CITY OF MONASH

Rates and Charges Hardship Policy

COUNCIL POLICY

Finance (Corporate Services)

OVERVIEW: This policy outlines guidelines and procedures for how Council manages financial hardship in the administration of municipal rates and charges. It is essential for Council to have this policy in place to ensure a fair, transparent and consistent approach to the consideration of hardship in the administration of municipal rates and charges and provides a clear framework for accountable decision-making and responsible revenue management.

RESPONSIBLE MANAGER:	Chief Financial Officer for the corporate implementation, review, and interpretation of this policy.
RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT:	Finance

APPROVED or RESOLVED BY:	COUNCIL
DATE:	30 June 2026
EDNA NO:	D21-385834
REVIEW DATE:	June 2030

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Other languages 4713 5000 Italiano 4713 5008 한국어 4713 5010 සිංහල 4713 5020 தமிழ் 4713 5021

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1. Introduction

The Rates and Charges Hardship Policy (the Policy) sets out the principles guiding how Monash City Council responds to financial hardship in the administration of municipal rates and charges.

The Policy supports a fair, transparent and consistent approach to the consideration of hardship, enabling Council to comply with its obligations under the *Local Government Act 1989* (Vic) and the Ministerial Guidelines issued under section 181AA. It provides a clear framework for accountable decision-making and responsible revenue management.

2. Scope

The purpose of this Policy is to provide a clear and consistent framework for hardship assistance in relation to annual municipal rates and charges.

The Policy applies to ratepayers within the City of Monash who are liable for the payment of municipal rates and charges and who are experiencing hardship. It establishes the context in which Council may provide support to eligible ratepayers who are unable to meet their rate obligations due to hardship.

3. Background

Monash City Council (Council) recognises that residents and businesses may experience periods of financial difficulty due to changing economic conditions, personal circumstances, or unexpected life events. Council is committed to supporting ratepayers who experience hardship and ensuring that assistance is delivered in an accessible, fair, consistent, and compassionate manner.

Council currently offers a range of flexible payment options to support ratepayers in managing their rates. These existing options include:

- Online payments, such as BPAY, Post Billpay, and credit/debit card payments via Council's website.
- In-person payments, including cash, cheque or EFTPOS, available at Council's Customer Service Points.
- Direct debit arrangements, allowing automatic deductions to assist ratepayers with budgeting
- Centrepay, a government-operated bill-payment service that enables eligible ratepayers receiving Centrelink payments to have small, manageable amounts automatically directed towards their rates.

These payment pathways support diverse needs and preferences and reflect Council's ongoing commitment to providing accessible and flexible service delivery across the municipality.

However, Council acknowledges that some residents and businesses require additional, tailored support beyond standard payment methods, particularly during periods of financial or personal hardship.

This Policy provides those further supports by setting out clear assistance options designed to help ratepayers who are experiencing genuine hardship.

In developing this Policy, Council has considered emerging industry standards, best practice approaches adopted across the local government sector, and relevant Ministerial Guidelines. These external frameworks help ensure that Council's hardship processes remain contemporary, equitable, and aligned with statewide expectations.

This Policy reflects Council's broader commitment to social inclusion, responsible financial management, and transparent service delivery by providing clear pathways for ratepayers to seek support when they need it most.

4. Legislative Context and Governance Statement

The main legislative context in this document is the *Local Government Act 1989*, specifically sections 170, 171, 171A, 171B, 172, and 181AA. Other relevant legislations include the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic), and Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic).

In generating this Policy, Council confirms that its development, implementation, and review comply with the overarching governance principles outlined in the Act. This Policy has considered the importance of engagement, strategic planning, financial management, transparency, and service performance.

5. Definitions

Word	Definition
Annual rates and charges	Charges levied on properties annually by Council to fund municipal services. These include property rates, waste service charges, and State Government levy to fund emergency services.
Basic Necessities	Essential items and services required for a reasonable standard of living, such as food, housing, and utilities.
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	The principal officer of Council responsible for overall operations and implementation of Council decisions.
Chief Financial Officer (CFO)	Senior officer responsible for financial management and oversight of Council's fiscal policies.
Council	City of Monash, the local government authority responsible for municipal governance and services.
Deferral of rates and charges	Postponement of payment of rates and charges for an agreed period without penalty interest accruing during the deferral.
Director - Corporate Services	Executive responsible for corporate governance, financial services, and administrative functions.

Word	Definition
Financial Counsellor	A qualified professional providing advice and support to residents experiencing financial hardship. This is a free, independent and confidential service.
Financial Hardship (Person)	Severe financial difficulty that prevents a resident from paying annual rates and charges without compromising basic living necessities for themselves and/or their dependants.
Financial Hardship (Business Entity)	Situation causing a business to be unable to meet its existing financial obligations for a period due to unforeseen events or circumstances outside its reasonable control. Some examples are natural disasters, health crises, economic downturns.
Hardship	A broad term that refers to any situation in which a person is struggling due to circumstances beyond their control. The circumstance may be financial, but can also be social, health, emotional, or situational. The following are some examples of such circumstances: • Illness; • Family violence; • Bereavement; • Natural disasters The distinction against financial hardship is that not all hardship situations result in an inability to pay bills, but it may impact a person’s capacity to engage with managing daily life.
Legal Costs	Expenses incurred by Council in recovering unpaid rates and charges through legal proceedings.
Non-residential Properties	Land that is used, or intended to be used, for purposes other than domestic living. This includes commercial, industrial, retail, agricultural, recreational, community service, and mixed-use-properties where the primary function is not residential occupation.
Payment Plan	An agreed arrangement between Council and a ratepayer to pay outstanding rates and charges over an extended period.
Penalty Interest	Interest charged on overdue rates and charges as prescribed under the *Local Government Act 1989 Vic*.
Pension Concession Card Holder	As per eligibility criteria on Municipal rates concession - DFFH Services . A ratepayer who holds one of the following eligible cards. • Pensioner Concession Card • Veterans’ Affairs Gold Card (given for TPI, War Widow, EDA or POW).

Word	Definition
PRAVS (Property, Revenue and Valuations)	The team responsible for managing ratepayer details, property valuations, and revenue collection.
Ratepayer	A person or entity liable for the payment of municipal rates and charges under the *Local Government Act 1989 (Vic).*
Residential Properties	Land that is used, or intended to be used, primarily for domestic living purposes. Examples are houses, apartments, townhouses, units, and other dwellings that serve as a person's principal or secondary place of residence.
Waiver of interest and legal costs	Council's discretion to waive accrued penalty interest and legal costs associated with overdue rates and charges.
Waiver of rates and charges	Council's discretion to waive part of the rates and charges in cases of extreme hardship.

Table 1: Definitions

6. Responsibilities and Roles

Who	Role
Councillors	Councillors play a significant role in representing the community's needs and interests to Council. Councillors are a significant stakeholder in the development, amendment and review of policies. Councillors must ensure that all policies comply with relevant laws and regulations, and they are responsible for upholding the legal and ethical standards of Council.
Communications Team	Responsible for graphic design and assisting with communications and community engagement.
Director - Corporate Services	Oversight responsibility to ensure this policy's compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and industry standards. The director has a role in monitoring how policies are put into practice and compliance.
Chief Financial Officer	Responsible for ensuring that the Policy is applied in a manner that meets all legislative requirements, delivers fair and consistent outcomes for the community, whilst ensuring Council's long-term financial sustainability. The CFO will escalate complex or exceptional cases to the CEO and/or Council in accordance with delegated authority. The CFO is also responsible to assess appeal applications to ensure the decisions made on hardship assistance applications are fair, compassionate, but also in the best interest of the Monash community.

Who	Role
Coordinator – PRAVS Team	Responsible for development and implementation of the Policy, and periodic review of the Policy. Also responsible in ensuring staff members are adequately trained. The PRAVS Coordinator is responsible for the approval decision on hardship assistance applications received.
PRAVS Team	Responsible for the assessment of applications and their related inquiries, in accordance with the framework within this Policy.

Table 2: Responsibilities and Roles

7. Ratepayers of Residential Properties

This section outlines the assistance options available to residential ratepayers experiencing financial hardship. All information provided in applications will be handled with care and in accordance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* to ensure confidentiality and compliance with privacy obligations**.** Council aims to provide fair and consistent support while encouraging applicants to submit detailed information and supporting documents.

Assistance Options

1. Flexible Payment Plan (up to 24 months)
   An agreed arrangement between Council and the ratepayer to pay outstanding rates and charges over an extended period of up to 24 months. Penalty interest will be suspended for the duration of the payment plan. This option helps residents manage payments without compromising basic living necessities.

2. Deferral of Rates and Charges
   Postponement of payment of rates and charges for an agreed period without penalty interest accruing during the deferral. Deferred amounts will eventually need to be paid when the ratepayer's financial situation improves or when the property changes ownership. Deferring rates and charges will stop the accumulation of penalty interest, and all debt recovery or legal actions for the duration of the deferral. Deferrals are reviewed annually to ensure continued eligibility.

3. Waiver of Penalty Interest and/or Legal Costs
   Council may exercise discretion to waive accrued penalty interest and legal costs associated with overdue rates and charges. This option is considered in cases of significant hardship.

Eligibility Criteria

- Applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- Automatic eligibility applies to:
  - Holders of a Pensioner Concession Card
  - Recipients of the State Government's Utility Relief Grant Scheme

- Other applicants must demonstrate circumstances of hardship or financial hardship (refer to Definitions table above) that prevent payment.
- Council will assess financial hardship situations based on the following:
  - Balance sheet health (assets v liabilities)
  - Household cashflow situation
- Applicants are encouraged to provide as much supporting documentation as possible. The following are examples of such documents:
  - Income statements
  - Evidence of adverse change in income
  - Medical certificates
  - Recommendation letter from financial counsellor
  - Government agency documentation (e.g. from Centrelink, NDIA)
- Please note that mere inconvenience or difficulty in making a payment is not considered as financial hardship. An example of this is if the ratepayer would be able to afford their rate obligation by:
  - Reorganisation/reprioritisation of finances (for example, liquidation of assets or reducing private school expenses)
  - Reducing expenditure on social activities and discretionary goods and services (such as holidays, sport and recreational activities)

Safety Net – Waste Service Charge Concession

To ease the impact of introducing the new waste service charge, Council will provide a $150 concession to households experiencing hardship (including financial hardship).

8. Ratepayers of Non-Residential Properties

This section outlines the assistance options available to non-residential ratepayers experiencing financial hardship. All information provided in applications will be handled with care and in accordance with the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* to ensure confidentiality and compliance with privacy obligations.

Assistance Options

1. Flexible Payment Plan (up to 24 months)
   An agreed arrangement between Council and the ratepayer to pay outstanding rates and charges over an extended period of up to 24 months. Penalty interest will be suspended for the duration of the payment plan. This option helps businesses manage payments during periods of financial difficulty.

2. Deferral of Rates and Charges (up to 3 years)
   Postponement of payment of rates and charges for an agreed period without penalty interest accruing during the deferral. Deferred amounts will eventually need to be paid when the business's financial situation improves or when the property changes ownership. Deferring rates and charges will stop the

accumulation of penalty interest, and all debt recovery or legal actions for the duration of the deferral. Deferrals are reviewed annually to ensure continued eligibility.

Note: Waiver of previously accumulated penalty interest and legal costs is ***not available*** *for non-residential ratepayers.*

Eligibility Criteria

- All applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- There is no automatic eligibility for non-residential ratepayers.
- Applicants must provide supporting documentation, which may include:
  - Recent financial statements
  - Business Activity Statements (BAS)
  - A supporting letter from an accountant outlining the financial hardship circumstances
- Applications should include a clear explanation of the circumstances causing financial hardship.

9. Council Position on Waiver of Rates and Charges

While the *Local Government Act 1989* provides Councils with discretionary powers to waive rates and charges in cases of extreme hardship, Monash City **Council does not waive any portion of rates and charges** under this Hardship Policy.

Justification:

Council operations, services, and infrastructure are funded primarily through rates and charges paid by property owners within the municipality. Waiving rates for a select group of ratepayers would effectively shift the financial burden onto the broader community, which is considered inequitable and inconsistent with principles of fairness.

Instead, Council provides alternative hardship assistance options—such as flexible payment plans, deferrals, and suspension of penalty interest—to support ratepayers in genuine need without compromising the sustainability of essential services for the entire community.

10. Application Process

Ratepayers seeking financial hardship assistance must apply through one of the methods listed below. Applications may be submitted by an authorised person on the ratepayers' behalf.

1. **Online Application Form**

   Complete the online application form available on Council's website:
   https://www.monash.vic.gov.au/Residents-Property/Rates/Hardship-Assistance

2. **Physical Application Form**

   Alternatively, a physical application form can be completed and submitted in person, mail or e-mail. These forms will be available at Council's Customer Service Points.

Applicants are encouraged to provide all relevant supporting documentation with their application to assist in the assessment process. Examples include income statements, medical certificates, financial statements, BAS statements, or letters from accountants.

Council will advise of its decision in writing, or contact the applicant if further information is required, within 14 days of the application being received.

Ratepayers are strongly encouraged to seek assistance and advice from **financial counselling services**, which are free, independent, and not-for-profit. For confidential support, contact the **National Debt Helpline** on **1800 007 007** to discuss your situation. Alternatively, information is also available on the following website: [Home - Financial Counselling Victoria]

In line with section 171 of the *Local Government Act 1989*, it is essential that all information provided to Council in support of an application is accurate, complete and not misleading in any material respect. Applicants must also promptly notify Council of any change in circumstances that may affect an application or a waiver granted under this section. Providing false or misleading information, or failing to disclose relevant changes, constitutes an offence.

The maximum penalty for this offence is 10 penalty units, with the monetary value of a penalty unit set annually by the Victorian Government and subject to indexation.

Appealing Against Application Outcome

Ratepayers who are dissatisfied with the outcome of their financial hardship application have the right to request a review of the decision.

How to Lodge an Appeal

An appeal can be submitted online, in-person, through mail or e-mail, by completing the Appeal Application Form, available through:

- Online on Council's website
- Physical copy at Council's Customer Service Points

Review Process

- The appeal will be reviewed by an independent officer who was not involved in the original decision.
- The purpose of the review is to ensure:
    - The decision-making process was fair and transparent.
    - The decision was based on relevant evidence.
    - The decision complies with applicable laws and regulations.
    - The decision was reasonable and justifiable in the circumstances.

Council will notify the applicant of the outcome of the appeal in writing within 21 days of the application being received.

11. Gender Impact Assessment

Council recognises that financial hardship can have gendered impacts. A Gender Impact Assessment has been conducted to ensure equitable support for all residents. The assessments identified several actions to strengthen equity and accessibility within the Policy such as:

- Enhancing staff capability to handle sensitive circumstances through targeted training
  - Family violence response
  - Cultural competency
  - Gender sensitivity
- Improving availability of useful information such as:
  - Family violence assistance programs
  - Financial counselling services
  - Homelessness support
  - Language services
- Improving accessibility of information:
  - Policy and other information to be made available on Council website
  - Policy and other information to be made available physically at various Council's customer service points
- Use of inclusive language and relatable stories in the Policy and/or website

12. Human Rights Considerations

This policy has been reviewed to ensure it does not negatively impact human rights and complies with the *Charter of Human Rights & Responsibilities Act 2006*.

13. Administrative Amendments

From time to time, circumstance may require minor amendments be made to this Policy. Where this does not materially alter the Policy, such amendments may be made administratively by the Chief Executive Officer.

Any amendment which materially alters the Policy must be approved by Council.

14. Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Coordinator of the PRAVS team by January 2030.

15. Document Version

Version Number	Date	Author	Reviewed By	Approved By	Comments
1.0	28/04/2026	Coordinator PRAVS	Chief Financial Officer		

16. Contact

If you have any questions about this Policy, please contact Council:

By emailing: mail@monash.vic.gov.au

By calling Coordinator PRAVS on 03 9518 3661.

17. Appendices

Appendix A - Hardship Assistance Application

Property Details:	
Relationship to property: **(Owner / tenant)**	
Property Address:	

Personal Details:	
Full Name:	
Email Address:	
Phone Number:	
Application Category: **(Company / Personal)**	
Mailing Address:	

Information:	
Are you a Pensioner? (Yes / No)	
Assistance Request **(Rate Repayment Deferment / Waiver of interest and/or rates)**	
If Rate Repayment Deferment: **(With Payment / Without Payment)**	
If Rate Repayment Deferment with Payment **Enter Amount:**	**$**

If Rate Repayment Deferment with Payment Enter frequency of payment offered:	

Circumstance surrounding hardship / financial hardship:

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Income Details:	
Income Type: **(Salary Income / Business Income)**	
Income Frequency:	
Amount:	$

Description:	
Any Government Benefits (Centrelink) **(Yes / No)**	
Benefit Amount:	$
Benefit Frequency:	
Description:	
Any Rental / Board Income **(Yes / No)**	
Amount:	$
Frequency:	
Any Interest / **Dividend Income (Yes / No)**	
Amount:	$
Frequency:	
Any other Income (Yes / No)	
Amount:	$

Frequency:	
Description:	
Total Income	$
Balance Income ***(Total Income – Total Expenses)***	$

Expenses Details:	
Do you have a Mortgage? (Yes/No)	
Amount:	$
Frequency:	
Do you have Rent or Board? (Yes/No)	
Amount:	$
Frequency:	

Other Expenses Details:		
Expense Type	**Amount**	**Frequency**
Food & Groceries	$	

Utilities and Telecommunication	$	
Insurances	$	
Property Charges	$	
Education	$	
Clothing & Personal Grooming	$	
Medical Expenses	$	
Leisure	$	
Other Expenses	$	
Total Expenses	$	

Asset Details:	
How many properties do you own?	
Total Value of Properties:	$
Properties Descriptions:	
Do you own motor vehicles? (Yes/No)	
Total Motor Vehicles Value:	$

Savings:	**$**
Other Investments:	**$**
Superannuation:	**$**
Other Assets:	**$**

Liabilities:	
Do you have secured loans? **(Yes / No)**	
Total Amount Owed: $ Descriptions:	
Do you have unsecured loans? **(Yes / No)**	
Total Amount Owed: $ Descriptions:	
Do you have Credit Cards? **(Yes / No)**	
Details: **Total Amount Owed: $**	

Do you have other debts? (Yes / No)	
Details **Debt 1:** **Amount Owed: $ Description:** **Debt 2:** **Amount Owed: $** **Description:**	

Declaration:	
Are you the only owner of the property? **(Yes / No)**	
How many owners does the property have?	
I / We have owned the property since (date of purchase) **Date of purchase:**	
I / We acknowledge that by signing this document, the information provided in support of my application is true and correct. I/we also understand that penalties may apply for providing misleading information.	
Applicant Name:	
Applicant Signature:	

Penalty for Misleading Information

It is an offence under Section 171 (6) of the Local Government Act 1989 to provide misleading information as part of this application.

Privacy Collection Statement

Monash City Council ("Council") collects personal information via this form to provide you with the service you are seeking and/or to fulfill its statutory responsibilities, and for related purposes which you may reasonably expect. Council will not release or provide your personal information to any other person or body, unless (a) it has been authorised to do so by you, or (b) it is permitted or required to do so by law, or (c) it is appropriate or required in the performance of the functions of

Council. If you do not supply the requested information, we may not be able to provide you with the service and/or fulfill our statutory responsibilities. You may gain access to your personal information by contacting Council's Privacy Officer via telephone on 9518 3555 or email at

mail@monash.vic.gov.au. Further details are available at the Privacy page on Council's website (www.monash.vic.gov.au).

CITY OF MONASH

Appendix B – Appeal Against Decision – Hardship Assistance

Monash City Council's Hardship Policy provides hardship assistance to people and businesses experiencing hardship in relation to the payment of rates and charges. To make an appeal, you must have first completed an Application for Assistance under the Hardship Policy.

Where a person or business is dissatisfied with the outcome of their Application for Assistance, they may request a review of the decision by completing and lodging this form. The review will be conducted by an appropriately delegated senior officer of Monash City Council.

The Hardship Policy ensures there is an opportunity for people who are unable to pay rates and charges to seek hardship assistance from Council.

Please note that Council is unable to waive the requirement to pay the amount due; however, hardship assistance may include waiving interest or legal costs, deferral of payment, or entering into a payment arrangement.

Applicant Details	
First name	
Last name	
Property address	
Suburb	
Postcode	
Phone number	
Email address	

Grounds for Appeal (tick one)

☐ **Mistake in original decision**

☐ **Contrary to law**

☐ **New information**

☐ **Other (please specify): ____**

Please note that if insufficient information is provided, Council may request further details. If requested information is not provided within 28 days, Council may determine the appeal based on the information available.

Reasons for Appeal

Please explain why you believe the above ground applies to your application. Attach additional pages and/or supporting documentation(s) if required.

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Declaration

I acknowledge that the outcome of this appeal is final. I declare that the information provided is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signature: ____________________________ Date: _____________

Lodging Your Appeal

Post: PO Box 1, Glen Waverley VIC 3150

Email: mail@monash.vic.gov.au

In person: Monash Civic Centre, 293 Springvale Road, Glen Waverley

Enquiries: (03) 9518 3555

Privacy Collection Statement

Monash City Council ("Council") collects personal information via this form to provide you with the service you are seeking and/or to fulfill its statutory responsibilities, and for related purposes which you may reasonably expect. Council will not release or provide your personal information to any other person or body, unless (a) it has been authorised to do so by you, or (b) it is permitted or required to do so by law, or (c) it is appropriate or required in the performance of the functions of

Council. If you do not supply the requested information, we may not be able to provide you with the service and/or fulfill our statutory responsibilities. You may gain access to your personal information by contacting Council's Privacy Officer via telephone on 9518 3555 or email at

mail@monash.vic.gov.au. Further details are available at the Privacy page on Council's website (www.monash.vic.gov.au).

Appendix C – External Support Services and Assistance for Financial Hardship

This Appendix provides information on free, independent and government-funded support services available to residents who may be experiencing financial hardship. These services can assist residents to manage debt, access financial information, and seek additional social and emotional support.

1. Services Australia – Financial Help and Information

Services Australia provides a range of **free financial support and information services** to assist individuals and families who are experiencing financial difficulty.

- **Social Worker Services** (https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/social-work-services)
  Residents experiencing financial hardship, crisis, or distress can access free counselling, support and referrals through Services Australia social workers. These services also provide support for people experiencing emotional distress related to financial pressures.

- **Financial Information Service (FIS) –** (https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/financial-information-service)
  FIS Officers provide free, independent financial information to help people make informed decisions about money, including budgeting, managing debt, and understanding financial options. This service is available to anyone, regardless of whether they receive a Centrelink payment.

- **Advance Payments from Centrelink** (https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/advance-payment)
  Individuals receiving income support payments or Family Tax Benefit may be able to access an advance lump sum payment. An advance payment is an early release of part of an existing payment and is repaid through reduced future payments.

2. Help with Managing Debt

Residents experiencing debt or financial stress are encouraged to seek early support. Services Australia highlights the following options:

- **Financial Counselling (Home - Financial Counselling Victoria)**
  Free financial counsellors can assist residents to:
  - Understand their financial situation
  - Negotiate with creditors and service providers
  - Set up payment arrangements
  - Access additional support services
- **National Debt Helpline (1800 007 007)**
  The National Debt Helpline provides free, confidential financial counselling and advice to people experiencing debt problems.

- **Legal Support and Bankruptcy Information (**https://www.moneysmart.gov.au/managing-your-money/managing-debts/free-legal-advice)
  Services Australia provides pathways to legal information and support services for residents dealing with serious debt, legal disputes or bankruptcy concerns.

- **Saver Plus Program** (https://www.bsl.org.au/services/saving-and-managing-money/saver-plus/)

Matched savings program for eligible low-income earners by Brotherhood of St. Laurence to help build essential financial skills

3. Support for Vulnerable Residents

Additional support options are available for residents facing specific or heightened vulnerability:

- **Financial Abuse and Family and Domestic Violence Support (https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/help-from-other-places-for-family-and-domestic-violence)** Financial abuse is recognised as a form of family and domestic violence. Services Australia provides information and support for people whose access to money is being controlled or restricted by another person.

- **No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS)** (https://goodshep.org.au/services/nils/)

Small, no-interest loans for essential goods and services.

How Residents Can Access Support

Residents should contact Services Australia for up-to-date information and support:

- **Website:** https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/getting-financial-help-and-information [Getting fi...Australia]

- **Interpreter service:** 131 450 (ask to be connected to Services Australia)

Appendix D – Support Services and Helplines for Family Violence, LGBTIQA+ and Mental Health

Residents experiencing or at risk of **family violence**, **mental health distress**, or who identify as **LGBTIQA+** may engage the following **free, confidential support services and helplines**. This information is provided as a guide only. Residents should contact the relevant service directly for support.

1. Family Violence Support and Helplines

The following services provide crisis support, counselling, safety planning and referrals for people experiencing family violence or sexual assault:

- **The Orange Door (Inner Eastern Melbourne)**
  Local access point for family violence support and child and family services
  Phone: 1800 354 322
  Email: IEMA@orangedoor.vic.gov.au
  Website: https://www.orangedoor.vic.gov.au

- **1800RESPECT**
  Australia-wide confidential counselling and support for family violence and sexual assault
  Phone: 1800 737 732
  Website: https://www.1800respect.org.au

- **Safe Steps**
  Family and domestic violence crisis support line
  Phone: 1800 015 188
  Website: https://www.safesteps.org.au

- **Sexual Assault Crisis Line (SACL)**
  Crisis counselling for people who have experienced sexual assault
  Phone: 1800 806 292
  Website: https://www.sacl.com.au

2. LGBTIQA+ Specific Support

Specialist services providing inclusive, safe and confidential support for LGBTIQA+ communities:

- **Rainbow Door**
  Specialist LGBTIQA+ helpline for family violence, mental health and wellbeing support
  Phone: 1800 729 367
  Website: https://www.rainbowdoor.org.au

- **W Respect**
  Specialist family violence support for LGBTIQA+ communities
  Phone: 1800 542 847

- **Q-Life**
  LGBTIQA+ peer support for mental health and wellbeing
  Phone: 1800 184 527
  Website: https://www.qlife.org.au

3. Mental Health Support and National Helplines

The following services provide crisis support, counselling and mental health information: 1

- **Lifeline** – Crisis support and suicide prevention
  Phone: 13 11 14
  Website: https://www.lifeline.org.au

- **Beyond Blue** – Mental health support and information
  Phone: 1300 224 636
  Website: https://www.beyondblue.org.au

- **Suicide Call Back Service**
  Phone: 1300 659 467
  Website: https://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au

- **SANE Australia** – Mental health support and information
  Phone: 1800 187 263
  Website: https://www.sane.org

- **Kids Helpline** – Children and young people aged 5–25
  Phone: 1800 551 800
  Website: https://www.kidshelpline.com.au

4. Further Information

A comprehensive and up-to-date list of support services and helplines is available on the City of Monash website:
https://www.monash.vic.gov.au/Community/Community-Safety/Support-Services-and-National-Helplines