



Productivity Commission Investigates RIGHT TO REPAIR

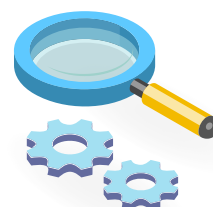


There is growing community concern that everyday products are becoming harder to repair, leading to higher costs, greater inconvenience for consumers, and growing waste.

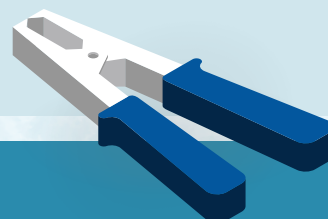
The Australian Government has asked the Productivity Commission, its independent research agency, to look at what can be done to address these concerns.

Our **draft report** sets out some of the obstacles that consumers may face in getting goods repaired and some **recommendations** on how to reduce them.

We are calling for further information and **feedback** from the community to inform our final report, which will be delivered to government in October 2021.



Consumers have some rights to repair but could be better assisted to exercise those rights



More clarity on how long rights apply



Problem: Consumers have some existing rights to have their goods repaired, replaced or refunded under guarantees in consumer law. But it can be hard for them to know when they can exercise their rights.

Solution: To give consumers and manufacturers more clarity, the ACCC should provide a guide as to how long common household goods should be expected to last without fault. The Commission is also considering whether manufacturers should provide software updates for a reasonable period of time.

Power to resolve more issues

Problem: When exercising their rights, it can be hard for consumers to resolve issues with suppliers.

Solution: Governments should introduce new ways for regulators to resolve disputes (such as requiring a business to take part in conciliation). Consumer groups should also be able to lodge complaints on behalf of many consumers, that will be fast-tracked by the ACCC.



It could be made easier for independent repairers to repair goods



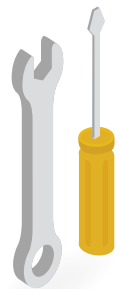
Repair information, tools and spare parts

Problem: There are concerns that some manufacturers are making it difficult for consumers and independent repairers to repair goods, such as by not providing repair information, tools or spare parts. This can give manufacturers the ability to increase the price of repair and reduce the choice of repairers.

Solution: The Commission is considering ways to make it easier for independent repairers to access the things they need to repair goods.

One approach could be to change copyright law to allow independent repairers to legally access and share copyright information (such as manuals and diagnostic information).

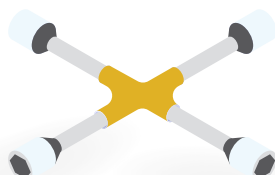
Another approach could be to require that manufacturers provide independent repairers and consumers with access to repair information, tools or spare parts. This may be more beneficial for certain products, such as agricultural machinery or mobile phones and tablets.



Warranties

Problem: In some cases, manufacturers say that a warranty will become void if the consumer does not use an authorised repairer. This can discourage consumers from using independent repairers. However, even if their warranty is void, consumers still have the right to have their faulty goods repaired under consumer law.

Solution: Warranties should be made clearer to inform consumers that even if they use independent repairers, they will not lose these legal rights. The Commission is also considering a ban on voiding warranties if consumers don't use the manufacturer's repairer.



Product labelling

Problem: There are some concerns that consumers don't have enough information on how easy it is to repair something, or its life expectancy, when choosing which product to buy. This means that manufacturers may not have a strong enough incentive to produce long-lasting and easy-to-repair goods.

Solution: The Commission is interested in understanding whether introducing product labels, that indicate how easy it is to repair a good or how long it is expected to last, would help consumers make better choices.



Management of e-waste could be improved



Encourage repair and reuse of e-waste

Problem: If people find it hard to repair their goods, they are more likely to dispose of them, contributing to 'e-waste'. Australia's e-waste makes up less than one per cent of total waste generated and is generally well managed, but it is growing faster than most other forms of waste.

Solution: To enable repair and reuse of discarded products, current and future product stewardship schemes should count repaired and reused e-waste products towards annual targets. GPS trackers should also be used to better monitor Australia's e-waste.



We want to hear from you

pc.gov.au/repair



read our draft report
write a submission
or leave a brief comment
by 23 July 2021

