



Victorian  
Small Business  
Commission



Annual Report  
2021

# Summary



## Year at a glance

5,175

applications for help to  
resolve a dispute

77

% success rate for  
completed mediations

81

% client satisfaction rate for  
our mediation services

354K+

354,237 visits to  
our website





19,421

phone and email enquiries

2,298

completed mediations  
conducted

38

% of matters resolved before  
reaching mediation

### Boosting awareness of ways we can help during the pandemic

In 2020–21, we significantly ramped up efforts to address small business needs in response to exceptionally stressful circumstances. We:

- shared frequent and timely guidance on rent relief via workshops, webinars and our website, and promoted our translated resources
- encouraged small business owners who were feeling stressed to access free mental health and financial counselling
- provided guidance in managing disruption to local trade via our Small Business Friendly Council initiative.

The outcome? More and more small business people accessing information on supports, rights and obligations, and how to prevent disputes.

### Responding to unprecedented demand to resolve disputes

We saw an 85 per cent rise on last year in people applying for help to resolve a dispute, the vast majority being over commercial rent relief.

Matters ranged from a tenant who had stopped paying rent to a landlord who refused to negotiate. We also helped with a range of other disputes – from undelivered goods to retail leasing matters.

We resolved 38 per cent of all disputes early on and where the dispute needed to progress to mediation, 77 per cent were successfully resolved.

Learn more about our supports in response to the pandemic and access our latest resources at

► [vsbc.vic.gov.au](https://vsbc.vic.gov.au)

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## Victorian Small Business Commission

Level 2, 121 Exhibition Street  
Melbourne Victoria 3000  
GPO Box 4509  
Melbourne Victoria 3001  
Telephone 13 VSBC (13 8722)  
[enquiries@vsbc.vic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@vsbc.vic.gov.au)  
[www.vsbv.vic.gov.au](http://www.vsbv.vic.gov.au)



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“ We would never have achieved an outcome without the VSBC – everything from the people answering the phone to the formal process made such a massive difference. The value of the work of the VSBC cannot be underestimated. We shall be forever grateful”

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Preliminary assistance feedback

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“ [The mediator] was excellent, very concise, made the parties feel comfortable with the proceedings and provided clear guidelines for how the process should work and as a result parties were able to work conciliatorily towards a productive outcome. He just made the process work smoothly.”

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Mediation feedback