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Renter support to continue and grow across the Mallee under new state program

Mallee Family Care has been appointed to deliver the new Renter Rights Service for the Mallee, continuing and expanding the tenancy support the organisation has provided to renters in the region since 2022.

The service will cover Buloke, Gannawarra, Mildura and Swan Hill, and forms part of the Victorian Government's new Victorian Renter Rights Program, which is replacing the current suite of renting support services across the state. The new service is expected to begin in early 2027.

Renters in the Mallee do not need to do anything differently in the meantime. Mallee Family Care's current tenancy service continues to operate as normal until the new program starts, and renters with a tenancy problem can contact the organisation today on 1300 417 618 for information and advice.

For renters, the change is largely one of scale and structure. The Mallee will have a dedicated local renter rights team of two working across all four local government areas, alongside a new statewide renters helpline and new specialist services including a dedicated service for older Victorians in private rentals, residential parks and retirement housing. The new program also funds support at tribunal hearings, so renters facing a hearing are less likely to have to go it alone.

Chief Executive Officer Teresa Jayet said the appointment meant continuity for a service the region had come to rely on.

"Renting in a small country town is a different experience to renting in a city," Ms Jayet said. "There are fewer properties, and if you lose your home there is often nothing else available within a reasonable distance of your work, your school or your family. That reality changes how people behave. We see renters who put up with problems they should not have to put up with, because raising them feels riskier than living with them."

Ms Jayet said the people who came to the service were rarely dealing with a housing problem alone.

"Tenancy is very often the thread you pull and everything else comes with it," she said. "Often those seeking our support are also managing family violence, or a disability, or the loss of an income. Housing is where that shows up first, because it is the thing that falls over first."

"Most of what our workers do never reaches a tribunal. It is a phone call to an agent, a letter about repairs, a payment plan that keeps a family in the house. Small steps taken early are what stop a tenancy problem becoming a homelessness problem."



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Ms Jayet said the service would remain part of Mallee Family Care's broader community services, so a renter who came in with a housing problem could also reach financial counselling, legal help or family violence support without having to tell their story again.

Details of service locations and hours across the four local government areas will be confirmed closer to the launch date.

The Victorian Renter Rights Program is an initiative of the Victorian Government, delivered through Consumer Affairs Victoria.

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About Mallee Family Care

Mallee Family Care is a dedicated, place-based community service organisation that has been supporting the regional, rural and remote communities of North West Victoria, Far West NSW and South Australia's Riverland region since 1979. With around 300 staff delivering more than 70 programs, MFC supports thousands of people across the Mallee each year, providing vital services in areas including family and youth support, mental health, financial counselling, tenancy advocacy, legal assistance, early childhood education and care, and disability services.



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