DISCUSSION PAPER

Options for a Legislated Safety Check Accreditation Scheme

Prepared by Detector Inspector for the Victorian Government · 25 May 2026

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RECOMMENDATION

Establish a legislated Safety Check Accreditation Scheme, governed either by Consumer Affairs Victoria or by a new independent not-for-profit Authority with CAV integrated.

Executive Summary

This paper recommends the establishment of a legislated Safety Check Accreditation Scheme. Two potential governance pathways are proposed. The first positions Consumer Affairs Victoria (CAV) as the Accreditation Authority; the second establishes a new independent not-for-profit Accreditation Authority.

Both models would deliver accreditation, oversight, and enforcement, but they differ in legislative simplicity, technical capacity, and political optics.

The McKell Institute Report and industry consultations confirm that tenants are exposed to unsafe practices, that regulators such as Energy Safe Victoria (ESV) and the Building and Plumbing Commission (BPC) lack the tools and resources to manage compliance effectively, and that the current system allows operators to exploit weaknesses through tick and flick practices.

Approximately 1.3 million rental safety checks take place annually, making a $500 million industry. There is both a significant public interest case and safety need for a properly resourced accreditation framework.

ANNUAL SAFETY CHECKS
1.3 million

INDUSTRY SIZE
$500 million

Legislative Framework

The scheme would be legislated by government to create an Accreditation Authority responsible for the registration, training, monitoring, and enforcement of all businesses and workers performing safety checks.

The Authority would be empowered to set training and quality standards, collect and analyse reports, audit providers, and impose penalties. All providers would be required to submit safety check reports to the Authority within a specified timeframe for review and compliance monitoring.

Governance Structure

Option A – Consumer Affairs Victoria as Accreditation Authority

- Consumer Affairs Victoria would become the Accreditation Authority.
- CAV already enforces the *Residential Tenancies Act*, under which safety checks are mandated, so centralising accreditation within CAV creates a single line of accountability.
- A dedicated Accreditation Division would be created inside CAV. Technical expertise such as auditors, inspectors, and engineers would be contracted or seconded from ESV and BPC.
- An Advisory Board representing industry and tenant groups would provide policy guidance and transparency.

Option B – Independent Accreditation Authority with CAV integrated

- Create a new not-for-profit statutory body to act as independent Accreditation Authority.
- This Authority would employ its own technical staff and operate with clear neutrality from both industry and tenancy regulators.
- CAV would sit on the governing board and receive full access to safety check data to support its tenancy enforcement functions.
- Under this model, accreditation offences such as operating without registration or submitting false reports would also constitute breaches under the *Residential Tenancies Act*, allowing CAV to take enforcement action alongside the Authority.

Comparative Assessment Matrix

CRITERIA	OPTION A — CAV AS ACCREDITATION AUTHORITY	OPTION B — INDEPENDENT AUTHORITY, CAV INTEGRATED
Governance and accountability	Builds on existing statutory regulator. Accreditation becomes part of tenancy compliance under the *Residential Tenancies Act*.	Creates a new not-for-profit statutory body dedicated to safety check accreditation.
Legislative complexity	Relatively straightforward, as CAV already has legislative authority under the *Residential Tenancies Act*.	Requires new legislation to establish a separate body with its own powers and functions.
Technical expertise	Would need to contract or second auditors and engineers from ESV and BPC to provide technical capacity.	Can directly employ technical staff with specialised expertise in safety checks.
Consumer transparency	Strong alignment with CAV's existing tenant-facing role. Easier integration with existing consumer portals and complaint channels.	Transparency delivered through the new Authority's reporting platform, with CAV oversight. Requires additional communications to establish recognition.
Resourcing and capacity	Risk of overwhelming CAV without significant additional resourcing. Current structure is not designed for one million annual reports.	Higher setup costs but purpose-built for scale. Dedicated staff and systems reduce the risk of overload.
Industry acceptance	Some industry resistance likely, as CAV is viewed as tenancy enforcement-focused rather than technically competent.	Industry may prefer a dedicated body that includes representation from sector stakeholders.
Cost and funding	Lower establishment costs but ongoing reliance on external technical support.	Higher establishment costs but more efficient technical oversight in the long term.
Political optics	Attractive to government as it demonstrates direct consumer protection and consolidation under an existing regulator.	Attractive to industry and technical stakeholders as it avoids over-burdening CAV and creates a neutral body.
Tenant outcomes	Clearer consumer pathway through existing CAV systems.	Stronger technical oversight may deliver higher quality, safer outcomes, but transparency must be built.

Components of the Accreditation Body

RESPONSIBILITY	DESCRIPTION
Registration and accreditation	All businesses conducting safety checks would be required to register for accreditation. All individual workers performing safety checks would also be required to register, with their accreditation linked to their relevant trade licences. Accreditation numbers for both businesses and workers would require recording on all reports.
Education and competency standards	Businesses and workers would complete mandatory training and assessment before accreditation. Ongoing professional development would be delivered through a learning management system with periodic refresher modules. Training would be aligned with Australian Standards and statutory requirements. Regular competency testing would ensure standards are consistently met.
Reporting and data oversight	All safety checks would be recorded using standardised reporting templates approved by the Authority. Completed reports would be uploaded to a centralised database within five business days. The Authority would analyse data and flag suspicious patterns for audit. Relevant data would be shared with ESV, BPC, and CAV.
Operational objectives	The Accreditation Authority would administer the scheme, educate accreditation holders, collect and analyse safety check data, and enforce compliance through infringements, suspensions, and penalties. It would provide transparency and accountability for renters and ensure fair competition for compliant operators.
Transitional arrangements	Existing providers of safety checks under the *Residential Tenancies Act* would be given a grace period to obtain accreditation. Operating without accreditation after this period would constitute an offence.
Offences and penalties	The scheme would establish penalties for operating without accreditation, performing safety checks without worker accreditation, failing to submit reports on time, submitting false or misleading reports, or failing to complete the safety check as per the relevant standards. Penalties would include fines, suspension, or revocation of accreditation.
Technology platform	The scheme would require a centralised digital platform to manage report lodgement, data analytics, and enforcement. The platform would provide secure access for businesses and workers, integrate with existing licensing systems, and include tenant-facing transparency features.

Costs and Revenue

The overarching objective is for the scheme to be self-sustaining without imposing unnecessary burdens on businesses or workers.

Initial establishment costs, including platform development, legislative drafting, recruitment, and communications, are estimated at **$1.5–$3 million**. This could be financed through a government loan, to be repaid from scheme revenue, consistent with the establishment of similar regulatory bodies.

The table below summarises the scheme's projected revenue against indicative operating costs, demonstrating the net return available to government for reallocation.

ITEM	AMOUNT (ANNUAL)
Accreditation licences (880 × $1,500)	+$1,320,000
Business accreditation licences (80 × $5,000)	+$400,000
Penalty and audit cost recovery	+$100,000
Indicative annual operating cost	−$800,000
Estimated net return	**$1,020,000**

Conclusion and Recommendation

Both governance models can deliver the objectives of the Legislated Safety Check Accreditation Scheme. CAV as the Accreditation Authority provides legislative clarity and consumer alignment but depends on new investment in resourcing and technical capability.

An independent Authority offers a stronger technical focus and neutrality but requires a more complex establishment process. The government must weigh whether policy objectives are best served by consolidating responsibility within CAV or by creating a new independent body with CAV fully integrated into governance and enforcement.

Prepared by Detector Inspector, submitted to the Victorian Government, May 2026. This document contains proprietary commercial analysis and is intended for government consideration only.