

DOMESTIC, FAMILY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE CUSTOMER POLICY

Purpose

Domestic, family and sexual violence (DFSV) is a serious issue that poses substantial risk to the health and wellbeing of our communities. As an essential service provider to South Australians, if you are impacted by domestic, family and sexual violence we will actively support you, with your safety a key priority. We also recognise that domestic, family and sexual violence can lead to payment difficulty and financial hardship.

Government, corporate and community sectors all have a responsibility to work together to support people affected by domestic, family and sexual violence. A collaborative and integrated response is essential to bring about long-term systemic change.

This document sets out our approach to supporting residential customers who disclose to us they are affected by domestic, family and sexual violence.

Principles

If you are a residential customer disclosing domestic, family and sexual violence, SA Water will ensure that:

- You are treated with respect and confidentiality
- There is a clear process for you to access support from SA Water, via our customer service team
- Staff receive training to appropriately respond to disclosures of domestic, family and sexual violence
- Your privacy and safety is of paramount importance in how we design and use the information we collect and store in our systems
- You are protected from debt collection activities and supported to manage your SA Water bill
- You are offered information on other services and networks that can provide the support you need.

Scope

This policy applies to all residential SA Water customers who disclose they are experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence and require assistance regarding SA Water matters. Some parts of the policy and protections also apply to residential tenants, as outlined throughout the document.

Definitions and Acronyms

Term	Description
Customer Care Team	The Customer Care Team supports customers with specific challenges including financial hardship. They are trained to understand the needs of customers experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence.
Domestic, family and sexual violence	<p>Family violence is a term used for violence that occurs within family relationships, such as between parents and children, siblings, intimate partners or kinship relationships. Family relationships can include carers, foster carers and co-residents (for example in group homes or boarding residences).</p> <p>Domestic violence is a type of family violence that occurs between current or former intimate partners (sometimes referred to as intimate partner violence).</p> <p>Family violence, domestic violence and sexual violence can include a range of behaviour types such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical violence • sexual violence • emotional abuse • psychological abuse • coercive control • financial abuse • technological abuse • social abuse/isolation • spiritual/religious abuse • pet abuse • cultural abuse • stalking. <p>More detail on the context of these forms of abuse can be found here.</p>
Hardship Policy	SA Water's Hardship Policy for residential customers hardshippolicyrescustomers.pdf
Privacy Policy	SA Water's Privacy Policy: SAWater - Privacy policy
Residential Customer	<p>A property owner of a residential property in South Australia. This includes both metropolitan and regional areas.</p> <p>Residential customer is defined in the Water retail code - major retailers - WRC MR/06:</p> <p>Residential customer means a customer which acquires retail services primarily for domestic purposes.</p> <p>This is underpinned by the definition of customer in the Water Industry Act 2012:</p> <p>Customer means a person who owns land in relation to which a retail service is provided and includes:</p> <p>(a) where the context requires, a person seeking the provision of a retail service; and</p> <p>(b) in prescribed circumstances—a person supplied with retail services as a consumer or user of those services (without limiting the application of this definition to owners of land); and</p> <p>(c) a person of a class declared by the regulations to be customers</p>

Tenant	<p>A resident of a property who does not own the property but is renting it from the owner.</p> <p>If you are a tenant, we may still be able to help. Please contact our customer care team to discuss your situation.</p>
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How you can access support

Direct access to our team

- If you are affected by domestic, family or sexual violence you can call our Customer Care Team on 1300 SA WATER (1300 729 283) or complete the General Enquiries online form [here](#).
- We understand that sharing your story multiple times can be difficult. If you prefer, we can minimise the need for you to repeatedly disclose your situation.
- Members of the Customer Care Team are trained to ensure that we:
 - protect your privacy
 - believe you without you having to provide proof of your situation (unless needed when considering debt management)
 - provide connection to specialised DFSV support services, and
 - provide access to our financial support and assistance options, including protection from debt recovery action.
- The Customer Care Team will confirm your preferred methods of communication.
- You can also visit SA Water in person at 250 Victoria Square, Adelaide/Tarntanyangga, between the hours of 8:30am – 5:00pm Monday – Friday.

Protecting your privacy and safety

Additional privacy and identification processes

- We ensure the secure handling of all customer information is in line with our privacy policy and relevant legislation. More information can be found in our [privacy policy](#) which is available on our website.
- We will ensure you feel confident that your personal information will not be shared without consent, especially in the case of joint accounts where we have received a DFSV disclosure.
- Your personal details can only be accessed by SA Water staff who have a need to access it as part of their duties.

Financial support available

Tailored financial support and protection from debt recovery

- If you are affected by domestic, family and sexual violence you can access the support available under our [customer hardship policy](#).
- Our team will tailor support to suit your individual needs. This may include:
 - Affordable payment arrangements (that are not means-tested)
 - Support with managing debt
 - Referrals to support networks and financial counsellors.

- If you enter a payment assistance plan with our team, and maintain that arrangement, you will be protected from further debt recovery action related to SA Water bills.
- We provide additional support and assistance if you are left with debt as a result of domestic, family and sexual violence:
 - We may waive all or part of your debt based on several factors, including the amount of the debt, the circumstances in which the debt was incurred (including if it was incurred because of financial abuse), the payment assistance options that have been (or could be) effective, your personal circumstances and capacity to pay the debt
 - If your circumstances change, we will work with you to ensure that the financial and debt assistance also changes as required
 - If you have a joint account, you may be left with debt by the other account holder(s) due to a DFSV situation. Being part of a joint account may raise additional concerns about your financial situation and information privacy. In these situations, we will:
 - keep your personal information confidential from other people on the account
 - Ensure that you can access support without having contact with the other people on the account
 - Offer the same types of financial support whether you are on a joint or individual account.
- If you are a tenant or someone who pays the water bill but are not the property owner, please contact our customer care team to discuss your individual situation.

Referrals to other support services

Critical support beyond SA Water

- To assist navigating what can be a challenging situation, if you disclose domestic, family and sexual violence you will be offered the contact details of community service organisations that provide a variety of wrap-around supports. Organisations include:

Support service	Description
Emergency Services	000 Please call if you are in immediate danger.
1800RESPECT	1800 737 732 www.1800respect.com.au 1800RESPECT is the national domestic, family and sexual violence counselling, information and support service operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They provide crisis assistance for anyone of any gender, orientation, culture, ability.
13YARN	13 92 76 www.13yarn.org.au 13YARN [Thirteen YARN] is the First Nations crisis support line for mob who are feeling overwhelmed

	or having difficulty coping. 13YARN offer a confidential one-on-one yarning opportunity with a Lifeline-trained Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporter who can provide crisis support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
SA Domestic Violence Crisis Line	1800 800 098 www.Womenssafetyservices.com.au A 24/7 SA-based service to support you or someone you know who is experiencing DFSV.
First Nations Healing	1800 003 308 www.embolden.org.au/members/nunga-miminar Providing specialist support for First Nations women and children living with or escaping family violence.
QLife	1800 184 527 www qlife.org.au This service provides 3pm-midnight anonymous, daily support to LGBTIQ+ people about a variety of matters specific to this community include DFSV.
SA Yarrow Place Rape & Sexual Assault Service	1800 817 421 https://www.wchn.sa.gov.au/our-network/yarrow-place
Zahra Foundation	08 8352 1889 www.zahrafoundation.org.au Supports women impacted by domestic abuse, providing free programs, services and education to support economic well-being and a pathway out of poverty.
Beyond Blue	Beyond Blue provide free mental health support https://www.beyondblue.org.au/
Mensline Australia	1300 789 978 www.mensline.org.au Counselling services that can support emotional, family and relationship issues.
No to Violence Men's Referral Service	1300 766 491 www.ntv.org.au Working with men to end family violence.
Women's Information Service	1800 188 158 https://officeforwomen.sa.gov.au/womens-information-service/our-services Provides financial counselling and assistance with Family Court attendance, free internet access, and a wide range of information and assistance.
Women's Legal Service SA	08 8231 8929 www.wlssa.org.au Legal services, assistance and justice for women.

Working Women's Centre SA	08 8410 6499 www.wwcsa.org.au Legal advice, information and advocacy for working women.
Relationships Australia SA	1300 364 277 www.rasa.org.au Working with all peoples to recover from adverse experiences and trauma.

Online resources	
A range of online resources are also available to help you better understand DFSV	Break the Cycle breakthecycle.sa.gov.au Our Watch www.ourwatch.org.au Stop it at the start www.respect.gov.au White Ribbon www.whiteribbon.org.au WSSSA www.womenssafetyservices.com.au

Communicating the support available

Information via your preferred channels

- You can find information about our domestic, family and sexual violence policy and supports on our [website](#).
- We will share information about the supports we offer and the phone line for our team with community organisations and financial counsellors.
- Information about our support can be provided via your preferred channels, for example by mail or email, to your nominated address.

Staff training and support

Staff at all levels are trained

- We provide training and support resources for our staff to ensure a consistent awareness and understanding of domestic, family and sexual violence and our related policies, procedures and processes.
- We provide additional role-specific training for staff with customer-facing roles, including best practice Recognise, Respond and Refer training, and how to apply our policies, procedures and processes to effectively support customers who disclose domestic, family and sexual violence.
- As well as ensuring that our staff can work to support and safeguard customers experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence we also train our people leaders to be able to support and/or refer team members who may also be impacted.

Complaints process

- Details of our customer complaints and dispute resolution process are available at our website: www.sawater.com.au. We can also make a copy of this process available, upon request at no charge.
- As a customer of SA Water you have a right to have any complaint heard and addressed by us, and the right to escalate that complaint to the Energy and Water Ombudsman SA (EWOSA), in the event that your complaint cannot be resolved. The website: Free, Independent and Fair | Energy & Water Ombudsman SA.