

# Communication and agreement

This guide is based on the premise that any payment arrangement reached between Gippsland Water and a customer will be mutually agreed. Both parties have a responsibility to maintain open communication.

By notifying Gippsland Water early you will have access to a greater range of alternatives and our customer service staff will work with you to develop an appropriate payment solution.



Contact  
Gippsland Water on  
**1800 050 500**  
for a confidential discussion  
about payment options  
available

**Are you  
having  
trouble  
paying your  
Gippsland  
Water  
account?**

Customers experiencing financial hardship should contact Gippsland Water on 1800 050 500 for a confidential discussion about the range of payment options we have available.

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# Who is eligible?

*If you believe your personal circumstances warrant special consideration, you may apply for a case review under Gippsland Water's Hardship Policy.*

## Customers who may be considered include:

- People on low or fixed incomes.
- People who may have experienced a sudden change in circumstances (such as ill health, unemployment, separation, a death in the family, a loss arising from an accident), or some other temporary financial difficulty.
- People who, through self assessment, believe they are in financial hardship.
- People eligible for a government funded concession, eg. Health Care Card, Centrelink benefit, etc.
- People who have previously applied for a Utility Relief Grant.
- People whose payment history indicates that they have had difficulty meeting Gippsland Water's payment terms in the past.

*Other eligibility criteria may also be considered.*

## Anyone experiencing financial hardship has the right to:

- Be treated respectfully, sensitively, and without judgement.
- Have their case individually considered, and their circumstances kept confidential.
- Receive prompt information on options for alternative payment arrangements, Gippsland Water's Hardship Policy and government concessions (including the Utility Relief Grant Scheme and other government financial assistance programs).
- Negotiate an amount they can afford to pay on an arrangement plan.
- Choose from various payment methods and receive written confirmation of the agreed payment arrangement within 14 days.
- Re-negotiate the amount of their instalment if there is a change in their circumstances.
- Receive information about free, independent and accredited financial counselling services.
- Receive a language interpreter service at no cost.
- Not have water supply restricted as long as they have agreed to a payment arrangement and are meeting it.
- Be shielded from legal action and additional debt recovery costs, whilst they continue to make payments according to an agreed schedule, or an agreed altered schedule of payments.
- Speak with a Gippsland Water representative who is familiar with their situation in order to re-negotiate their payment arrangement if a payment has been, or is likely to be, missed.
- Be advised about how to minimise future water usage.
- Be advised about their right to lodge a complaint with the independent dispute resolution scheme (Energy and Water Ombudsman of Victoria) if their affordability issue is not resolved with Gippsland Water.

