



Family Violence Policy Statement

Purpose

This policy outlines Aqwest Bunbury Water Corporation's approach to addressing family violence, as required by the *Water Services Code of Practice (Family Violence) 2020*.

Policy Statement

This policy applies to customers and staff of Aqwest who have been, or are being, affected by family violence.

Legislation

The *Water Services Code of Practice (Family Violence) 2020* requires water service providers to have and implement a family violence policy and stipulates the minimum requirements that the policy must address.

This policy meets these requirements and has been informed by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation's Guidance for water service providers in addressing family violence.

Context

Family violence is the intentional and systematic use of violence and abuse to control, coerce and create fear. It can be physical, emotional/ psychological, sexual, financial, spiritual or social in nature. Further information on what is considered family violence is available [here](#).

Perpetrators of family violence can use control over their victims as a form of economic abuse, such as incurring debt in the victim's name, refusing to contribute to costs, refusing to pay bills or having the service disconnected when they leave the family home.

Victims of family violence may suffer significant psychological and emotional impacts while attempting to resolve debts at the same time as ensuring their personal safety. In addition, perpetrators may gain access to the victims' confidential information such as their whereabouts, for example, through their knowledge of the personal details of the victim.

Our Role in Addressing Family Violence

At Aqwest, we have zero tolerance for family violence and will do everything we can (within our control) to support customers affected by family violence.

We have implemented systems and staff training so that customers who disclose to us that they have been, or are being, affected by family violence:

- Are heard and need only make this disclosure once.
- Have confidential and respectful interactions with our staff.
- Can be certain their personal information is kept confidential and safe.
- Are provided with information about financial support and assistance available, including specialised support networks.
- Are provided with time and information to help them consider their options and make informed decisions.
- Can enter into Aqwest's Financial Hardship program and be supported by our family violence process.

Support Available

Customers can be referred into external support networks and resources including:

Organisation	Phone	Freecall	Website
National Sexual Assault Domestic Family Violence Counselling services	1800respect	1800 737 732	Home 1800RESPECT
Men's Domestic Violence Helpline	(08) 9223 1199	1800 000 599	Department for Child Protection - Western Australia - Men's Domestic Violence Helpline (dcp.wa.gov.au)
Women's Domestic Violence Helpline	(08) 9223 1188	1800 007 339	Department for Child Protection - Western Australia - Women's Domestic Violence Helpline (dcp.wa.gov.au)
Crisis Care		1800 199 008	Department for Child Protection - Western Australia - Crisis Care (dcp.wa.gov.au)

Support Available (Cont.)

Organisation	Phone	Freecall	Website
Mensline Australia		1300 789 978	Free help, support, referrals & counselling: Contact MensLine Australia
Sexual Assault Resource Centre	(08) 6458 1828	1800 199 888	Sexual Assault Resource Centre (SARC) (health.wa.gov.au)
South West Refuge	(08) 9791 2894		South West Refuge Inc (swrefuge.com.au)
Waratah	(08) 9791 2884	1800 017 303	Home - Waratah

Up-to-date information about support networks and resources from the [Department of Communities' website](#).

Useful Information

Redirection of Water Bill

We will advise you of your right to have your water bill redirected to another person free of charge if you are absent or ill.

Payment Options

You may pay your water bill by BPAY, BPOINT, Centrepay, Direct Debit, at Australia Post, or in person. Centrepay is only available to customers who receive Centrelink payments. Paying by Direct Debit or Centrepay may help you manage your bills more easily, as your bills will be paid through regular deductions. For more information on your payment options, please contact us or visit our website.

Concessions and Other Financial Relief and Assistance

You may be eligible for Pensioner and Senior Concession(s) and/or financial relief (HUGS -Hardship Utilities Grant Scheme). We may refer you for a Hardship Utilities Grant.

Financial counselling

We will advise you of any financial counselling services or other organisations that may be available to you. Financial counsellors offer free, independent information to help you take control of your financial situation.

The National Debt Helpline can be contacted on 1800 007 007 or alternatively you can go to the website (www.financialcounsellors.org) to locate your closest financial counselling service.

Complaints Handling

If you have a complaint, please contact us first. Our contact details are included below.

Our complaints handling process is available at www.aqwest.com.au

If you are not satisfied with the way we handle your complaint, you may refer your complaint to the Energy and Water Ombudsman. The Energy and Water Ombudsman will investigate your complaint and may mediate the dispute between you and us.

The Energy and Water Ombudsman's contact details are:

Energy and Water Ombudsman WA
Phone: 9220 7588
Freecall: 1800 754 004
Email: energyandwater@ombudsman.wa.gov.au
Website: www.ombudsman.wa.gov.au

Approval and Review

Our policy was approved by the Department of Water & Environmental Regulation (DWER) in accordance with the *Water Services Code of Practice (Family Violence) 2020*. We will review our policy at least every five years to ensure it remains up-to-date and relevant.

Our Contact Details

You can contact us at:

5 Mackinnon Way, East Bunbury, WA, 6230
Our normal business hours are 9:00am to 4:00pm, Monday to Friday.
Tel: (08) 9780 9500
TTY: 133 677
TIS: 131 450
Web: <http://www.aqwest.com.au>
Email: accounts@aqwest.com.au