

## Financial Hardship Management (FHM) Policy

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### Definition of Hardship

In order for Voicetalk Pty Ltd to comply with the Telecommunications Consumer Protections Code C628:2007, Voicetalk Pty Ltd adopts the ACIF Credit Management Code's definition of financial hardship:

*“a situation where a Customer is unable, reasonably, because of illness, unemployment or other reasonable cause, to discharge their financial obligations under their contract with the Supplier and the Customer reasonably expects to be able to discharge those obligations if payment and/or Service arrangements were changed. Financial hardship can be of limited or long term duration.”*

### Financial Hardship Management (FHM)

In times of genuine hardship, customers and/or their financial counselor deserve easy access to empathetic and skilled staff who can promptly address their circumstance or concerns. Voicetalk Pty Ltd will provide this service by training all staff in the customer service area to identify financial hardship customers, and refer these customers to specialised staff.

This team is known as the Financial Hardship Management Team (FHMS). Voicetalk Pty Ltd's FHMT team members act with compassion and sympathy, yet still manage the situation within business requirements. FHM Representatives are required to accept reasonable payment arrangements, taking into account each customer's individual circumstances.

Note:

- Voicetalk Pty Ltd's Financial Hardship Management team **does not** manage Business Accounts.
- Customers who have chosen to transfer all of their services to another provider but still have an outstanding balance with Voicetalk Pty Ltd are ineligible for participation in Voicetalk Pty Ltd's Financial Hardship Management Program.

## Identification of a Customer Experiencing Financial Hardship

Voicetalk Pty Ltd considers financial hardship a state that involves an inability of the customer to pay bills, rather than an unwillingness to do so. Customer hardship can arise from a variety of situations. Hardship can be either of limited duration or long term. To illustrate, several of the common causes are listed below.

Hardship can result from a number of factors including:

- Loss of employment by the consumer or family member;
- Family breakdown;
- Illness including physical incapacity, hospitalisation, or mental illness of the consumer or family member;
- A death in the family;
- Abuse of the service by customer (e.g. from use of 190X numbers);
- Abuse of the service by a third party leaving the customer unable to pay the account;
- Natural Disaster.

## Reaching a Financial Arrangement

The basic principle of any agreed financial arrangement is that the repayment should be sufficient to cover expected future use of the service (as adjusted to ensure the customer's financial position does not worsen over a reasonable period of time) as well as providing continued reduction of debt at a reasonable level (i.e. the customer should not be going into further debt under the arrangement).

## How to find out more?

### By Phone

Financial Hardship Management Inquiries: 1300 835 262

Hours of Operation: Monday - Friday 9.00am - 5.30pm (QLD time)

### By Mail

Voicetalk Pty Ltd

Financial Hardship Management Team

Locked Bag 4000

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