

# Gold Coast business Australian 4WD Hire and Russian millionaire Vitali Roesch face ACCC investigation

Campbell Gellie, Gold Coast Bulletin  
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MORE than 70 people claiming to be have been ripped off by Gold Coast-based business Australian 4WD Hire have come forward in just over a month.

Member for Clayfield Tim Nicholls said he was aware of 75 complaints after he gave a speech in parliament claiming the business were “rip-off merchants”.

The company, which has its address listed as a unit within the Q1, was previously owned by [former multi-millionaire Russian Vitali Roesch](#).

Mr Nicholls has passed the complaints from tourists all over the world to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission, which confirmed to the *Gold Coast Bulletin* it was investigating the business.

“There are so many complaints,” Mr Nicholls told the *Gold Coast Bulletin* yesterday.



*Member for Clayfield Tim Nicholls called Gold Coast-based business Australian 4WD Hire “rip-off merchants” during a speech in Parliament. (AAP Image/Darren England)*

In his June 15 parliamentary speech, the former Opposition leader outlined how he believed the scheme operated.

“When someone hires a four-wheel drive for the adventure of a lifetime they sign a lengthy standard form take-it-or-leave-it hire contract containing terms which, in my view, are a clear breach of Australian Consumer Law,” he told the house.

“They pay a deposit of up to \$5,000, sometimes more, and they leave a credit card imprint as additional security.”

Mr Nicholls said the vehicle would then break down or not live up to expectations.

“Then Mr Roesch and the company start getting threatening and abusive. They start debiting the customer’s credit card for repairs — in one case for an engine replacement, in others for mechanical rebuilds.”

In Parliament Mr Nicholls said the company appeared to be under the command of bankrupt Mr Roesch despite the single share in the company being transferred to his wife, Maryna Kosukhina, in February 2017.



*Vitali Roesch and wife Maryna Kosukhina. Photo: Regi Varghese*

In a response to a *Gold Coast Bulletin* interview request, Mr Roesch, whose email signature has him listed as the Fleet Manager, said he had been advised by the company’s “legal representatives not to communicate with any media outlet anymore”.

“What needs to be told has been said too many times, there is nothing else to report,” he wrote.

“We have replied to every request of OFT and ACCC to date and will continue to do so if anything else will come up.”

An ACCC spokesman said the watchdog was looking into the complaints.

“The ACCC is currently considering the conduct of Australian 4WD Hire as it relates to the Australian Consumer Law,” the spokesman.

The Office of Fair Trading investigated the businesses operations in 2017 and found no evidence of breaches of consumer law.



*Vitali Roesch said he had responded to every request from the Office of Fair Trading and Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. Photo: Supplied*

Documents filed to Queensland Parliament reveal there had been 10 proceedings at Brisbane Magistrates Court filed by Australian 4WD Hire over the past two years.

In all of these matters the company won and was awarded money.

The largest payout to the business, \$66,098.05, was for damage caused to a vehicle after it was submerged in water, the documents reveal.

Another for \$54,329 in 2018 was after a vehicle became bogged and the company sought to recover the finance payout and loss of income for 88 days.