

Media Release

The Hon Jaala Pulford MLC

Minister for Employment

Minister for Innovation, Medical Research and the Digital Economy

Minister for Small Business

Minister for Resources



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COMMERCIAL TENANCY SUPPORT EXTENDED

The Victorian Government will extend the *Commercial Tenancy Relief Scheme (CTRS)*, providing rent relief and protections for commercial tenants and landlords experiencing hardship through the latest wave of the pandemic.

The CTRS was created in 2020 and reintroduced in July 2021 to support small to medium businesses. It will be extended to 15 March 2022 to provide further financial relief and security for thousands of small businesses across the state.

The extended scheme will be available to businesses with an annual turnover of \$10 million or less and which have suffered a decline in turnover of at least 30 per cent due to COVID-19.

Landlords will be required to provide continued proportional rent relief in line with a reduction in turnover. For example, a business with a turnover of 40 per cent of pre-pandemic levels could only be charged 40 per cent of its rent.

Of the balance, at least half would be waived, with the remainder to be deferred. The freeze on rent increases will continue.

The Victorian Small Business Commission (VSBC) will continue to provide mediation support to tenants and landlords if parties cannot reach a satisfactory agreement.

The eviction moratorium will continue. Landlords will not be able to lock out or evict tenants without undertaking mediation through the VSBC.

The new regulations will take effect from 16 January 2022. Tenants and landlords should abide by the conditions in their existing agreement. Small and family businesses that already have a deferment will have more time for repayments as a result of this extension.

Many commercial landlords have already backed their fellow Victorians by providing rent relief to commercial tenants, supporting eligible businesses through reduced trading due to COVID-19.

Eligible commercial landlords that have provided rent relief to their tenants have received support through the \$20 million Commercial Landlord Hardship Fund. They will continue to do so while their tenants are eligible for the scheme.

Full details of the scheme including eligibility will be published on the VSBC's website. Tenants and landlords can contact the VSBC for further information on 13 87 22 or visit vsbc.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Small Business Jaala Pulford

"Victorian small and family businesses play a critical role in creating jobs and driving economic growth – and that's why we're supporting them to get through this challenging period."

"We have allocated more than \$13 billion in funding to businesses across Victoria throughout the pandemic."