

## Family Violence

---

**Effective date:** 1 July 2018

**Responsible officer(s):** General Manager Customer and Community

**Next revision date:** 1 July 2020

### Policy Statement

Central Highlands Water (CHW) is committed to recognising and responding appropriately to family violence issues through the provision of confidential and respectful assistance for staff and customers who have been exposed to family violence.

It is widely accepted that Government, corporate and community sectors have a shared responsibility to work together in support of those experiencing family violence - a collaborative and integrated response is essential in order to effect long term systemic change.

### Purpose

In accordance with *Clause 14 of the Essential Services Commission Customer Service Code*, this policy outlines CHW's approach of providing ongoing assistance and support to staff and customers affected by family violence.

### Scope

CHW champions staff and customer safety and has made a strong commitment to the following actions:

- Recognising that victims of family violence generally experience a broad range of behaviour that is not limited to physical violence, but can include economic and emotional abuse. CHW seeks to provide a sensitive response in consultation with the victim to provide the best outcomes.
- Empowering customers, with our support, to manage the financial impacts, security of their data and future account management in a manner that provides outcomes that meet their needs and supports them to move forward.
- Providing a safe environment for staff and customers to access relevant information and seek support.
- Delivering a process that avoids customers having to repeat disclosure of their family violence, and provides for continuity of service by providing a dedicated team who deal with those affected by family violence.
- Ensuring secure handling of information about those who are affected by family violence, in a manner that maintains confidentiality.
- Guaranteeing customers affected by family violence will be assessed on an individual basis with consideration given to recovery of debt from customers with joint accounts, debt waiver or deferment, allocation of debt and debt collection activities, Hardship grants and access to Utility Relief Grants and concessions.

To reinforce the above commitment, CHW provides that all relevant staff have ongoing training to identify and deal appropriately with customers affected by family violence.

In addition to the above, CHW provides ongoing support to staff affected by family violence including appropriate leave, training, external referrals and counselling is available.

### **External Support Networks and Resources**

- 1800 RESPECT
- Berry Street
- Child & Family Services Ballarat (CAFS)
- In-touch Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence
- Kids Help Line
- Lifeline
- Mensline Australia
- Relationships Australia
- Safesteps

### **Internal Support Networks and Resources**

- Employees Dealing with Family Violence: A Resources for Managers
- Dealing with Family Violence: A Resource for Employees
- Central Highlands Water Employee Assistance Program (EAP) – Converge International

### **Related and Referenced Documents**

- Central Highlands Water Customer Charter
- Communication and Engagement Strategy
- Credit Management Strategy
- Customer Service Code
- Digital Strategy
- Diversity and Inclusion Strategy
- OH&S Strategy
- Residential Hardship Guidelines
- Vulnerable Customer Strategy
- Water Efficiency Strategy

### **Responsible for Implementation**

- All employees
- Customer and Community Division
- Executive Leadership Team
- People and Culture Division

**(END POLICY)**