

# Media release

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Thursday, 8 April 2010

## VICTORIANS DESERVE A BETTER DEAL ON RENTAL HOUSING

Minimum standards to ensure all Victorian rental properties are safe, healthy and affordable to live in are urgently needed, said Victoria's state-wide telephone and web financial counselling service, *MoneyHelp*, today.

*MoneyHelp* was responding to the campaign launched today by the Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) urging decent, not dodgy housing for Victorian renters, after VCOSS found 1 in 10 rental properties in Victoria are unfit for human habitation.

The *MoneyHelp* service is managed by consumer law and advocacy organisation Consumer Action Law Centre. Consumer Action CEO Carolyn Bond said many Victorians in housing stress have been approaching *MoneyHelp* for assistance with financial problems.

"Last month a third of our callers to *MoneyHelp* seeking advice were renters, and two thirds of these renters were in housing stress – they were struggling to pay more than 30% of their income just for rent or were already behind in their rent," says Ms Bond.

"While these renters are often struggling to pay for their housing, they are not necessarily getting a good deal for that money."

Ms Bond said the *MoneyHelp* financial counsellors had come across many problems stemming from poor quality rental housing that were contributing to people's money woes.

"Renters coming to us for financial advice have been living in housing with no or poor insulation, in housing with only one small space heater inappropriate for heating the whole house or in old flats with hardwired expensive heaters. We have also seen renters living in properties with only expensive day-rate hot water heaters."

"Some callers have even found *MoneyHelp* after a direct referral for financial advice by their electricity or gas company because they are struggling to afford their utility bills."

The *MoneyHelp* service is supported by the Victorian Government to provide free, confidential and independent financial advice to Victorians affected by the global economic downturn.

Victorians can visit [www.moneyhelp.org.au](http://www.moneyhelp.org.au) or call the *MoneyHelp* help line on **1800 149 689** to speak to one of our trained financial counsellors.

**Media contact:** Nicole Rich, Director – Policy & Campaigns, Consumer Action Law Centre, M: 0417 348 571

**MoneyHelp** - [www.moneyhelp.org.au](http://www.moneyhelp.org.au) - 1800 149 689  
**Consumer Action** – [www.consumeraction.org.au](http://www.consumeraction.org.au)