



# **PORT OF BRISBANE** **FINANCIAL HARDSHIP** **POLICY**

WATER AND SEWERAGE SERVICES

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MARCH 2022

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# Financial Hardship Policy

## Purpose

This policy is designed to provide ongoing assistance and support to our small business customers experiencing difficulty in paying their water and sewerage account from Port of Brisbane Pty Ltd (PBPL).

This policy meets the requirements as set out in the *South East Queensland Customer Water and Wastewater Code 2017*.

## Applicability of the Policy

This is a strategic policy, which is for internal and external use and is made available on our website.

## Scope

This policy applies to all PBPL small business customers using less than 100 kilolitres of water per annum, who are willing but unable to pay their water and sewerage accounts due to financial or personal circumstances. If you are unsure whether you qualify, please get in touch via our contact details at the end of this document.

## Related Legislation

- *South-East Queensland Water (Distribution and Retail Restructuring) Act 2009*
- *Water Supply (Safety and Reliability) Act 2008*
- *South East Queensland Customer Water and Wastewater Code 2017*

## Policy Statement

We are committed to maintaining positive customer relationships, and as your retail-distributor, we want to make sure you are aware of your options when faced with circumstances preventing you from meeting your financial commitments related to your water and sewerage supply account. All requests for assistance are reviewed and assessed on a case-by-case basis.

## What is financial hardship?

We define financial hardship as circumstances that are normally unforeseen or out of your control, that impede your ability to pay your regular water and sewerage account. Whatever the cause, we have a range of assistance options available to offer, such as extension of time or agreed payment plans.

## Identifying customers in financial hardship

If you are experiencing financial difficulty, we encourage you to contact us as soon as possible to discuss your situation. We are dedicated to providing support for our customers during tough times, and we encourage you to get in contact as soon as possible to enable us to proactively work towards a solution to manage your account pursuant to this policy. We understand you may be referred by a financial counsellor, advisor, community agency or the Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ) and we will work towards a suitable outcome together.

## Payment options and arrangements

We can work out what payment arrangement suits you and your situation and offer flexible and affordable plans to get you through. Once we have come to an agreement, a written notice will be issued outlining the details of the arrangement and requesting your confirmation.

Provided that your account is settled as per the agreed payment arrangement, no additional charges will be incurred due to further recovery action such as debt recovery or interest on overdue amounts.

### Monitoring and reviewing payment arrangements

PBPL may review the agreed payment terms at any time and, should your circumstances change, we ask that you get in touch in order for us to determine if any changes need to be made to the agreed payment plan.

### Non-payment of your payment arrangement



If you are unable to meet the agreed payment arrangements, such as missing an instalment, or anticipate you may miss a future instalment, please contact us and we will talk it through with you.

Should the terms of the agreement not be met, we will handle the account pursuant to our Customer Charter. Further recovery action may be taken, and/or interest may be charged on overdue amounts.

Our Customer Charter is available for review at [www.portbris.com.au/property/water-and-sewerage-services](http://www.portbris.com.au/property/water-and-sewerage-services)

## Additional support

### Water efficiency measures

We are happy to provide advice on saving water for your business in order to lower the cost of your water and sewerage services and ease the financial burden that comes with unnecessarily high water consumption. Please contact us on the details provided at the end of this document if you'd like advice on water efficiency.

### Complaints and feedback

While we take pride in looking after our customers, we recognise our service, decisions or actions may fail to meet your expectations, or the standards we set in our service standards and customer charters. We take valid feedback on our services seriously, as we are committed to continuous improvement and satisfaction of our customers. If you wish to provide feedback or make a complaint, please contact us on the details provided on the next page. For more information on how we manage complaints, our Complaints Management Policy is available at [www.portbris.com.au/property/water-and-sewerage-services](http://www.portbris.com.au/property/water-and-sewerage-services)

### Our contact details

If you are experiencing financial hardship or would like further information regarding this policy, you can contact your PBPL Property Portfolio Managers from 9am to 4pm on business days:

**Phone:** Deborah Wood: 0411 137 963

**Phone:** Peter Crowley: 0491 213 663

**Email:** [billing.enquiry@portbris.com.au](mailto:billing.enquiry@portbris.com.au)

#### **Mail**

PBPL Water and Wastewater Enquiry

Locked Bag 1818

Port of Brisbane QLD 4178

### Definitions

**Customer** - Residential and small business customers using less than 100 kilolitres per annum who has (or would have, if connected) a direct billing relationship with PBPL.

**Kilolitre** - 1000 litres.

**Payment arrangement** - An arrangement where due or overdue water and sewerage accounts are paid by making agreed instalment payments of agreed amounts over a set period of time.