

Tuesday 20 March, 2007

CONSUMER EDUCATION PROGRAM LAUNCHED FOR MIGRANTS

Minister for Consumer Affairs Daniel Andrews today launched a Bracks Government project partnership with the Springvale Community Aid and Advice Bureau (SCAAB) to address tenancy issues faced by new migrants, particularly refugees, in the City of Greater Dandenong.

Mr Andrews said the Bracks Government is committed to ensuring all Victorians have access to consumer information and support services

“We welcome the valuable contributions migrants make to Australia. But we must also help with the challenging transition new migrants undergo,” Mr Andrews said.

“This community education program will make tenancy services more visible to the local community and increase awareness of rights and responsibilities.

“In this regard, SCAAB will recruit representatives from the main language groups within emerging communities as liaison officers for the project, initially focusing on African communities.

“Moving to a new country presents many challenges and obtaining secure and stable housing is an important foundation from which new settlers in Victoria can begin to build their lives.

“However, understanding the legal frameworks associated with rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords can be particularly confusing for families making a new life in Australia.

“This partnership between Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) and SCAAB will provide vital information on tenancy arrangements in relation to repairs and maintenance, bond management and inspections, among other issues.

“We expect to improve housing outcomes for emerging communities in the Greater Dandenong area and strengthen relationships between tenants and the local real estate industry.”

Mr Andrews said that CAV and SCAAB would also work together to address broader consumer issues new migrants face.

“From the moment new migrants arrive in Victoria they become consumers, whether they are renting a home, buying a car or a pair of shoes,” Mr Andrews said.

“Learning about the traps and pitfalls of buying goods and services in Victoria, and being a smart shopper can help consumers avoid unwanted debts and dubious deals.

“I am proud to say this community-driven initiative is owned and directed by the local community to suit the local community.”

For advice and information in a range of languages, CAV can be contacted on **1300 55 81 81**.