



# ERC Energy

ENERGY SAVINGS DELIVERED TOGETHER

FAMILY VIOLENCE POLICY



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## ERC Energy | Family Violence Policy

### Introduction

#### This Policy

ERC Energy is committed to providing confidential and respectful assistance to customers experiencing Family Violence. ERC Energy has developed this policy to assist people affected by Family Violence.

Our family violence policy and processes have been developed to be supportive and flexible. This policy will be reviewed at least every two years. If you are affected by family violence and need access to any or all of the support mechanisms detailed in this policy or there is another way by which ERC Energy can assist you, please do not hesitate to contact our team when it is safe to do so:

- Phone: 1300 650 849
- Email: [hardship@ercenergy.com.au](mailto:hardship@ercenergy.com.au)

We also have a Hardship Policy which provides assistance to customers experiencing payment difficulties. It can be found on our website [www.ercenergy.com.au](http://www.ercenergy.com.au)

### Scope

This policy applies to our customers who may be affected by Family Violence. It also sets out the process for employees to understand Family Violence and our commitment to provide affected customers privacy and support. In this policy 'you' or 'your' refers to an Affected Customer.

### Policy Details

#### Defined Terms Affected Customer

##### **Affected Customer**

means any customer, including a former customer, who is or was a small customer and who may be affected by Family Violence.

##### **Confidential Information**

means any information that may be used to identify or locate an Affected Customer, including information about their location, contact details, or financial or personal circumstances. This includes name, phone numbers, email addresses, PO Boxes, and residential address



## **Family Member**

means –

1. (a) a person who is, or has been, the relevant person's spouse or domestic partner;
- (b) a person who has, or has had, an intimate personal relationship with the relevant person;
- (c) a person who is, or has been, a relative of the relevant person;
- (d) a child who normally or regularly resides with the relevant person or has previously resided with the relevant person on a normal or regular basis; or
- (e) a child of a person who has, or has had, an intimate personal relationship with the relevant person.
- (f) they are related according to Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander kinship rules or are both members of some other culturally recognised family group; or
- (g) is the carer (within the meaning of the Carers Recognition Act 2005) of the other.

## **Family Violence**

means –

- (a) behaviour by a person towards a Family Member of that person if that behaviour—
  - (i) is physically or sexually abusive;
  - (ii) is emotionally or psychologically abusive;
  - (iii) is economically abusive;
  - (iv) is threatening;
  - (v) is coercive;
  - (vi) in any other way controls or dominates the Family Member and causes that Family Member to feel fear for the safety or wellbeing of that Family Member or another person; or
- (b) behaviour by a person that causes a child to hear or witness, or otherwise be exposed to the effects of the behaviour referred to in paragraph (a).



## Customer Rights

You are entitled to additional account security. In all conversations we will firstly have regard to your safety. When providing you support we will consider your particular circumstances.

ERC Energy, or agents of ERC Energy, will not disclose or provide access to Confidential Information about you to any person without your prior consent. Including any person who is or has been listed on your account. If you are in New South Wales, Queensland or South Australia, we may disclose Confidential Information if there is a lawful purpose to do so. ERC Energy will work with you to determine a safe communication method, by:

- working with you to determine your preferred method of communication;
- contacting you by that preferred method of contact;
- pausing some or all communication to you for a period;
- setting up additional security for your account; and
- where your preferred method of communication is not reasonably practicable, offer alternative methods of communication.

Your preferred method identified above will take precedence for any communication over any other communication method. The support detailed in this policy takes precedent over any requirements in the relevant energy rules, our contract with you or our other policies.

ERC Energy will keep a record of your preferred method of communication. We will continue to provide you support under this policy until you inform us that you no longer require it.

## Customer Service

ERC Energy will provide a secure process that will avoid the need for you to repeatedly disclose or refer to your experience of Family Violence. ERC Energy will do this by:

- ensuring that your customer account readily identifies you as an Affected Customer;
- and provide ongoing engagement with you when you seek or request assistance.

## Debt Management

ERC Energy recognises that Family Violence is a cause of payment difficulty. Before ERC Energy takes action to recover arrears from you, including disconnection for non-payment, ERC Energy will take into account:

- the potential impact of debt recovery at that time on you; and
- whether other persons are jointly or severally responsible for the energy usage that resulted in the accumulation of those arrears.

We will explain the different forms of support that are available in our Hardship Policy and will help you access support that you may be entitled to. For example, customers in our hardship program will be provided:



- Information on if there is a better electricity plan for them
- Ideas about how to reduce your electricity use
- Payment arrangements that include a payment amount and frequency that suits your circumstances.

With ERC Energy you have access to a payment arrangement including payments by Centrepay, support that will help you in reducing your energy costs and information about various Government and Non-Government Schemes which you may be eligible for.

You can view our Hardship Policy, which has more detail on the support that is available: [www.ercenergy.com.au](http://www.ercenergy.com.au)

## Evidence

ERC Energy will not seek evidence from you to access the support detailed in this policy.

If you are a Victorian customer accessing the Utility Relief Grant Scheme (URGs) we may ask you to provide the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing evidence of your circumstances to assess your eligibility for the grant.

## Training

ERC Energy will provide training to any person (including employees, agents and contractors) acting on ERC Energy's behalf who:

- may engage with Affected Customers by any means of communication;
- is a manager of anyone that may engage with Affected Customers; and
- is responsible for systems and processes that guide interactions with customers.

ERC Energy's training addresses:

- the nature and consequences of Family Violence;
- the application of this policy;
- how to identify Affected Customers; and
- how to engage appropriately and effectively with Affected Customers.

## External Services

ERC Energy will provide you with information about the availability of support services that is safe, respectful and appropriate in your circumstances. In particular, ERC Energy may refer you to the following services:



## National Organisations

- 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732) - specialise in providing support to all people who may be affected by family violence.
- Lifeline (13 11 14) - offer services to those experiencing a personal crisis or are thinking about suicide.
- Relationship's Australia (1300 364 277) - offer support groups for both abusive and abused partners.
- Aboriginal Family Domestic Violence Hotline (1800 019 123) - provide dedicated assistance for Aboriginal people, including those affected by Family Violence.
- Rainbow Door (1800 729 367) is a free, specialist LGBTIQA+ helpline. Experienced peers provide information, referral, and support to enable LGBTIQA+ people, their friends, and their families to navigate the system and access the supports they need within a safe environment. Website: <https://www.switchboard.org.au/rainbow-door>
- The Orange Door. Is a Victorian service that helps Victorians affected by family violence get the support they need quickly and easily. Phone: Differs between locations, find a service near you here – <https://www.orangedoor.vic.gov.au/find-a-service-near-you> Website: <https://orangedoor.vic.gov.au>

## State Government support services

- Victoria – (1800 319 353) <https://www.vic.gov.au/contact-orange-door>
- New South Wales – (1800 656 463) <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/domestic-violence>
- South Australia - (1800 800 098) <https://www.sa.gov.au/topics/family-and-community/safety-and-health/domestic-violence-and-sexual-assault/domestic-violence>
- Queensland – (1800 811 811) <https://www.qld.gov.au/community/getting-support-health-social-issue/support-victims-abuse/domestic-family-violence>

**You should call 000 for emergency services if you are in immediate danger.**

## Privacy

We will comply with all relevant privacy legislation in relation to your personal information. You can find a summary of our privacy policy on our website [www.ercenergy.com.au](http://www.ercenergy.com.au)

If you have any questions, you can contact our privacy officer.

## Feedback & Complaints

ERC always takes feedback and complaints seriously. If you wish to submit feedback or lodge a complaint this can be done by:

- Contacting our Customer Care team on 1300 650 849
- Online at [www.ercenergy.com.au](http://www.ercenergy.com.au)
- Write to us at GPO Box 583 Buddina QLD 4575
- For full information on ERC's Dispute Resolutions please visit [www.ercenergy.com.au](http://www.ercenergy.com.au)



You may also contact the Electricity Ombudsman Scheme in your state. However, ERC Energy would prefer that you contact us first, as this is what the Ombudsman will request in the first instance.

#### Electricity & Water Ombudsman Queensland (EWOQ)

- Freecall: 1800 662 837
- Fax: (07) 3087 9477
- Interpreter: 131450
- NRS: 133 677
- Email: info@ewoq.com.au

#### Electricity & Water Ombudsman NSW

- Freecall: 1800 246 545
- Freefax: 1800 812291
- Interpreter: 131 450
- NRS: 133 677
- Email: complaints@ewon.com.au

#### Australian Capital Territory Civil & Administrative Tribunal (ACAT)

- Phone: (02) 6207 1740
- Fax: (02) 6205 4855
- Interpreter: 1300 408 265
- Email: tribunal@act.gov.au
- Visit: acat.act.gov.au

#### Energy and Water Ombudsman Victoria (EWOV)

Freecall: 1800 500 509  
Visit: [www.ewov.com.au](http://www.ewov.com.au)

#### Energy and Water Ombudsman Western Australia

Freecall: 1800 754 004  
Visit: <https://energyandwater.ombudsman.wa.gov.au/>

#### Electricity & Water Ombudsman SA

- Freecall: 1800 665 565
- Freefax: 1800 665 165
- Interpreter: 131 450
- NRS: 133 677
- Visit: ewosa.com.au

## Assistance with Understanding the Policy

A copy of this Policy is easily accessible on our website at [www.ercenergy.com.au](http://www.ercenergy.com.au) and selecting Family Violence Policy at the bottom of the home page.

We will provide you with a copy of this Policy based on your preferred method of communication, free of charge. If you are unable to access our Policy via our website we can post a copy of this Policy to the residential address that is on your electricity account.



We recognize the importance of clarity. ERC is committed to ensuring that our customers fully understand their rights and options under this policy. Our customer support team is readily available to provide information and address any queries regarding the policy.

#### Translation services

For TTY assistance, please use one of the following 24 hour relay call numbers:

- TTY/voicecalls: 1800 555 727
- Speak&Listen: 1800 555 727
- SMSrelay: 0423 677 767

#### TIS

If you do not speak English and need help with this document, call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS) on 13 14 50 for assistance by an interpreter.

**Web:** <https://www.communications.gov.au/what-we-do/phone/services-people-disability/accesshub/national-relay-service>

This document can be translated by Google translate and an easy English version if required.