

# CUSTOMER hardship

**At different times throughout our lives our needs change, which can sometimes result in financial difficulty.**

In recognition of this, Wannon Water has developed a number of programs to assist customers. Wannon Water has a team of staff who have been specially trained to support customers' needs in times of financial difficulty.



wannonWATER

[www.wannonwater.com.au](http://www.wannonwater.com.au)

## Wannon Water's Customer Hardship Policy

Wannon Water has in place a Customer Hardship Policy, which defines the approach to supporting customers experiencing either temporary or permanent hardship. The policy ensures all customers requiring additional support will be treated individually, with respect and sensitivity, whilst at the same time keeping your circumstances confidential. We will ensure this by customers having one contact person at Wannon Water. Customers will be shielded from restriction and further recovery action and will be informed of all support available to them.

The Customer Hardship Policy provides details on the rights of customers experiencing hardship. To obtain a copy please contact Wannon Water on 1300 926 666 or visit [www.wannonwater.com.au](http://www.wannonwater.com.au) to download a copy.

## Customer Support

Wannon Water's Customer Relations Team has an extensive understanding of hardship issues including training on the following:

- Government funded concession schemes;
- Wannon Water's programs that support customers in financial difficulty;
- Wannon Water's Customer Hardship Policy;
- Wannon Water's legal responsibilities including the Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) and the Essential Services Commission's Customer Service Code requirements for hardship customers; and
- Circumstances of customers experiencing financial hardship.

We understand that customers cannot always afford the minimum payment amounts required to manage their account. Accordingly, we will negotiate arrangements based on what customers can reasonably afford to pay. With an individual case management approach, we ensure that each customer's needs are appropriately and sensitively addressed. Customers are invited to contact Wannon Water at any time to discuss their situation.



## Financial Assistance Policy

The Financial Assistance Policy is designed to provide incentives to customers that continually meet their payments. After customers make a set number of payments, we will credit the customer's account to the value of one payment. If the customer continues to meet their arrangement over a period of time, we will review the account and adjust the balance where appropriate.

## Government Assistance Schemes

For those customers who meet the criteria, Wannon Water has information on various Government Assistance Schemes including the Utility Relief Grant Scheme which provides assistance to customers who are unable to pay their water account due to a temporary financial crisis.

## Pensions and Concessions

Customers may hold a valid Pension or Concession Card and have not claimed a rebate on their water bill. This is often overlooked and contributes to a larger account than necessary. Wannon Water will grant a rebate as soon as we are aware and assist with claiming retrospective rebates which will reduce the outstanding account. Customers should contact Wannon Water to discuss Pension/Concession entitlements.

## Site Visits

Customers may have difficulty filling in forms, communicating over the telephone or may be unable to leave the house for several reasons. To assist these customers, Wannon Water can arrange a home visit by one of our friendly staff to discuss their financial difficulties in an environment that best suits the customer's individual needs.

## Financial Counselling

Wannon Water can quickly refer customers to an independent financial counsellor at no cost to the customer. Financial counsellors are able to provide detailed information on your rights and the options available to you. Customers can discuss with the financial counsellor any financial matters that may be causing difficulty or distress.

## Further Information

For assistance please contact our Customer Relations Team:

**Telephone:** 1300 926 666  
**Fax:** (03) 5564 7650  
**Email:** [info@wannonwater.com.au](mailto:info@wannonwater.com.au)  
**Web:** [www.wannonwater.com.au](http://www.wannonwater.com.au)  
**Mail:** Wannon Water  
PO Box 1158  
Warrnambool VIC 3280

### In Person:

Visit our team at your local Wannon Water Customer Service Centre.

## Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria)

If you are not satisfied with the way in which Wannon Water has handled your situation you are able to request that your matter be referred to a higher level within Wannon Water for review. If you remain dissatisfied with the way your matter is handled or you are not satisfied with the outcome, you are able to refer the matter to the Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) via the details below:

**Freecall:** 1800 500 509 (mobile rates apply)  
**Freefax:** 1800 500 549  
**Email:** [ewovinfo@ewov.com.au](mailto:ewovinfo@ewov.com.au)  
**Mail:** Energy and Water Ombudsman (Victoria) Ltd  
GPO Box 469D  
Melbourne VIC 3001

