

# CHOICE

**252**  
products  
TESTED

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- Electric heaters
- Stand mixers
- Green cleaning products
- Air fryers
- Strollers
- Printers



*Green  
light*

Eco cleaners  
that work



**KIDULT COVER**

Hanging on to  
health insurance



*Fair & square*

How ethical is your chocolate?

# Bittersweet

## Chocolate is complicated

**W**hen CHOICE investigative editor Andy Kollmorgen told me he was planning to cover the ethics of chocolate production, my first thought was “hell yes, great idea Andy!”

Not for altruistic reasons, quite the opposite. I didn't give much thought to deforestation or exploitative supply chains. Selfishly, my brain went: “Let's get this out in time for Easter, CHOICE readers will love this”.

But later, when it came time to edit, my thinking changed dramatically. Andy's story stayed with me – I've been reflecting on it for days.

First and foremost, I've been thinking about the extensive use of child labour in cocoa farming. That's obvious. But being honest, it's the complexity of the situation that's truly haunted me. I was reminded that – even if something objectively horrific is occurring – the solution isn't always simple. You'd think wading in and attacking it head on would fix the problem, but it doesn't.

Sometimes white knighting the situation makes things worse.

To begin with, the term “child labour” is not clear cut – some

countries define a child as under 18, others under 16. Secondly, some of these people are in situations where jobs like these are their only option. Thirdly, completely eliminating that labour could have disastrous implications for the economy in West Africa, which could potentially make life even more difficult for the people already being exploited.

In short, doing the right thing in this situation means doing the right thing thoughtfully, stimulating long-lasting change without doing damage.

Each year, researchers from Macquarie University, University of Wollongong and Open University UK put together the Be Slavery Free Chocolate scorecard – an attempt to evaluate the ethics of chocolate companies from across the world. They track all verifiable documentation in an attempt to figure out which companies are doing the best job of producing ethical chocolate.

You can find out more on page 22, but here are three things that jumped out at me.

Number 1: Advocacy groups, instead of using a name and shame approach, are opting to reward companies that are trying to do the right thing.



Number 2: The brand that won the title of most ethical chocolate did so because it was committed to enacting systemic change, as opposed to quick fixes that seem good on the surface but ultimately aren't effective.

Number 3 is arguably the most important. Change – real change – won't happen unless everyone works together. We can vote with our wallets and support companies for doing the right thing, but governments must support these initiatives.

The real opportunity to enact change lies with the government bodies that have legislative powers. If they don't come to the table, real transformation will always remain out of reach.

**Mark Serrels**  
CHOICE Editorial Director  
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## CHOICE

CHOICE gives you the power to choose the best goods and services, and avoid the worst. Wherever possible, we pay full price for the products we test, so we remain 100% independent. We don't take advertising or freebies from industry. We're not a government body and our consumer publishing and advocacy is almost entirely funded by membership. Membership includes access to services such as CHOICE Help and the Voice Your Choice research program. Our product ratings are

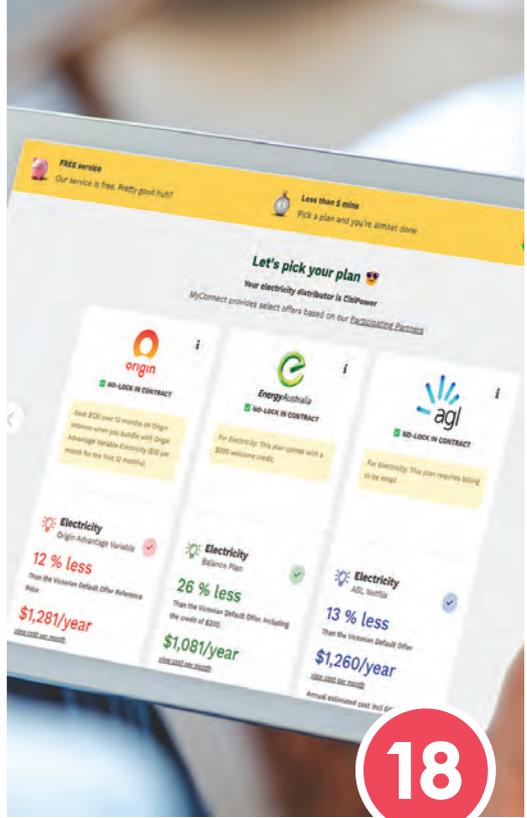
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The latest consumer news in brief  
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## Investment scam 'hydras' exploiting market volatility

**A**uthorities have issued fresh warnings to beware of finance scams after months of sharemarket volatility impacted many Australians' superannuation and investments. Police say scammers are targeting those who have lost money, and the corporate regulator says it has seen "hydra-like" companies associated with fake investment schemes continuing to emerge. The Queensland Police Financial and Cyber Crime Group says many Australians may have seen their superannuation balances decline after recent share price volatility across multiple global markets. Detective superintendent Craig McGrath says criminals running investment scams are trying to "exploit the economic instability" by promising high returns to those affected.

Meanwhile, the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) says it recently received court approval to wind up 95 companies it believes were associated with investment and romance scams. ASIC says the businesses were trying to trick consumers into putting money into fake foreign exchange, digital asset and commodity trading schemes. The regulator says that despite shutdown efforts it continually comes across new phoney investment offers. "These scams are like hydras: you shut down one and two more take its place," says deputy chair Sarah Court.

**LIAM KENNEDY**

## Recall alert: Bugaboo high chair

**S**ome batches of the **Bugaboo Giraffe high chair** (reviewed in *CHOICE* Apr 25) have been recalled as they pose a fall risk. The screws connecting the legs to the frame can become loose and may detach when a baby or toddler is seated, with or without the baby set accessory. Affected batch numbers are: 200001013, 200001001, 200001002, 200001005 and 200001007. Consumers should stop using the high chair immediately and visit [productsafety.gov.au](http://productsafety.gov.au) for more information and next steps.

## Door-to-door solar salespeople on notice

In July last year, the federal government announced a new way for consumer rights groups to bring systemic issues to the attention of the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC). Certain groups, including CHOICE, were given the power to lodge a 'designated complaint'. The ACCC then has to respond within 90 days, a rule that only applies in such situations. The idea is that consumer groups have a special role to play in bringing forth evidence of systemic wrongdoing in the marketplace.

In early April this year, the Melbourne-based Consumer Action Law Centre (Consumer Action) lodged its first designated complaint about door-to-door solar

system sales. "In the past it was encyclopedias and educational software," says Consumer Action CEO Stephanie Tonkin. "Today, we are hearing about the unsolicited door-to-door selling and telemarketing of many items, most notably solar panels. It's an ongoing systemic issue that impacts thousands of Australians and causes real harm, especially to those living in vulnerable circumstances."

Salespeople often show up after someone at the premises has entered their details on a related website, expressing general interest in what's on offer. This is called third-party lead generation, a practice often relied upon by unscrupulous sales-driven businesses.

ANDY KOLLMORGEN



## Big tech accused of anti-competitive conduct

Two of the world's most famous tech companies have faced courts in the United States after being accused of breaking competition laws and hurting consumers. In April, a court found Google had breached regulations designed to uphold competition by acquiring other tech companies in order to monopolise the digital advertising industry. In handing down the decision, the court said Google's actions had harmed consumers looking for information online.

Meanwhile, Facebook owner Meta has also faced court for allegedly breaking the law to gain dominance. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), America's consumer regulator, has accused the company of anticompetitive conduct and engaging in a "systematic strategy" to eliminate threats to its monopoly over personal social networking. The FTC lists Meta's acquisition of platforms like Instagram and WhatsApp as examples of this strategy in practice. When it first announced it was suing Meta, the FTC said the company's conduct had left consumers with few choices for social networking. The case began in April and is expected to last for several months.

LIAM KENNEDY

## Survey shows Australians underestimate scam threat

New data from a cybersecurity company has revealed common misconceptions consumers have about scams, suggesting some could be more vulnerable to online criminals than they think. A survey of over 1000 Australians by Trend Micro found many believe they can avoid scams by not oversharing personal information online and looking out for poor spelling in messages, when these methods are no longer guaranteed to keep consumers safe.

Of the survey respondents, 31% believed they could only fall victim to a scam if they shared too much personal information online. However, a recent spate of data breaches affecting major companies means criminals now have more ways of accessing someone's personal information, even if they haven't shared it publicly.

Meanwhile, 47% of respondents said they thought scam messages and emails can be "easily identified" by their spelling and grammar mistakes. In reality, many scammers are now relying on cheap and easy-to-use generative artificial intelligence programs to craft sophisticated messages that don't come with the misspelt words and garbled grammar that were hallmarks of earlier scam efforts.

LIAM KENNEDY



## Recent cybersecurity breaches underscore need for legal reform

Data breaches are unfortunately still with us, and the recent wave of incidents across Australia highlights just how vulnerable we are. At least 30,000 bank passwords – likely more – belonging to Westpac, NAB, ANZ, and Commonwealth customers were recently stolen after malware attacks. Meanwhile, cyberattacks on major superannuation funds including Australian Super, REST and Hostplus have caused some unlucky members to lose thousands of dollars from their hard-earned retirement savings. (Fortunately, they will likely be reimbursed.)

These breaches are a stark reminder that current laws are not keeping pace with the speed and scale of cyber threats. Our friends at Super Consumers Australia, for example, have called for super funds to be included in the Scams Prevention Framework to protect their members and boost their cyber protections. Broader updates to our privacy laws could also help minimise the amount of personal information available to cyber criminals and encourage better privacy practices for businesses by making them accountable for protecting the data they hold.

We at CHOICE want the federal government to commit to strengthening scam, privacy, and cybersecurity laws and protecting consumers from what seems a never-ending threat of data breaches.

RAFI ALAM

## Plastic bag maker fined for garbage eco claims

The Federal Court has ordered Clorox Australia, the maker of Glad kitchen and garbage bags, to pay a penalty of \$8.25 million for claims that the bags were partly made from recycled 'ocean plastic'.

The ruling, which followed court action taken by the ACCC, came after Clorox admitted that between June 2021 and July 2023 it breached Australian Consumer Law with its "Green 50% Ocean Plastic Recycled" bags.

More than 2.2 million products carried this claim of being made of 50% recycled plastic from the ocean or sea, when in fact the recycled plastic

came from communities in Indonesia situated 50 kilometres from the shoreline.

"Claims about environmental benefits matter to many consumers and may impact their purchasing behaviour. When those claims are false or misleading, this is a serious breach of trust, as well as the Australian Consumer Law," says ACCC chair Gina Cass-Gottlieb.

"This is also a significant matter because consumers have limited or no ability to independently verify the accuracy of the claims made on packaging and it also disadvantages competitors who are accurately communicating their environmental credentials."

**JARNI BLAKKARLY**



## City Beach novelties fail button battery standards

Mandatory button battery safety standards came into effect in Australia in 2022, requiring makers of products that contained them to design secure battery compartments and include warnings and emergency advice on the packaging. The backdrop is the death of three children and the serious injury of at least 44 after ingesting a button battery, whose lolly-like shapes can be irresistible.

But some businesses have failed to comply. In April, the ACCC launched a legal case against the surf, skatewear and accessories retailer City Beach for selling 70 product lines (amounting to 57,358 products) with button batteries that were non-compliant. The novelty products include toys, digital notepads, keyrings, lights and

light-up Jibbitz accessories for Crocs shoes.

"We are concerned that these items are likely to be in homes with young children. Many of these items were brightly coloured or had light-up features or both, meaning young children may be drawn to playing with them," says ACCC deputy chair Catriona Lowe.

"We urge consumers to check the Product Safety Australia website ([productsafety.gov.au](https://productsafety.gov.au)) for details of recalled products and return them to the supplier or to dispose of them safely."

In our most recent button battery safety test, 10 of 15 products had serious failures. See [choice.com.au/buttonbatteries](https://choice.com.au/buttonbatteries).

**ANDY KOLLMORGEN**



## Hollard Insurance taken to court for three-year claim delay

In October last year, a Parliamentary inquiry delivered a damning 457-page report on insurers' responses to the 2022 floods across various parts of Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania. Many policyholders had claims knocked back on flimsy grounds and faced long delays in claims processing. Many waited years to return to their homes due to such delays, or lowball offers that they refused, prolonging the process even further.

In April this year, the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) commenced legal action against Hollard Insurance for taking nearly three-and-a-half years to resolve a claim from a

couple in regional Victoria. It was lodged in October 2021 after a major storm damaged the roof of their home.

"The egregious delay highlights ASIC's concern about the significant rise in general insurance complaints reported to AFCA since the 2022 floods, particularly those involving claim delays," says ASIC deputy chair Sarah Court. "We are taking this case to send a clear message that delays of this magnitude are not acceptable and, in our view, are unlawful. The consequences of Hollard's actions have caused significant harm to the policyholders who remain without their own home three-and-a-half years later."

ANDY KOLLMORGEN

## Car insurers give different prices depending on current insurer

Following a tip from an eagle-eyed CHOICE member, we collected over 100 insurance quotes for a regular family car in NSW to see if the answer to the question 'Who is your current insurer?' affected the quote.



When we said our current insurer was NRMA, the Suncorp brands – AAMI, Suncorp, and GIO – offered a 5% discount compared to a different current insurer. Everyday Insurance, Australian Seniors, Huddle and Real gave a 5.5% cheaper quote when we said our previous insurer was Budget Direct, and a 1.1% cheaper quote when we listed Youi.

The most dynamic pricing we came across was with Bingle. We found price reductions from 7% if we listed our previous insurer as Youi, to 13% if we listed Budget Direct, and around 10% if we said we were with another Suncorp Brand (AAMI, Suncorp) or QBE.

We didn't see any evidence of prices increasing based on the answer to the "current insurer" question, but it is something that we're keeping an eye on.

In the meantime, this finding highlights the importance of getting quotes from multiple car insurers before buying your next policy.

JANE BARDELL

## Google glow up

### GOOGLE TV STREAMER 4K

PRICE \$159

CONTACT [store.google.com](https://store.google.com)



While the Chromecast brand has become almost as ubiquitous as Google itself, its time has now come to an end. The Google TV Streamer 4K has taken its place, and with it comes a new rectangular design. Yes, Google's dongle is dead.

With improved hardware, broad streaming support and better smart home integration, this lightweight hub has a lot to offer if you're buying your first streaming device. But the asking price is higher than older versions, and what was once a great deal now feels like a hard sell for customers considering an upgrade.

This iteration has 32GB of onboard storage, 4GB of RAM, and high-speed ethernet – a first for a Google streaming device. While it's still not the fastest streaming device around and can feel a little clunky from time to time, navigation is smoother and snappier than the Chromecasts of yore. There's more than enough grunt for high-quality 4K video streams.

The home screen acts like a streaming hub, listing content from a variety of services that you may enjoy, alongside new releases, movies and shows to continue watching and

so on. Google's approach to the amalgamated content feed is one of the better examples around, though it's not without its quirks.

New and trending recommendations tend to be quite good, but Google does include lots of content from services you aren't subscribed to (though you can turn off this feature). The 'continue watching' section, which pulls content from all of your subscriptions, is quick and easy to access. But content doesn't consistently appear in this list, which is annoying.

Using voice to search for movies and shows is one of the highlights of this streamer. Not only are voice commands accurate and responsive, they're really fast. In fact, these commands might just be the quickest way to get around.

In many ways, the Google Streamer feels like a culmination of Google's ongoing efforts to turn streaming devices into smart home hubs. It's easier than ever to communicate and control supported devices across your home network – such as smart lights, security cameras and smoke alarms.

Where these controls might have felt like a bit of a novelty with your phone, they're genuinely useful, and faster, via the Google TV Streamer remote. The interface, integration and response times are a bit more robust with the latest update.

Design-wise, the death of the dongle makes way for a larger, flat, rectangular streaming box. While older Chromecasts were designed to sit discreetly behind your TV or computer monitor, the TV Streamer has a rather sleek appearance that looks right at home on a TV cabinet. Though still portable, the larger design does make it a little less travel-friendly than its predecessors.

Overall, it's a great little device in its own right. The TV Streamer is fast, easy to use, has a sleek design and support for just about every streaming app under the sun. But the performance improvements don't feel significant enough to justify the asking price if you already own a last-generation Chromecast. In this case, it's best to wait for a sale.

PETER ZALUZYNY



## Supermarkets face fine threat as new grocery code begins

All of Australia's largest supermarkets will now face multi-million-dollar fines if they mistreat suppliers, after a new mandatory food and grocery code came into effect. Retailers and wholesalers earning over \$5 billion a year from a grocery business are now governed by the updated Food and Grocery Code of Conduct, which was previously voluntary. The new code came into effect on 1 April and decrees how retailers and wholesalers should negotiate with suppliers. It requires them to have written agreements in place, act lawfully and in good faith, and ensure suppliers do not face retribution for exercising their rights under the code.

Businesses found to have breached the code can now be fined the greater of \$10 million or three times the value of the benefit they obtained through their conduct. Previously, retailers could opt-in to being bound by the code and those that did weren't fined for breaches. The new set of rules is the result of a review of the previous code initiated by the federal government last year.

LIAM KENNEDY



## NSW smart meters: Complaints about estimated bills on the rise

A report released by the Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) suggests the mandatory smart energy meter rollout in the state is not serving customers well. One of the supposed key benefits of smart meters is that they eliminate the need for estimated meter readings and ensure customers are billed for actual use. Yet the report shows complaints about estimated bills now account for 13% of all electricity complaints to EWON, compared to 8.7% in 2017. At issue is the fact that in NSW, metering service providers (MSPs) are independent businesses hired by energy retailers and are beholden to no one, including EWON.

"MSPs own and control the smart meter at customer's properties, but no contractual relationship exists between the MSP and the customer," says ombudsman Janine Young. "There is also no regulation requiring MSPs to respond to customer or retailer queries, assist with resolving customer disputes or participate in external dispute resolution schemes, which means EWON's capacity to assist customers is impacted, with complaints taking longer to resolve."

As of mid-2024, 46% of NSW households had smart meters installed. The mandatory rollout across Queensland, New South Wales, the ACT, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania is slated to be complete by 2030.

ANDY KOLLMORGEN

## Jemena fined millions for breaching gas rules

**E**nergy provider Jemena and its subsidiaries have been ordered to pay a fine of \$5.5 million by the Federal Court for breaches of the National Gas rules. The breaches relate to the so-called Day Ahead Auction, which allows companies that transport gas to bid for available pipeline capacity the day in advance. The court heard that between March 2019 and February 2022, Jemena breached the rules surrounding the auction.

Australian Energy Regulator deputy chair Justin Oliver says it's important that gas market participants have the necessary checks and systems in place to support the Day Ahead Auction. "The Day Ahead Auction plays a vital role in making sure spare pipeline capacity can be used to transport gas throughout eastern Australia, but it relies on accurate and timely information to work effectively," he says. "This judgment is a reminder to all gas market participants of their important responsibility to provide accurate information so that the Day Ahead Auction can continue to support the efficient use of natural gas services for the long-term interest of consumers."

JARNI BLAKKARLY



## Superannuation death benefit delays: Do higher fees mean better service?

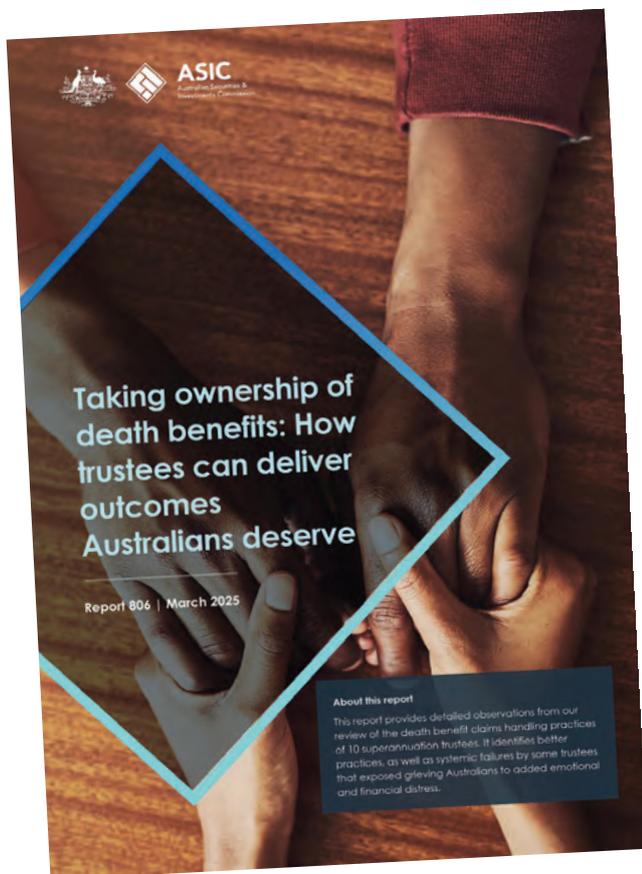
**A**ASIC has released a damning report showing widespread failings by super funds in handling death benefit claims, including delays, unfair treatment, and a total lack of transparency, affecting many grieving Australians.

The regulator found:

- Four in five of the reviewed claims were delayed by issues within the fund's control.
- No funds tracked end-to-end processing times, leaving them blind to delays.
- Larger balances were paid faster, raising serious equity concerns.
- Some trustees are ignoring binding nominations (you can set this up to bind the super fund to give your money to certain people when you die), increasing wait times.

When Super Consumers Australia read the report, we wanted to test the adage 'you get what you pay for'. So we compared the fees charged to the time each fund took to pay a claim. It turns out in this case, the adage doesn't hold true. In fact, our analysis found that the funds that processed death benefits fastest had some of the lowest fees. It's another example of poor service and haphazard costs across the industry. Our findings underscore the urgent need for mandatory customer service standards in superannuation, especially timeframes for processing death benefit payments.

ANTOINETTE DYCE, KATRINA ELLIS AND ROBERTA CHEN





## Growing crypto ATMs put on notice

Australia's anti-money laundering and financial crime agency is warning that some crypto ATM providers may not have appropriate anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism checks in place. The Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre (AUSTRAC) says it has set up a special internal taskforce to address the risks associated with crypto ATMs, also known as crypto kiosks.

"The taskforce has been busy engaging with businesses to understand the risks in their sector and assess their compliance with the law," AUSTRAC CEO Brendan Thomas says. "It identified worrying trends and indicators of suspicious activity, including transactions that may be linked to scams or fraud."

Australia has the highest number of crypto ATMs of any country in the Asia Pacific region. The number of kiosks has grown rapidly – there were 23 in 2019 and 60 in 2022. Today, approximately 1600 crypto ATMs are in use around the country, with new ones regularly installed by digital currency exchanges. The vast majority of transactions at these terminals involve cash deposits to buy the popular bitcoin cryptocurrency.

JARNI BLAKKARLY

## CHOICE submission: Aviation Customer Rights Charter

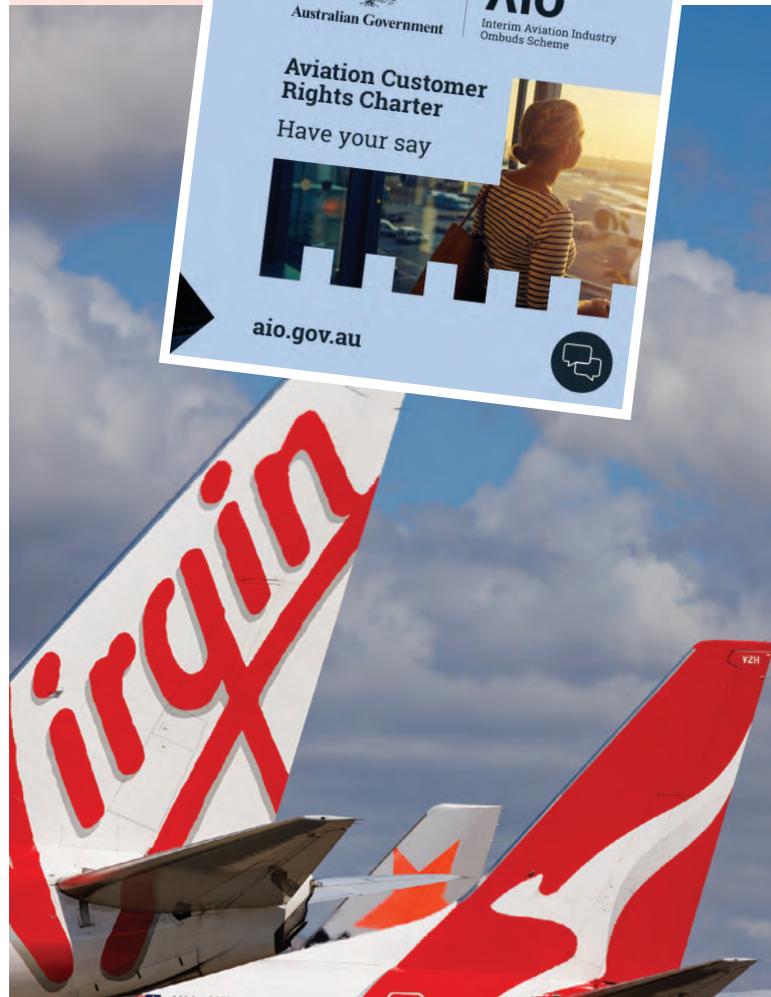
In March, CHOICE made a submission to the Aviation Customer Rights Charter calling on the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts to ensure that the proposed Aviation Customer Rights Charter is clear, strong and comprehensive.

As it currently stands, the draft Charter falls short – it may be weaker than existing consumer laws and the internal policies of some Australian airlines. The Charter is a critical opportunity to provide consumers with strong, adequate protections when they fly, so it is crucial that the Department gets this right.

CHOICE supporters are on board, with 12,295 people endorsing our submission. The message is clear: we want and need a robust Aviation Customer Rights Charter with real protections for Australian travellers.

If you want to read more about our submission, visit [choice.com.au/aviationcharter](https://choice.com.au/aviationcharter).

BEA SHERWOOD





# RANTS AND RAVES

## It's time video games stopped playing us



**F**or as long as I can remember, video games have been a central part of my life. First, I played them. Later, as a journalist, I covered them.

I reviewed video games, I interviewed game developers, spoke about them on TV and radio. All that stuff.

But now that I have kids, my relationship to video games has changed dramatically. Partly because I have two boys who need protecting, but mostly because video games, as we once knew them, have changed.

In many ways for the worse.

Once upon a time you'd head to the store, buy a video game with your cold hard cash, play it through to completion, then rinse and repeat.

Now, instead of playing through a number of different video games that you pay for up-front, kids rotate between a handful of what I call "forever games". Free-to-play games like Fortnite or Roblox. Games that don't necessarily have an end point and instead feel more like online spaces to exist and hang out in.

The reasons behind this cultural shift are numerous and complex, but the end result is a massive, captured audience that many game publishers take full advantage of.

Taking advantage can mean endless pop-up advertising, but it can also mean being pressured into buying huge amounts of in-game currency to spend on cosmetic upgrades, such as new costumes or new weapons. Some of the

techniques involved are manipulative at best – at worst, predatory.

A recent study by the Consumer Policy Research Centre (CPRC) and Monash University found that an astonishing 95% of Australians encountered these deceptive "dark patterns" while playing video games in the past year. 19% made a purchase by accident, 27% felt pressured into buying something, and 30% spent more than they initially intended. At least 52% of gamers also encountered some sort of privacy harm.

These are big, scary numbers.

If you have young children who play video games, you may have experience in this realm. An accidental credit card charge for in-game purchases, or endless requests for "V-bucks" or "Robux". Despite the

fact that some of these games are "free-to-play", children are constantly being incentivised to spend money in certain video game environments, and it's a little bit terrifying. It's terrifying for me, a man in his 40s, who's spent an entire lifetime enmeshed in video game culture. I'm an informed adult who understands every trick in the book – I know exactly what these games are and how they work, but what about the parents who don't?

Unsupervised, it's relatively easy for kids to stumble across something unsuitable in a video game like Roblox – even with some form of parental control enabled. But it's even easier for their algorithms to surface dopamine-driven games designed solely to separate children from their parents' hard-earned money.

**It's completely unreasonable to expect parents to be across every online threat to their children**



Back when I was a games journalist (before I had kids), I often thought of this as an education issue. If parents were more connected to their children's screen habits, maybe these issues would disappear. Nowadays I'm embarrassed by that position. Given the complexities and ever-evolving state of video games and technology, it's completely unreasonable to expect parents to be across every online threat to their children.

In its report, the CPRC recommends Australia establish and enforce a duty of care. Game developers should be testing their algorithms and designs to make sure they hold up ethically – especially if those games feature mechanics that resemble gambling, and especially if the video game is aimed at children.

This isn't your bog-standard moral panic: these are very real threats. If we accept that video games can have a positive impact on children, the reverse holds true. Video games can also have a negative impact on our kids, and we should do everything we can to make sure they're protected.

**MARK SERRELS**

# ASK THE EXPERTS

Got a niggling question our team can help with?

## ASK US

Email your question to [asktheexperts@choice.com.au](mailto:asktheexperts@choice.com.au) or write to Ask the Experts, CHOICE, 57 Carrington Rd, Marrickville, NSW 2204. You can also tap into the 'brains trust' at [www.choice.community](http://www.choice.community).

**Q** Last year I noticed in your toilet paper testing that an Aldi toilet paper product got a good score, but this year it rated pretty poorly. Can you explain why its score has changed?

**A** CHOICE household product testing expert Chris Barnes:

For each toilet paper review, we buy all the supermarket toilet papers we can find and put them to the test. The scores are based on how they compare against each other, so in



each test they are ranked from worst to best. These results then replace the previous year's results.

There are various reasons why a product that does well one year may perform worse the next year. For example, the manufacturer might reduce production costs by using a cheaper or thinner grade of paper, with the result that the toilet paper now punctures too easily and ends up scoring worse as a result. Or, it might be that better products have appeared and so a product that was a winner the previous year now slips lower in the scoring.



**Q** I recently was in the market for a simple phone and decided to buy the Doro 6880, which the CHOICE review indicated was 4G-compatible. Since Optus switched off its 3G, I have discovered that my phone is LTE, but it needs to be VoLTE in order to make and receive calls now the 3G network is gone. Is there anything I can do?

**A** CHOICE tech expert Denis Gallagher:

I'm sorry to hear about your experience – this really isn't good enough. In the past, whether a phone supported LTE or VoLTE was not a big issue for owners of simple phones, as long as a 3G network existed so you could make and take a voice call and send a text.

I contacted Doro on your behalf and was told the company released

a software update to provide VoLTE settings for the phone so users could continue to make phone calls. The problem is, even with this update the onus on supporting VoLTE still lies with the network provider. The local distributor of Doro could only confirm that support was available for the Doro 6880 (with the software update) on Telstra and Vodafone as of the beginning of this year, which might explain why you aren't having any luck with Optus.

Although the network shutoff had been proposed for a few years. It seems that the speed with which 3G was finally cut off has caught out many mobile phone suppliers. If you bought the phone in the last year then there'd be a strong argument for a refund or a replacement with true 4G or even 5G support.

The speed with which 3G was finally cut off has caught out many mobile phone suppliers





**Q** I recently bought an air fryer, which does a really good job at crisping up chips and frozen foods, but when I try to cook meat in it, the meat keeps coming out looking (and tasting) more like it's been boiled than fried. Am I doing something wrong?

**A** CHOICE kitchen expert Fiona Mair:

I suspect that the main issue here is likely excess moisture.

Remember, an air fryer doesn't actually fry – it's essentially a benchtop oven, so just like when you cook in your oven, you're not guaranteed crispy food unless you prepare it properly. If you're putting your meat straight in the air fryer, it may have some moisture from the packaging that is causing the meat to steam rather than become crisp and brown on the outside. I recommend using some paper towel to pat dry anything you're cooking that might have excess moisture such as meat, vegetables or fish. I would also suggest you remove the meat from the fridge at least 30 minutes before cooking, and preheat your air fryer for 5 minutes before putting the meat in. You should also place the meat on the grill rack rather than straight into the basket or on a baking tray.

Head to page 42 to read more about air fryers and see our latest review.



## CHOICE Help

### TV troubles

**C**HOICE member Fiona called about an issue she was having with her TV, which she bought for \$6500 less than four years ago. The TV would only turn on for a second at a time, then immediately switch off again. She had booked an assessment by an LG technician but was informed she'd have to pay for the callout because the TV was out of warranty.

We told Fiona that under the consumer guarantees of Australian Consumer Law, goods purchased come with automatic guarantees that they are of 'acceptable quality', meaning they should be safe, durable and free from defects for a reasonable period of time.

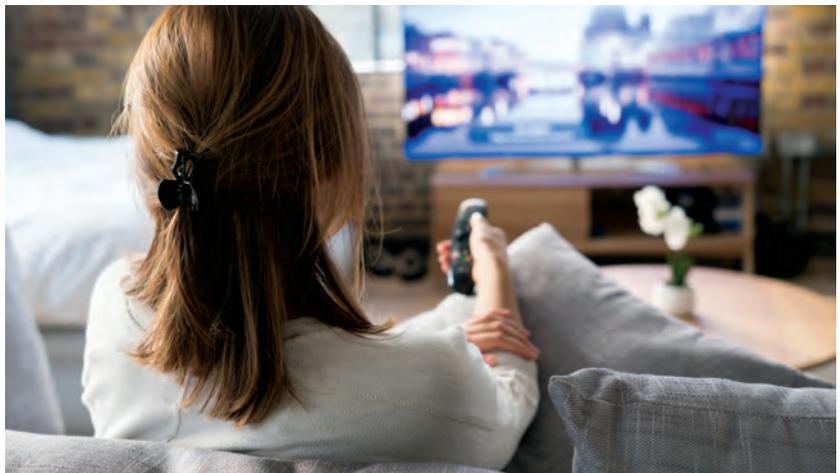
What is 'reasonable' depends on the nature of the goods, the cost, and any representations made in the packaging or labelling. We told Fiona that if a product fails to meet this guarantee, the consumer is entitled to a remedy. The type of remedy depends on whether the fault is major or minor. It seems in

this case the fault was major because it meant that the TV could not be used at all.

We reminded Fiona that consumer guarantees are separate from the manufacturer's warranty and that her TV could still be covered considering the cost and age of the product.

We suggested she contact LG once more via a formal complaint letter or email, explaining that the TV does not meet the consumer guarantee of acceptable quality and noting that she would like a free repair or replacement and for the TV to be assessed free of charge under the consumer guarantees of the Australian Consumer Law. We also suggested that she mention that she is a CHOICE member.

Fiona responded the same day saying that after contacting LG again as suggested by us, they agreed to waive the callout fee for the technician. Six days later, the technician replaced the faulty power board that was causing the issue, free of charge, fixing the problem and leaving Fiona with a functional TV once more.



CHOICE Help is our in-house advice service for CHOICE members. We'll arm you with the information and tools you need to tackle your consumer issue and help you work towards a solution.

**CONTACT US** at [choice.com.au/choicehelp](https://choice.com.au/choicehelp).

**CHOICE**