

Our Organisation.

History

FCRC commenced in 1978 as the Financial Counsellor's Association of Victoria (Inc.) and later changed its name to the Consumer Advocacy and Financial Counselling Association of Victoria (CAFCA). Following a review of the Constitution in 1996 CAFCA changed its name to the Financial and Consumer Rights Council Inc (FCRC).

Since then, FCRC has grown to include nearly 250 financial counsellor and organisation members, all of which are focused on different areas of consumer protection and financial counselling practice. Members of FCRC are very active in supporting each other through participation in regional, statewide and case specific working groups.

The systemic advocacy, policy and project work of the FCRC has contributed to an increase in the number of Financial Counsellors in Victoria. This has also resulted in the development of numerous resources to assist consumers and caseworkers to deal with financial hardship, and to advocate strongly for those who need it most.

Purpose

- › **To advocate** for vulnerable Victorian consumers who are experiencing financial difficulty. We do this through our work supporting financial counsellors and through stakeholder relationships to create systemic change.
- › **To support** the financial counselling sector through its casework, advocacy and law reform, to adopt and maintain best practise.

Objectives

- To ensure that:**
- › financial counsellors in Victoria are supported to comply with best practice
 - › the financial counselling sector has secure, stable and sustainable funding
 - › financial counselling has a high profile
 - › vulnerable consumers have an effective voice
 - › the council is a strong, adaptive organisation that is valued by members, government and other stakeholders.

Strategic Plan 2016–2019

1 Implement and maintain professional and sector standards.

- › Implement national standards
- › Support professional counsellors' professional development
- › Implement national disciplinary policy.

2 Provide value to members, staff and stakeholders.

- › Assist Financial Counsellors to comply with ongoing membership requirements
- › Support the sector and be well connected with members and agencies
- › Communicate with members, stakeholders and media
- › Provide advice to government about emerging consumer issues and the profession
- › Support FCRC board and staff.

3 Develop and grow a financially sustainable organisation.

- › Grow and diversify income focusing on FCRC expertise in training and peak body functions
- › Review and build opportunities to train industry, community agencies and complimentary services
- › Ensure FCRC work and expertise is recognised.

4 Governments and industry recognise and support financial counsellors.

- › People who need financial counselling can access the right service
- › Seek new opportunities to expand financial counselling into new areas
- › Positively influence hardship practices in financial services, utility and telcos
- › Gather casework information to respond to emerging issues and inappropriate industry practices.