



Customer Assistance Program

At Southern Water we recognise that residential customers may experience times of financial hardship due to circumstances beyond their control. That's why we have put in place a Customer Assistance Program with the support of the Salvation Army, Anglicare and the community sector to help customers who have the intent, but not the capacity to make the required payments in accordance with the terms outlined on their water and wastewater accounts.

OUR AIM

Our aim is to be proactive to ensure financial difficulty is recognised early in the credit cycle and provide help via the Assistance Program to those who are identified either by themselves, by us or by an independent financial counsellor.

Financial hardship may fall into one of two categories: long term or temporary. Depending on the type of hardship being experienced, customers will have different needs requiring different solutions.

Customers in long-term financial hardship may need ongoing assistance, while customers who are in temporary financial difficulties due to a sudden change in circumstances such as ill health, unemployment or some other short term financial problem may require one-off assistance such as an extension of time to pay or a flexible payment arrangement.

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

Southern Water will:

- Treat our customers respectfully, sensitively and without judgment;
- Consider each case individually and to ensure information is kept confidential;
- Provide prompt information on options for alternative payment arrangements and available concessions;
- Work with the customer to nominate an amount they can afford to pay on an arrangement plan;
- Offer a range of payment methods and provide written confirmation of the agreed payment arrangement within 14 days;
- Re-negotiate the amount of the instalment if there is a change in the customer's circumstances;
- Provide information about free, independent and accredited financial counselling services;
- Ensure access to a language interpreter service at no cost;
- Guarantee the water supply will not be restricted or disconnected as long as the customer has agreed to a payment arrangement and are meeting their obligations;
- Take no legal action or impose additional debt recovery costs whilst the customer continues to make payments in accordance with the agreed schedule, or an agreed altered schedule of payments;
- Encourage customers to speak directly with a Customer Assistance Program officer in order to re-negotiate the payment arrangement if a payment is missed or likely to be missed;
- If you are not satisfied with the way your request has been handled we will provide you with information about external dispute resolution forums such as the Ombudsman Tasmania.

To access the Customer Assistance Program please call: 13MYWATER or 13 6992 or contact

Email: info@southernwatertas.com.au

Internet: www.southernwatertas.com.au

