





What protections do I have?

Consumer protection laws protect you when you buy goods and services or sign up to loans.

Consumer Action uses consumer protection laws to help you when you have a problem with:

-  payday loans or fast cash
-  renting household items (Rent-to-buy)
-  your gas, water and electricity
-  funeral products
-  a car you have bought
-  debt collectors
-  debt consolidation or debt management
-  borrowed money (loans and credit)
-  phone and internet contracts
-  faulty goods and services
-  a bank



consumer
action
Koori Help

KOORI HELPLINE
1800 574 457

Monday - Friday 10am - 1pm & 2-5pm
koorihelp@consumeraction.org.au



Victorian Aboriginal
Legal Service

1800 064 865
vals@vals.org.au

Financial stress can impact your quality of life and it can be harder to access:



healthy food choices



comfortable and safe housing



further education or keeping up with schooling



the doctor or health service



a good deal on your electricity and gas supply



friends, family and community



the shops and places you need to go



sports or the gym



For many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who call, gas, electricity, water, phone and credit card debt happens most often.



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PAYDAY LOANS FAST CASH THE TRAP WITH SHORT TERM LOANS

Payday loans (short term money, fast cash) are advertised on TV and the internet to tempt you into getting cash quickly to pay bills or money owing

! DEFAULT RATES

If you fail to pay back the loan on the due date you will usually be charged default fees that are added to your debt.

The total amount that can be charged in default fees can be up to twice the amount you borrowed.

Irresponsible Payday lending



! DIRECT DEBIT

When you sign up to a direct debit, lenders can take money straight out of your bank account once money hits it.

This can happen before food, rent and other essential bills are paid.

Payday lenders often get you to sign a document authorising them to automatically direct debit payments from your account.

You may want to stop the direct debits because you want to make payments another way or you no longer want to pay the business at all. Cancelling a direct debit does NOT make the debt go away and it won't stop a payday lender from chasing you for money.

Sometimes your credit report may be affected if you cancel a direct debit and fall behind on making payments to the business.

The law does not allow you to cancel direct debits from your credit card. You can only do this by cancelling your credit card.



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There are better options available than a payday loan

- You can ask for an affordable repayment plan through your bank, electricity, gas, water or phone company by asking to speak to their financial hardship team
- You might be able to get an emergency relief grant for your energy bills
- You might be eligible for a no interest loan to pay for household goods or important services such as medical treatment

If you need help urgently with living expenses, there are emergency relief programs to help you with things like food, transport, housing, essential services and clothing.



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