

CHOICE

DRIVE TO WIN

Uber's market dominance

333 products TESTED

Washing machines
Espresso machines
Garment steamers
Steam stations
Portable cots
Laptops
Irons
TVs



No glow

Risky tanning products

3G WOES

Shut down and shut out

Sleep easy

Most reliable mattress brands

Eye on the price

Can price trackers save you money?

Who can fix the internet?

Everything feels broken

There's a phrase, coined by Canadian journalist Cory Doctorow in 2022. A phrase I've been thinking about this year especially, as every online tool we use becomes increasingly beholden to AI 'assistance' we neither wanted nor asked for.

That phrase is – pardon the language – the “enshittification of the internet”.

“Enshittification” is a term that describes the way online services degrade. Online services that were once helpful or even revolutionary devolve into something that exploits its userbase. Think Facebook, a service that once connected us to family and friends – now a wasteland of ads and misinformation. Think Google search, once a useful way to find answers – now a data-harvesting operation packed full of paid search results designed to benefit commercial partners.

Enshittification is everywhere you look. I'm heading back to the UK in July and the act of booking flights online was a minefield. I sat at my laptop, mouse hand trembling, as I frantically unticked boxes designed to make me pay for services I didn't need – extra luggage, strange

insurance products I'd never even heard of, car hire...

Lower stakes purchases are no better. Last weekend I tried to buy tickets for a sporting match through an online ticketing platform and had a similar experience. In a world where scams flourish and we're rightly paranoid about every online purchase, services that should make us feel safe often feel built to trick us.

The worry is that nothing will change. Historically, such services would collapse in the face of competition and be replaced by something more efficient. But many are so hardwired into our daily existence it's almost impossible to imagine functioning without them. I can't imagine doing my job on a minute-to-minute basis without Google or Microsoft products. I can't imagine shopping online without Amazon. Yet these gigantic companies are slowly but surely becoming less useful for consumers and constantly compromise their utility in favour of the bottom line.

According to Cory Doctorow, the process of “enshittification” usually ends with a platform's demise. First a platform acquires users then, via the clumsy process of monetisation, loses



both its audience and client base. Then they “die”. But these days it feels as though no-one is being punished for their mistreatment of consumers. Maybe a future without products like Facebook, Google or Amazon is possible, but in this current moment it's near impossible to fathom.

All of them feel too big to fail.

But something has to give. Maybe the shift comes from consumer power, or additional regulation, or bold new innovations from competing companies. Whatever it is, we need change – because if the last few years are anything to go by, things are gonna get worse before they get better.

And, at some point, I'd like things to start getting better.

Mark Serrels

CHOICE Editorial Director

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CHOICE

CHOICE gives you the power to choose the best goods and services, and avoid the worst. Wherever possible, we pay full price for the products we test, so we remain 100% independent. We don't take advertising or freebies from industry. We're not a government body and our consumer publishing and advocacy is almost entirely funded by membership. Membership includes access to services such as CHOICE Help and the Voice Your Choice research program. Our product ratings are

based on lab tests, expert assessments and consumer surveys. We also research a wide range of consumer services, reveal the truth behind the facts and figures, and investigate their quality and claims.

BECOME A MEMBER To review the full range of membership options and benefits go to choice.com.au/signup.

MEMBERSHIPS/RENEWALS Call 1800 069 552 or email us at ausconsumer@choice.com.au.





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Choosing the right option

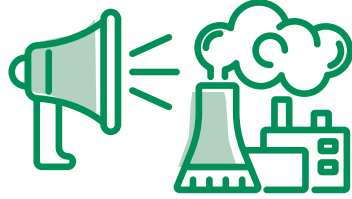


IMAGES: GETTY

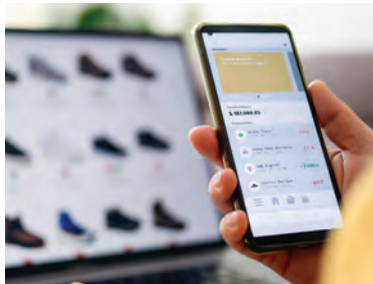
CHOICE magazine provides a selection of our top product reviews. We can't always include all the models we've tested, but you'll always find the products that scored the best. To view complete results for all our tests, go to choice.com.au, or call Customer Service on 1800 069 552 to add full online access to your membership package.

CHECKOUT

The latest consumer news in brief
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Supermarkets inquiry: ACCC's final report

The ACCC released its final supermarkets inquiry report at the end of March. The report confirmed what many of us have long suspected – Australia has a highly concentrated market, with the major supermarkets appearing to be among the most profitable in the world, even during a cost-of-living crisis.

The final report made a number of significant recommendations to address these issues, many of which CHOICE has long advocated for. These include introducing minimum information requirements on price displays, publishing pricing information on all products in-store, requiring supermarkets to display shrinkflation notices when a product shrinks but its price remains the same or increases, and support for strengthening the Grocery Unit Pricing Code.

With 84% of Australian households concerned about the cost of food and groceries, it is crucial that we maintain pressure on the government to implement these recommendations and ensure fairer food and grocery prices. Sign the petition for fair and transparent grocery pricing at choice.com.au/fairersupermarkets.

BEA SHERWOOD





People choosing between food and electricity

People experiencing financial and social disadvantages are skipping meals to pay their energy bills, according to new research by the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS).

Half of respondents to a survey of 1011 Australians indicated they're going without food, medication and other essentials to pay energy bills, with others selling belongings or turning to buy now, pay later schemes.

Although 64% of individuals surveyed are taking steps to reduce their energy use, they're still struggling to pay energy bills, with First Nations people and renters particularly impacted.

ACOSS CEO Dr Cassandra Goldie says: "It's a complete travesty that in one of the world's wealthiest nations people are getting sick, skipping meals and delaying medical appointments because they can't afford to cool and power their homes."

ACOSS is calling on the federal government to build on the \$800 million already provided for home energy upgrades for 110,000 social houses, with funding measures for people in private rentals and low-income homeowners to access home energy upgrades.

MOLLY INGLIS

Consumer issues at forefront of pre-election Federal Budget

In March, the federal government handed down its final budget before the election, with consumer concerns among the top issues addressed in the Treasurer's speech.

The government revealed plans to crack down on excessive card surcharges, tackle scams and take action on supermarket competition. Other commitments included energy rebates, price relief for essential goods in First Nations communities, and measures to keep banking services operating in regional areas. There was also a pledge to work with the states and territories to ban unfair trading practices.

These issues didn't appear out of nowhere – consumers have been calling for action on them for years. Tens of thousands of CHOICE members and supporters have lent their voices to petitions, surveys and letters to politicians to push for fairer markets and stronger protections. CHOICE is committed to ensuring that whoever wins the election follows through on promises to deliver real improvements for consumers.

RAFI ALAM



Banks in spotlight as scam fight continues

Banks receiving money that scammers have stolen from Australians are set to face more scrutiny, with authorities announcing extra measures to crack down on online criminals. From next year, the Australian Financial Complaints Authority (AFCA) – a key body responsible for resolving scam-related disputes with financial institutions – will be able to investigate and consider the actions of banks that have received stolen funds.

Currently, AFCA can only consider the actions of banks with a direct customer relationship when considering the case of a scam victim. It has previously ordered banks to compensate scam victims and is expected to have an expanded role in handling scam-related complaints under the national Scams Prevention Framework.

The changes to AFCA's remit come as the Australian Federal Police says it has boosted its presence in South East Asia, where it's working with authorities to disrupt local scam centres after finding they were likely targeting Australians. Meanwhile, the latest report from the National Anti-Scam Centre revealed scam losses reported to key organisations fell by 25.9% to \$2 billion in 2024.

LIAM KENNEDY



Crackdown on text scams

The national communications regulator is promising to “rebuild confidence” in Australian phone numbers and brands as it prepares to implement a new initiative to combat text message scams. The Australian Communications and Media Authority (the ACMA) has been seeking feedback on how it will set up and run Australia's SMS sender ID register.

The federal government announced the register last year, providing the ACMA with funding to implement the scheme. It will require telcos to check whether text messages claiming to come from a particular company or government agency are coming from the sender associated with that sender ID.

The process is designed to crack down on scammers impersonating trusted brands and agencies over text. Criminals have been able to use technology to adopt the sender IDs of these organisations, giving their messages greater credibility. The ACMA has outlined how it plans to establish and run the register and the rules it will impose on telcos. It wrapped up consultation on these proposals last month and says the register will be operating by 15 December this year.

LIAM KENNEDY

Australians in the dark on superannuation insurance

Do you know if you have insurance within your super? Or what you're covered for? When we surveyed Australians about what they know about insurance within super, we found that 1 in 4 either didn't know if they had any, or didn't know what the policies were.

Did you know that normally, super funds switch on insurance policies by default when you turn 25? Over half of the 25–29 year olds and almost three-quarters of 18–24 year olds we surveyed did not. Our survey revealed people's knowledge of the insurance they have in super doesn't improve much as they get older, either.

In 2023–24, Australians paid \$6.785 billion for group insurance within superannuation, yet many may not even know that they have it. With default insurance in super costing members hundreds of dollars a year, funds should be doing more to help people understand whether they want or need insurance, and if so, what type and level of cover is appropriate.

Super Consumers is calling on the government to assess whether there are better ways to financially protect people in the case of injury, illness or the death of a loved one by establishing a Productivity Commission review of insurance in super.

ANTOINETTE DYCE



Active Super fined \$10.5 million for greenwashing

In case financial services providers were wondering, the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) is serious about cracking down on greenwashing. In March, the regulator won a court case against Active Super, which was hit with a \$10.5 million fine. It was ASIC's third court case against greenwashing offenders in its jurisdiction.

Active Super's indiscretion was that it invested in businesses

it had said were ruled out by its environmental, social and governance (ESG) investment screens. The non-

compliant securities were from gambling, coal mining and oil tar sands businesses, where there is apparently money to be made.

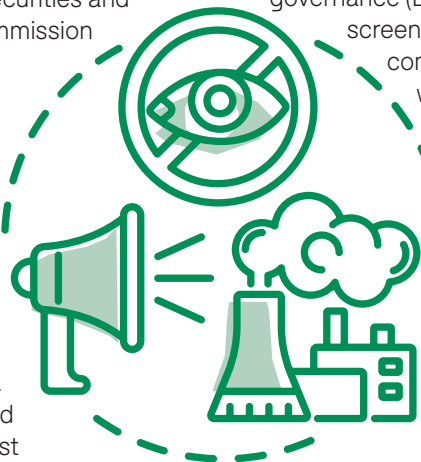
Following the invasion of Ukraine, Active

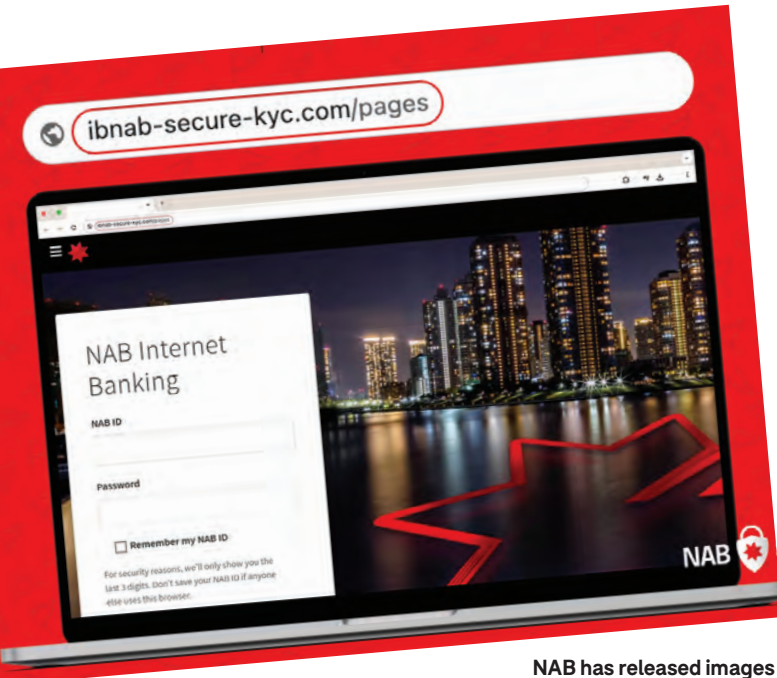
Super also claimed that Russian investments were off the table, but that, too, turned out to be untrue.

"This case demonstrates ASIC's commitment to taking on misleading marketing and greenwashing claims made by companies promoting financial services," says ASIC Deputy Chair Sarah Court, adding that "this is a significant penalty that sends a strong message to companies making sustainable investment claims that those claims need to reflect the true position."

The Justice in the case said Active Super clearly "benefitted from its misleading conduct by misrepresenting the ethical nature of a significant part of its investments" – all for the purpose of attracting investors and burnishing its ethical credentials.

ANDY KOLLMORGEN





NAB has released images of the real-life examples of fake websites, to help educate people about what to watch out for.

Major bank impersonated by almost 600 scam websites

Big four bank NAB has revealed its website was impersonated hundreds of times last year by scam portals designed to steal financial and personal information. The bank says it identified and helped take down almost 600 “realistic looking” sites trying to impersonate NAB or its products. The sites were often used to push phishing and investment scams or promise high windfalls from financial products or services.

It comes after ASIC revealed it’s helped shut down an average of 130 investment scam sites a week since 2023. The corporate regulator operates a service dedicated to removing the sites and has named combating and disrupting investment scams as one of its key priorities.

Investment opportunities aren’t the only target of online fakery – CHOICE has previously identified various sites impersonating major retailers and trying to steal sensitive information. These sites often have a similar URL to a famous brand and display multiple prompts to act quickly by investing money or making a purchase.

LIAM KENNEDY

Online shopping hits new record

In the past year, Australians spent a record \$69 billion on online goods, up 12%, as reported in Australia Post’s 2025 Annual eCommerce Report.

Last year, 9.8 million Australian households shopped online, spending the most at online marketplaces (\$16 billion), followed by food and liquor (\$13.6 billion) and fashion and apparel (\$9.6 billion).

With pressures around the cost of living, the average shop dropped to \$95, the lowest in a decade, indicating shoppers looking for affordable items.

An executive general manager for Australia Post Gary Starr says: “With cost-of-living pressures and high inflation an ongoing concern, Aussies turn to key sales events and loyalty programs to stretch their dollar further.”

Millennials contributed the most to online spending, forking out almost \$25 billion, followed by Gen X (\$19 billion), Gen Z (\$12 billion) and Baby Boomers (\$10 billion).

MOLLY INGLIS



Air fryer update from the CHOICE kitchen labs

The latest round of air fryer testing has just finished in the CHOICE kitchen lab, where our experts put 11 new models to the test.

We've seen some new and exciting innovations come through the lab this time around, testing models from Crumble, Ninja, Philips, Sunbeam and more, and we'll have the full results in our next issue of *CHOICE*. In the meantime, here's what piqued our interest in this round of testing.

Retailing for \$450, Ninja has released the 9.5L **DoubleStack XXXL 2 Drawer Air Fryer SL400**. It boasts the same versatility as a twin-drawer air fryer, but features cooking drawers stacked on top of each other to save space. You'll usually find the fan and element at the top of an air fryer, but the DoubleStack has its fan and element at the back.

Each drawer has a medium-sized 4.75L capacity with sync and match modes so you can time your meal. Our experts were impressed with the DoubleStack, which performed very well overall. This model is likely to be kept on your kitchen bench as its height would make storing in cupboards difficult.

More consumers are looking for air fryers made with less toxic materials, so some manufacturers have introduced glass and ceramic cooking drawers, rather than a PTFE non-stick coating. The **Crumble Air Fryer CCAF6LAU1** spruiks a carbon-steel exterior and a cooking basket with a food-grade silicone non-stick coating that claims to be free of harmful additives.

Crumble's entry into the air fryer market is available in a range of colours and is easy to use with basic controls, but it only has variable temperature selection and no pre-programmed functions. While our testers rated it very good for performance, it can be fiddly to clean in areas and the dial controls for temperature and time may not be accurate.

Manufacturers are also constantly looking for ways to make air fryers more versatile. The **Philips 5000 Series Dual Basket Airfryer NA551/00** features 12 pre-programmed settings and, interestingly, comes with a steaming function. The water tank sits on the top of the unit and the function can only be used in the larger cooking basket. When we put it to the test, it steamed broccoli to perfection but you'll need to be mindful that steam escapes from the back of the unit.

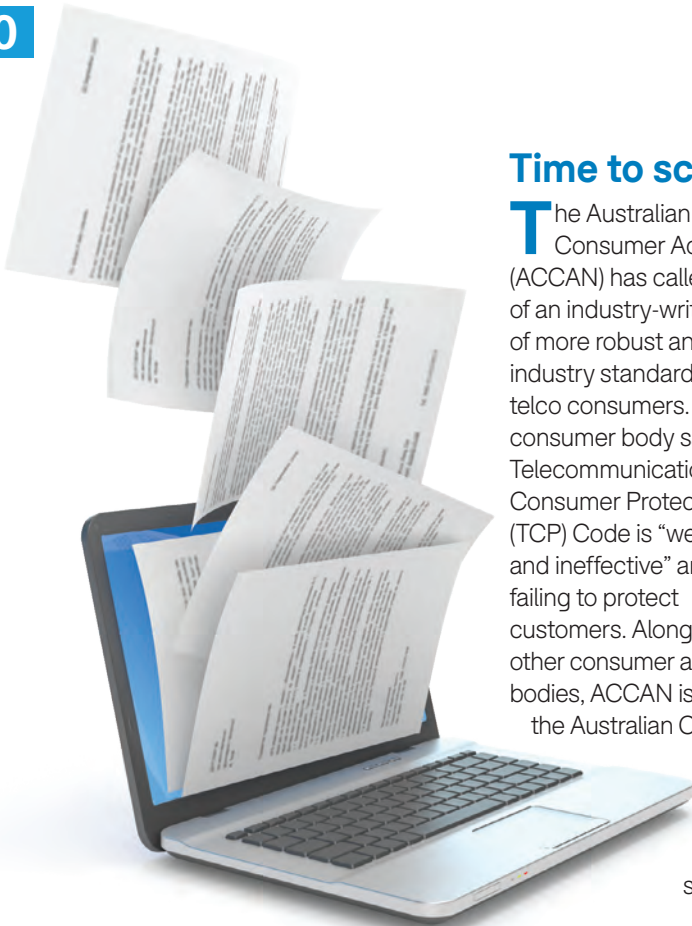
The full results will be available in the June issue of our magazine.

REBECCA CIARAMIDARO



More consumers are looking for air fryers made with less toxic materials, so some manufacturers have introduced glass and ceramic cooking drawers





Time to scrap 'weak' telco code, say advocates

The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) has called for the scrapping of an industry-written code in favour of more robust and enforceable industry standards to protect telco consumers. The peak consumer body says the Telecommunications Consumer Protections (TCP) Code is "weak and ineffective" and failing to protect customers. Along with 22 other consumer advocacy bodies, ACCAN is calling on the Australian Communications

and Media Authority (the ACMA), the government body regulating the sector, to refuse to

register the code and to implement regulations instead.

"There have been countless examples of major telcos failing to prevent irresponsible sales to vulnerable consumers, scams, data breaches and outages. These failures have exacted serious economic consequences and caused lasting consumer harm," says ACCAN CEO Carol Bennett. "Right now, the fox is guarding the henhouse. No other essential services sector allows this and telecommunications should be no different. It's time to put consumers first," says Bennett.

Consumer advocates are calling on the government to refuse to register the code and regulate instead

JARNI BLAKKARLY

Origin fined over \$17 million for breaching energy rules

In March, Origin Energy was fined over \$17m for breaches of Victoria's energy rules that affected nearly 670,000 customers between December 2021 and May 2023.

The breaches included not providing adequate "best offer" messaging to more than 655,000 customers and failing to provide adequate support to 6806 customers experiencing payment difficulty.

Essential Services Commission Chairperson and Commissioner Gerard Brody said the regulator "pushed for significant penalties in this case, to ensure the cost of breaking consumer protection rules cannot be written off as a cost of doing business. We wanted the penalty to send a message about the importance of these rules, and we're pleased these record penalties have done that."

Feeling a sense of déjà vu? Australia's two other major energy retailers have also been hit with hefty fines in recent months for shirking important consumer



protections. In September last year, EnergyAustralia was fined \$14 million for misleading customers by failing to include the lowest possible price in its communications to around 566,000 customers, and in December, AGL was fined \$25 million for overcharging customers through Centrepay.

JORDAN CORNELIUS



Health insurance average increases not the complete picture

On 1 April, health insurance premiums went up by an average of 3.73%. However, this widely reported average figure hides the fact that some individual policies increased by a lot more.

Take, for example, Medibank, Australia's largest health fund, which reported an average increase of 3.99%. While some of the cheaper Basic-tier policies actually went down in price, their comprehensive Gold Protect policy went up by a staggering 9.9% in NSW. Many policies in the middle, such as 'Bronze Plus Value' and 'Silver Plus Secure' recorded no change to their premiums.

The 3.99% figure Medibank customers might have seen in news reports is an overall average figure, weighted by how many people are covered under each

of its policies. While the overall average is useful for understanding the wider impact on inflation and government spending, it doesn't help individuals understand what's happening to their premiums.

The overall average also hides the fact that comprehensive Gold products have been skyrocketing in price: as high as 45% in the past four years. As we reported in *CHOICE* Apr 25, health funds continue to use a sneaky loophole to substantially increase the premiums of new policies, despite government promises of a crackdown. So, even if your fund has reported a low average increase, you should double-check your own increase notice and be sure to compare prices using our online comparison tool.

MARK BLADES



Insurance industry's improvement plan in question

In October last year, the federal government delivered a damning 457-page report on the home insurance industry's response to the devastating 2022 floods across Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland and Tasmania. To make a long and painful story short, insurance companies left many homeowners in the lurch in their time of – in some cases desperate – need. The chair of the committee conducting the inquiry, Dr Daniel Mulino, cited a "collective failure by insurers to meet their obligations to policyholders".

The Insurance Council of Australia – suitably chastened, it seemed – came back with an "industry action plan" so that it never happens again. But consumer advocates are having a hard time buying it. "Trust us just won't cut it," says senior policy and advocacy officer Drew MacRae from the Financial Rights Legal Centre.

One of the troubling factors is that the insurance industry's Code of Practice – which lays out some impressive protections for customers – is totally voluntary. It's self-regulation, kind of like laws that aren't really laws at all, just suggestions. MacRae says this needs to change.

"If insurers are genuine about leading changes to their industry, they simply must commit to the industry code forming part of the contract with their customers. A promise is a promise."

ANDY KOLLMORGEN

Insurance companies left many homeowners in the lurch in their time of – in some cases desperate – need



ASIC warns payday lenders

The corporate regulator says some small lenders providing small-amount credit contracts may be breaching the law by moving vulnerable customers into contracts with fewer protections. A recent report from the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) monitoring the impact of law changes governing small credit contracts, which came into effect in 2022, says some businesses may be entering customers into unsuitable contracts.

“Consumers who access these products are often financially vulnerable. That’s why people who use small-amount credit contracts are subject to additional protections,” says ASIC Commissioner Alan Kirkland.

“Lenders are on notice that if we detect serious breaches of the law, we will consider taking further

action. We were disappointed to uncover that some lenders may be seeking to shift consumers into other forms of credit, some of which involve greater risk.”

Kirkland adds that ASIC has recently taken action against Swoosh Finance, Ferratum Australia and Sunshine Loans.

JARNI BLAKKARLY



HelloFresh accused of misleading New Zealanders

New Zealand’s Commerce Commission has filed criminal charges in the Wellington District Court against HelloFresh, alleging it misled customers in cold calls to “re-activate” their previously cancelled subscriptions.

HelloFresh customers were allegedly offered a discount voucher which, upon its acceptance, would reactivate their subscription – something allegedly unclear to consumers. The claim relates to conduct between February 2022 and July 2023.

The Commission’s investigation followed a high number of complaints about HelloFresh’s sign up, cancellation and reactivation processes.

Deputy chair Anne Callinan says the Commission believes New Zealand’s Fair Trading Act was breached by



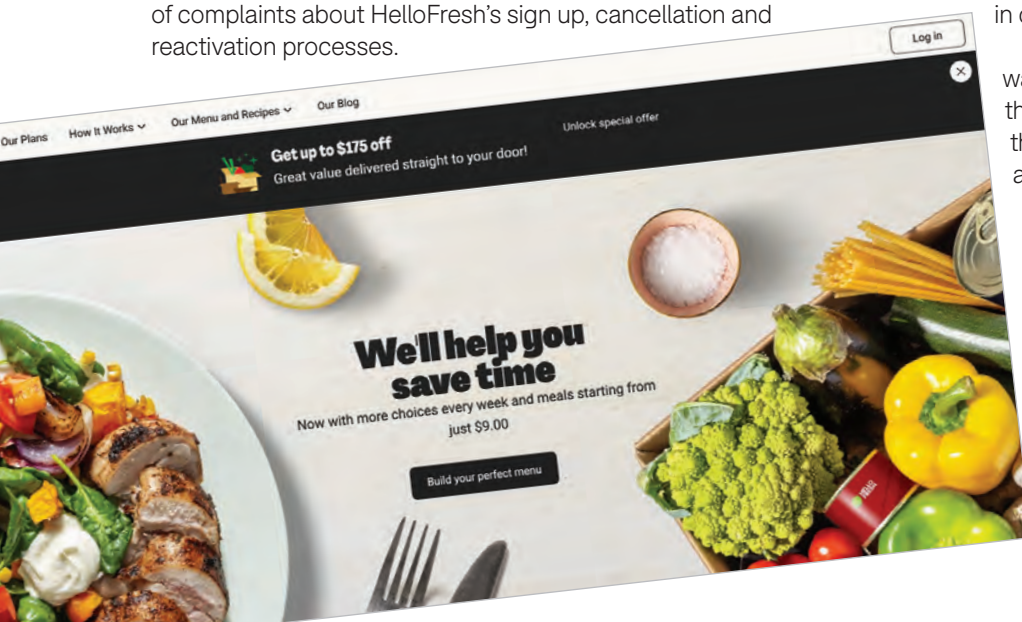
HelloFresh, as the conduct resulted in some cancelled subscriptions being reactivated without customers’ express consent or knowledge.

“We’re concerned some consumers have been misled into paying for services from HelloFresh they didn’t want through the use of misleading wording and processes in cold calls,” Callinan says.

She alleges that in these calls it was not made clear to customers that if they accepted the discount offer, their bank account would be charged and subscription reactivated.

In response to the charges HelloFresh says: “This practice fell well short of our standards and should not have happened. We sincerely apologise to any customers who were impacted or inconvenienced at the time.”

MOLLY INGLIS





RANTS AND RAVES

The great wedding tax



Let's talk about weddings.

The happiest day of your life, yet potentially the most expensive. As soon as you mention the 'W'

word, you're hit with a surcharge. Why does securing certain products and services cost so much more for a wedding than any other celebration? It's not just the wedding surcharge – many other aspects of the pricing of nuptials are similarly maddening. When wedding venue shopping, my partner and I inquired at one location about the cost of hiring a reception area in either April or June 2025. The difference? A staggering \$8000. This premium pricing extends beyond venues, infiltrating almost every aspect of wedding planning.

Take makeup, for example. Booking a makeup artist for a wedding often comes with a steep price hike. We received a quote that was double the cost of getting makeup for a regular event (excluding travel). A justifiable increase could be argued – perhaps wedding makeup is more intricate or time-consuming. However, this particular quote didn't even include a consultation. The pricing was doubled before the artist had any understanding of what the bride actually wanted. For many, a standard special-occasion makeup look would suffice, yet the mere mention of a wedding inflated the cost.

Then there's catering. A three-course meal for a corporate event or a milestone birthday will set you back a fair amount, but label it a "wedding dinner", and the numbers

start climbing. It's not just about the cost of ingredients or the time taken to prepare the meal – it's the expectation that weddings should cost more. A price tag placed on love, and the pressure to create the perfect day.

Florists, too, seem to follow this pattern. A bouquet of white roses for a formal event? Reasonably priced. The same bouquet for a wedding? A lot more. The reasoning? Wedding florals are seen as more bespoke, requiring additional care and expertise. Yet, if the arrangement is identical, why the drastic price difference?

Photography is no different. A photographer who charges a standard rate for a family photoshoot suddenly commands a much higher fee for a wedding package. The argument is that wedding photography requires more effort – more hours, more precision, more skill in capturing once-in-a-lifetime moments. While there is merit in that, the markup can often feel excessive, particularly when compared to the cost of securing photos of a similar event.

So why does this happen? The "wedding tax" is a well-known phenomenon, fueled by the idea that these ceremonies are big, emotional, once-in-a-lifetime events. Couples want everything to be perfect, and vendors know it. There's an assumption that if you're willing to spend thousands already, what's a little more? The industry plays on sentimentality, expectations and the pressure to have a dream wedding.

What can couples do? Being savvy and strategic helps. Some opt for non-traditional venues, avoiding spaces that cater exclusively to weddings. Others negotiate with vendors or seek out services without explicitly mentioning the wedding. Some even take a DIY approach, cutting back on the army of external helpers.

The reality is, love doesn't come with a price tag, but weddings do – and a hefty one at that. If you're planning your big day, brace yourself for paying more, but know that with a little creativity, there are ways to outsmart the wedding tax and still have a beautiful, meaningful celebration without breaking

the bank. Or, you could elope and use the savings for a downpayment on a house – just a thought.

**CINDY
MISSEYER**



ASK THE EXPERTS

Got a niggling question our team can help with?

ASK US

Email your question to asktheexperts@choice.com.au or write to Ask the Experts, CHOICE, 57 Carrington Rd, Marrickville, NSW 2204. You can also tap into the 'brains trust' at www.choice.community.

Q My house insurance has risen 62% from last year. Every year I compare my options and have always found a cheaper policy. This year, however, I have not had any success. I have contacted five companies seeking a better quote than what my current insurer is offering. Can you please tell me if insurers share my information with all the other insurance companies? Why is it necessary to declare your current insurer when filling out an application for a quote? I feel there

is some collusion happening and the insurers are working together to push prices up.



A CHOICE home insurance expert Jodi Bird: Sorry to hear about the price increase on your home insurance. Insurers do sometimes use common data sources, so it's possible this is

factoring into the higher premiums you see across several insurers. We're not aware of any price collusion happening between insurers though. It's more likely that the insurers you have looked at all have similar risk

aversion. Our online home and contents insurance comparison contains a \$ rating for the average cost of home insurers per state. It may be worth reviewing that rating for your state to see if there is an insurer available that will offer you more affordable home insurance. Or, you can wait to read our new home insurance review in the July issue of *CHOICE*.



Q I have an infestation of ants in my kitchen and they are getting into the microwave. Are there any models you've reviewed that won't

let them in? Maybe a model with very good door seals?

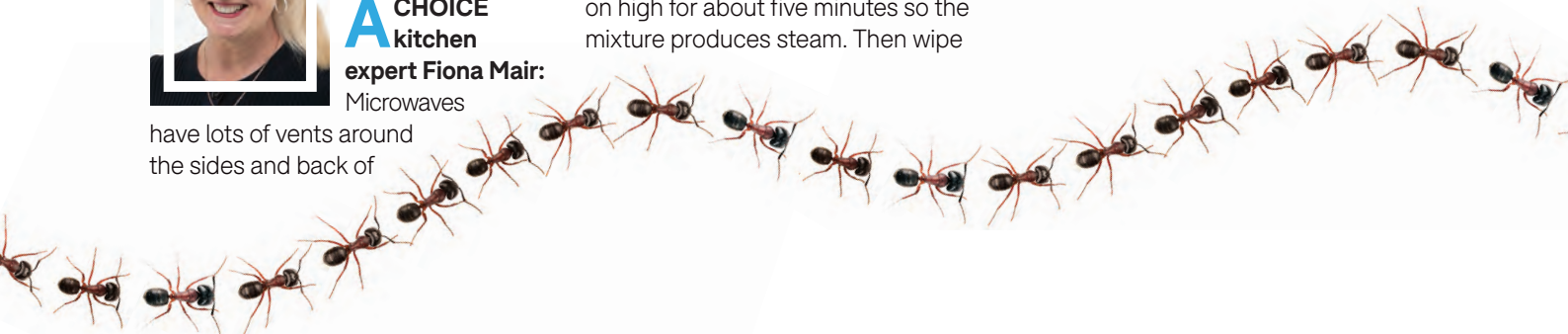


A CHOICE kitchen expert Fiona Mair: Microwaves

have lots of vents around the sides and back of

the unit to keep the unit from overheating – this is where ants might get in, rather than through the door seal. I suggest giving the microwave a good internal steam clean with vinegar. Fill a microwave-proof bowl with water and 1/4 cup of white vinegar. Allow the microwave to heat on high for about five minutes so the mixture produces steam. Then wipe

out the interior and dry well with a microfibre cloth. This should deter the ants. Keep in mind that they like moisture, so make sure you keep your microwave dry after use. You also might want to move the microwave temporarily while dealing with the original infestation.



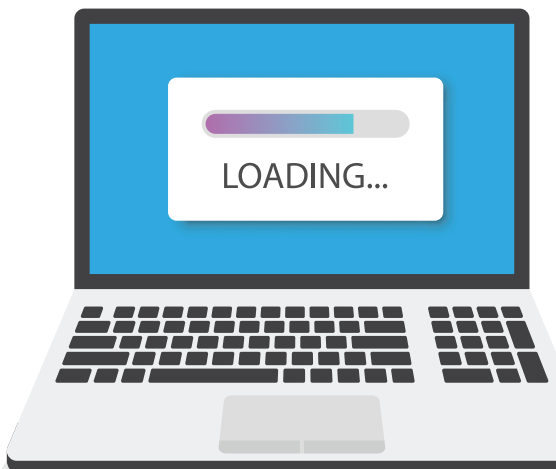
Q My laptop is five years old and I'm starting to notice it is running a bit slower. It also gets very hot and sometimes the fan noise gets very loud. Is there anything I can do to help with the overheating and get it running smoothly again?



A CHOICE tech expert Peter Zaluzny: This will depend on whether your laptop has a removable back panel. Most laptops use either screws

or screens and clips to hold the back panels in place – these are both removable, but if your back panel is glued on, you're out of luck.

If you can remove your back panel, you should be able to access and clean the fan. Over the years, dust can build up in the fan which can impact its functioning, causing your laptop to overheat. Grab a can of compressed air and a soft brush to gently remove the dust from the fan (and any other dusty areas you can see). This should help with the overheating. And, while you're there, you could check if the battery, RAM or storage are removable. If they are, you could consider upgrading them to improve your laptop's performance. You can read more about how to do so in our laptops review on page 65.



Q A couple of months ago I bought a blender off Facebook Marketplace which was still brand new in the box (it was an unwanted Christmas gift). Just a few days ago the motor blew while I was making my usual daily smoothie. I contacted the manufacturer to let them know and to ask for a refund or replacement but they told me they need to see the receipt in order to proceed. I contacted the person I bought it off but they don't have the receipt because it was a gift. What are my rights? It doesn't feel fair that a brand new blender would break after just a few months of use.

A CHOICE Customer Service: You're right, a brand new blender should last more than

a few months. Unfortunately though, the Australian Consumer Law does not apply when a consumer buys from a private seller and the item is not sold in the course of their business. That means private sales on Facebook Marketplace are generally not covered. If the model was fairly newly released, this may be indication enough for the manufacturer that the product is relatively new and therefore has not had a reasonable lifespan and some brands may still offer a remedy, even without proof of purchase. You could try responding to the manufacturer and stating honestly that you do not have a receipt, but provide the serial number and note that you feel the item has failed prematurely and they may still provide you with a remedy.