durack Heights, Palmerston.

During this reporting period, two calls were received relating to this Act. One call was in relation to the length of period a guest of a resident could stay at the premises and the other was in relation to cleaning the unit after a resident had vacated.

CARAVAN PARKS ACT

Caravan Parks in the Northern Territory as defined by the *Caravan Parks Act*, are regulated by the NT Consumer Affairs. The Commission of Tenancies is also the Commissioner for this Act. The *Caravan Parks Act* is similar in some ways to the *Residential Tenancies Act* where the caravan park operator must have an agreement in place with residents and follow similar processes to finalise a tenancy.

During this reporting period, no formal applications were received in relation to this Act with the call centre reporting twelve calls. The majority of these calls related to provision of advice in relation to the eviction of residents with other calls relating to the behaviour of residents.

OTHER STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Commissioner of Consumer Affairs is the statutory officer responsible for a number of pieces of legislation that Government has directed, through Administrative Orders, the responsibility for Acts placed with the Department of Business.

The Commissioner has also delegated authority for a number of tasks to the Director General of Licensing at the Licensing NT division of the Department of Attorney General and Justice. The following are Acts or Regulations of this nature:

Associations Act

Commercial and Private Agents Licensing Act

The Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading Act—Parts 10 and 14

Consumer Affairs and Fair Trading (Tow Truck Operators Code of Practice Regulations).