

# Family Violence Policy

28 August 2023



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## Australian

## Policy statement

At Blue NRG, we recognise that family violence is a serious and complex issue that impacts the entire community. As an essential service provider, we are committed to providing customers affected by family violence, confidential support, and flexible payment arrangements to help manage their energy needs.

## Purpose

Blue NRG's Family Violence Policy (Policy) seeks to empower customers to request assistance in managing any family violence-related issues, regardless of their financial capacity.

## What is family violence?

Blue NRG recognises that there are many forms of family violence. Under the Family Violence Protection Act 2008 (Vic) family violence has been defined as behaviour that is:

- physically or sexually abusive; or
- emotionally or psychologically abusive; or
- economically abusive; or
- threatening; or
- coercive; or
- in any other way controls or dominates the family member and causes that family member to fear for the safety or wellbeing of that family member or another person.

We acknowledge that customers subject to economic abuse may also experience financial difficulties in paying their energy bills. As such, Blue NRG recognises that family violence is a potential cause of payment difficulty.

## How we can help you

### Scope

This policy applies to all residential and small business customers, as well as customers in embedded networks who are impacted by family violence.

### Customer Rights

- Receive support from our employees in a respectful and supportive manner.
- Have your personal information handled securely, privately, and sensitively.
- Choose a method of communication of your preference.
- Access information about external family violence support services.
- Appoint an authorised representative or a support person to act on your behalf.
- Remove the joint account holders and, if needed, set up a new account in your name (if required).
- Receive payment assistance support, including access to the assistance under our hardship policy.
- Avoid the need to repeatedly disclose your circumstances and receive continuity of service.

## Our organisation and staff responsibilities

- Provide all staff with thorough training in awareness of family violence.

- Manage all engagement with affected customers in a respectful, understanding, and sensitive manner.
- Handle information pertaining to customers affected by family violence securely and confidentially.
- Ensure that customer consent is obtained before disclosing their personal information to a third party (unless required under law).
- Contact emergency services (police and/or ambulance) on request by the customer or if they believe further assistance is needed.
- Discuss a safety plan with customers who have disclosed family violence to confirm and ensure the safety of the customer and their children.
- Provide information regarding government support programs, including concessions and the availability of external family violence support services (see below).

## Account security

Blue NRG takes its obligations regarding your personal information seriously and we manage this in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth) and the Australian Privacy Principles. A copy of our privacy policy is available [here](#).

When you inform us that you are experiencing family violence, we will:

- Provide you with support, such as flagging your account for family violence, to ensure that your information is only accessed by senior employees within our organisation.
- Request you at the time of notification if you would like to set up a password or security questions to protect your account details and confidential information.
- Send bills and other communications only via your new preferred method of communication.

Your personal information will be securely handled and will remain confidential. We will not disclose a customer's confidential information to any other person without your prior consent.

## Debt management

Blue NRG recognises family violence as a potential cause of financial hardship or payment difficulty. We will consider each customer's individual circumstances to find a suitable solution specific to the customer's needs and offer support in accordance with our hardship policy as available [here](#).

The support that we offer may include:

- Flexible payment arrangements.
- Reviewing your energy plan and placing you on a more suitable plan.
- Waiving or suspending the debt.
- Restricting the collections cycle to ensure that your premise is not de-energised for an overdue bill.

## Accessing support

You can access support by contacting:

- our customer service department through various channels such as phone, email, or in-person visit.
- an independent financial counsellor, case worker or an external family violence support services to access resources and support.

## Supporting documentation

We will never request you or a third party acting on your behalf to provide specific documentation or evidence before providing you with support under this policy or the Rules.

## External support

We will advise you of external support services, including access to a free interpreter service (telephone 131 450).

Below is a list of external support services that are also published on our website. We will keep this information up to date to ensure customers affected by family violence can easily access this assistance.

## Support and assistance

If you are experiencing family violence and need help, including financial assistance to manage your energy bills, please call us Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm (AEST/AEDT) on 1300 599 888, or email [info@bluenrg.com.au](mailto:info@bluenrg.com.au).

Our friendly Customer Service Team have been trained to assist customers in need of our support.

### EMERGENCY 000

If there is an immediate threat to your safety call emergency 000.

### 1800RESPECT

The National Sexual Assault Domestic Violence Counselling Service offers confidential online and telephone counselling, information, and referral services. Visit [1800respect.org.au](http://1800respect.org.au) or you can call 1800 737 732, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

### LIFELINE

Lifeline provides Australians experiencing a personal crisis with 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services, call 13 11 14 or visit [Lifeline](http://Lifeline.org.au).

### MENSLINE AUSTRALIA

This is a free service offering national telephone and online support, information, and referrals for men with family and relationship concerns. Visit [MensLine Australia](http://MensLineAustralia.org.au) or call 1300 789 978.

### NO TO VIOLENCE'S MEN'S REFERRAL SERVICE

This service provides confidential counselling on 1300 766 491 or via [Live Chat](http://LiveChat.org.au). Live Chat operating hours are 8am – 9pm Monday to Friday. Visit [No to Violence's Men's Referral Service](http://NoToViolence.org.au).

### NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY LEGAL CENTRES (NACLC)

This is an independent not-for-profit community organisation that provides legal and related services to the public, focusing on the disadvantaged and people with special needs. The site is a centralised site where state-based community legal centres can be found according to your needs and locality. Visit [National Association of Community Legal Centres \(NACLC\)](http://NationalAssociationOfCommunityLegalCentres.org.au).

## Contact us

**Phone:** 1300 599 888 (9.00am to 5.00pm (AEST/AEDT) Mon – Fri)

**Email:** [info@bluenrg.com.au](mailto:info@bluenrg.com.au)

**Website:** [www.bluenrg.com.au](http://www.bluenrg.com.au)

**Fax:** 1300 881 903

**Post:** Blue NRG Pty Ltd. PO Box 24390, Melbourne VIC 3001

## NATIONAL DEBT HELPLINE

Customers can speak to a free, independent, and confidential financial counsellor (either on the phone or face-to-face) by calling the National Debt Helpline on 1800 007 007 from anywhere in Australia.

Visit [www.ndh.org.au](http://www.ndh.org.au) to access a range of step-by-step and self-help guides.

## Dissemination

This policy is published on our website, and a free copy will be made available to you upon request via your preferred method of communication.

## Review

This Policy and any associated procedures and policy will be reviewed annually or as required under the regulatory requirements to ensure that it remains current and effective in addressing family violence.

This Policy will continue in operation until replaced by a subsequent version or rescinded.

## Contact us and complaint handling

At any time, if you have concerns about your wellbeing or need support with your energy account, please do not hesitate to contact us. You can reach us via email at [info@bluenrg.com.au](mailto:info@bluenrg.com.au) or call us Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm (AEST/AEDT) on 1300 599 888.

We take all your concerns and complaints seriously and will handle them in accordance with our Complaints and Dispute Resolution Policy as available [here](#).

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of our investigation, you can also contact the state specific Ombudsman schemes for further assistance.

See below a list of state specific energy ombudsman contact details.

### Ombudsman

#### Energy and Water Ombudsman (VIC)

Phone: 1800 500 509

Website: [www.ewov.com.au](http://www.ewov.com.au)

#### Energy and Water Ombudsman (SA)

Phone: 1800 665 565

Website: [www.ewosa.com.au](http://www.ewosa.com.au)

#### Energy and Water Ombudsman (NSW)

Phone: 1800 246 545

Website: [www.ewon.com.au](http://www.ewon.com.au)

#### Energy and Water Ombudsman (QLD)

Phone: 1800 662 837

Website: [www.ewoq.com.au](http://www.ewoq.com.au)

#### Civil and Administrative Tribunal (ACT)

Phone: 02 6207 1740

Website: [www.acat.act.gov.au](http://www.acat.act.gov.au)