



PROGRAM

Time	Session details
8:45am	Registrations open
9:45am	A warm welcome from our Conference MC, Shungu Patsika Welcome to Country
10:00am	Minister's Address: The Hon. Nick Staikos MP – Minister for Consumer Affairs, Minister for Local Government
10:15am	Keynote Speaker: Brendan Coates – Housing and Economic Security Program Director, Grattan Institute
10:45am	A word from Premier Partner: Kate Fowler, Westpac
10:55am	Break for morning tea
11:25am	<p>Panel One – Essential Homes: Shifting The Housing Narrative To Support Renters' Financial Resilience</p> <p>This panel explores how shifting housing narratives can address systemic barriers for renters. It examines how framing housing as a commodity worsens financial stress and inequities. Speakers will discuss narrative-driven change in policy and grassroots advocacy, offering insights to reframe housing as an essential service and strengthen renters' rights in Victoria.</p> <p>Facilitator and Speaker: Noel Lim, CEO of Anika Legal</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Erin Turner, CEO of Consumer Policy Research Centre ▶ Eirene Tsolidis Noyce, Senior Policy Officer at Consumer Action Law Centre ▶ Selden Koolman, Digital Organiser for Better Renting
12:25pm	<p>Presentation: Victorian Housing Statement And Its Impact On Renters</p> <p>Victoria's Housing Statement, The Decade Ahead 2024-2034, focuses on five key areas to tackle housing supply and affordability in Victoria, with a bold target to build 800,000 homes in Victoria over the next decade. But what does this mean for renters? Join the Commissioner for Rental Tenancies Dr Heather Holst to unpack the commitments of the Housing Statement and how this will change the game for renters.</p> <p>Presenter: Dr Heather Holst, Commissioner for Residential Tenancies</p>
12:45pm	<p>Presentation: Strengths Of The Home Equity Access Scheme</p> <p>Media coverage of 'reverse mortgages' has long been negative, highlighting risks from both banks and predatory lenders targeting asset-rich, cash-poor older Australians. However, the government-backed Home Equity Access Scheme offers a safer, low-cost alternative. This session explores key differences, benefits for older Australians, and where financial counselling clients can get qualified advice.</p> <p>Presenter: Rob Burgess, Mortgage Stress Victoria</p>
1:00pm	<p>Presentation: Is A Better Policy Response Needed For Older Home-Owners Experience Mortgage Stress?</p> <p>This presentation will explore the lived experiences of those not eligible for Home Equity Access Scheme (HEAS) and potential policy responses that may alleviate mortgage stress for vulnerable cohorts, especially those over 55 years of age.</p> <p>Presenter: Dr Venkat Narayanan, RMIT (presented in partnership with Mortgage Stress Victoria)</p>
1:15pm	Lunch with our exhibitors
2:15pm	<p>Panel Two – Frontiers Of Housing Hardship</p> <p>This panel explores challenges and solutions in housing justice and economic hardship for both renters and homeowners. Experts will discuss eviction prevention, mortgage relief, tenant protections, and policies that support housing stability. Attendees will gain insights into innovative, practical strategies to keep people securely housed.</p> <p>Facilitator: Deborah Fewster, Director, Policy and Advocacy at VCOSS</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Lody Stewart, Financial Counselling, Knowledge Management and Advocacy Lead at Financial Counselling Australia ▶ Dan Nicholson, Deputy Ombudsman at Victorian Ombudsman ▶ Melissa Clare, Policy Director, Community Engagement at Australian Banking Association ▶ Dan Chafer, President of the Revenue Management Association

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speakers





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3:15pm Presentation: From Practice To Policy

At Tenants Victoria, client service workers identify common issues for systemic reform, shaping policy through monthly 'practice to policy' meetings. These discussions connect staff across teams, reinforcing our shared goal of safe, secure, and affordable housing for Victorian renters.

Speakers:

- ▶ Linda Burnett, Renter Support Services Manager at Tenants Victoria
- ▶ Annie Woodger, Policy Lead at Tenants Victoria

3:35pm Afternoon tea

4:05pm Presentation: Natural Disasters: Social And Community Impacts On Housing Insecurity

Natural disasters devastate communities, but their long-term impact on housing is often overlooked. This session examines effects on homeowners and renters, real-life cases, and how financial counsellors can provide meaningful disaster recovery support.

Presenter: Kellie Davis, Disaster Recovery Lead at FCVic

4:25pm Presentation: Housing and Financial Barriers for People Seeking Asylum

This session explores the housing challenges and financial barriers faced by asylum seekers, highlighting key issues, policy gaps, and potential solutions to support their stability and well-being.

Presenter: Anastasia Magriplis, Director of Advocacy and Campaigns at Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

4:40pm Panel Three – Closing Reflections With Financial Counsellors

Financial counsellors reflect on key insights from the Summit, discuss emerging challenges, and explore actionable strategies to enhance financial counselling practice and client outcomes.

Facilitator: Shungu Patsika – Senior Financial Counsellor, National Debt Helpline at Consumer Action Law Centre

Speakers:

- ▶ Rachna Madaan Bowman – Head of Financial Wellbeing, South East Community Links
- ▶ Alysa Coleman – Financial Counsellor, Casey North CISS
- ▶ Jessica Brauer – Financial Counsellor, Colac Area Health

5:10pm Event wrap-up with FCVic's CEO, Zyl Hovenga-Wauchope

5:15-6:45pm Networking drinks

FCVic sincerely thanks our Summit partners:

