



# **Rottnest Island Authority Utilities (Family and Domestic Violence) Policy**

November 2025



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## 1. Overview

The purpose of this Policy is to outline Rottnest Island Authority's (**RIA**) approach to supporting residential utility customers who are affected by family and domestic violence (**FDV**).

This Policy is required under the Water Services Code of Practice (Family Violence) 2020 and Electricity Code of Conduct 2024 and reflects best-practice guidance from the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (**DWER**) and the Economic Regulation Authority (**ERA**). While mandatory for water and electricity services, RIA applies this Policy to all utilities it provides, including water, wastewater, and electricity services.

## 2. Objectives

The objectives of this Policy are to:

- Ensure compliance with the Water Services Code of Practice (Family Violence) 2020 and Electricity Code of Conduct 2024.
- Establish clear and confidential support for customers experiencing FDV.
- Protect customer information and prevent Perpetrators from misusing utility accounts.
- Provide fair access to payment difficulty and financial hardship programs.
- Ensure staff and agents are trained and supported to respond appropriately.
- Make information on support services and this Policy readily available to customers.

## 3. Scope

This Policy applies to all residential utility customers of RIA (water, wastewater, electricity and gas).

It covers situations where customers have disclosed FDV or where RIA becomes aware of FDV through reasonable endeavours, even if not directly advised.

Customers identified as affected by FDV are automatically covered by the non-payment disconnection moratorium, unless they choose to opt out with Verifiable Consent. Customers may later opt back in at any time.

## 4. Definitions

**FDV:** The intentional and systematic use of violence and abuse to control, coerce, or create fear. It can be physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, financial, spiritual, or social in nature.

Perpetrators may use economic abuse, such as incurring debts in the victim's name, refusing to contribute to costs, or disconnecting services.

**Perpetrator:** As used in this Policy, a perpetrator is a person who commits family and domestic violence against another person. For the purposes of interpretation, this reflects the meaning in the



*Restraining Orders Act 1997 (WA)*, where family violence includes violent, threatening, or other behaviour that coerces or controls a family member or causes them to be fearful.

**Verifiable Consent:** A clear and confirmed agreement from the customer, recorded in writing or by another secure means, that demonstrates the customer's decision is informed and freely made.

## 5. Policy Position

### 5.1 RIA's Commitment

RIA has zero tolerance for FDV. RIA will provide information, support, and tailored assistance to customers affected by FDV in line with regulatory obligations.

### 5.2 Support for Customers

RIA and its agents will ensure that residential customers who disclose, or are reasonably identified as being affected by FDV:

- Need only disclose their circumstances once.
- Have their personal information treated confidentially and securely.
- Receive respectful and sensitive interactions from staff and agents.
- Are provided with information on financial support and specialist FDV services (Appendix A).
- Are given time and information to consider their options and make informed decisions.
- Are able to enter into a fair personalised payment difficulty program or financial hardship arrangement (Appendix B).
- Are protected by a non-payment disconnection moratorium unless they have opted out with Verifiable Consent.
- Will only be asked to provide evidence of FDV if reasonably necessary to determine appropriate measures.

### 5.3 Staff Training and Systems

- RIA will train relevant staff and agents on the requirements of this Policy, including the obligations listed in Section 7; Water Services Code of Practice (Family Violence) 2020 which includes:
  - Flag customer accounts confidentially, so victims are not required to repeat disclosures.
  - Ensure records relating to FDV are securely stored and access restricted.
  - Provide guidance on when FDV automatically qualifies as financial hardship or payment difficulty under the Water Services Code of Conduct (Customer Service



Standards) 2024 and Electricity Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers 2022 (Part 13).

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

The Director Contracts and Planning is the custodian of this Policy and responsible for implementation.

Managers must ensure staff receive appropriate training and support.

All staff and agents must comply with the Policy and treat disclosures with sensitivity and respect.

## 7. Statutory Compliance and Related Documents

This Policy is made to comply with:

- Water Services Code of Practice (Family Violence) 2020
- Water Services Code of Conduct (Customer Service Standards) 2024
- Code of Conduct for the Supply of Electricity to Small Use Customers
- ERA hardship policy requirements

Related documents:

### **RIA Utilities Customer Complaints Procedure**

[https://www.ria.wa.gov.au/docs/default-source/reports/customer-complaints/utilities-customer-complaints-procedure.pdf?sfvrsn=1796ff7f\\_5](https://www.ria.wa.gov.au/docs/default-source/reports/customer-complaints/utilities-customer-complaints-procedure.pdf?sfvrsn=1796ff7f_5)

### **WA Government Family and Domestic Violence Support**

[www.wa.gov.au/government/family-and-domestic-violence](http://www.wa.gov.au/government/family-and-domestic-violence)

## 8. Effective Date

This Policy takes effect from the date of approval in November 2025. The previous Rottnest Island Water Services (Family Violence) Policy (September 2021) is rescinded.

## 9. Review

This Policy will be reviewed at least once every five years, or earlier at the discretion of the Director Contracts & Planning or Executive Director.

The Minister for Water (or their delegate) may at any time require a review of this Policy in accordance with powers conferred under the Water Services Act 2012.

The Minister for Energy (or their delegate) may similarly require a review of this Policy where it falls within the scope of instruments governed by the Electricity Industry Act 2004 or related



regulatory frameworks.

Where this Policy is a regulatory instrument under the oversight of the Economic Regulation Authority (ERA), the ERA may require a review in accordance with its regulatory powers.

## 10. Policy Custodian

Director, Contracts and Planning.

## 11. Authorisation

This Policy details RIA's approach to addressing family violence for residential utility customers. It has been authorised by the Executive Director, RIA.

## Version Control

This policy will be updated in line with the Water and Electricity Codes of Conduct when required.

Version #	Document Name	Created/Amended by	Approved by	Changes Made	Effective Date
1	Rottnest Island Utilities Family Violence Policy 2025	Luke Bennett (Commercial & Residential Property Accountant)	Jason Banks (Executive Director)	Creation of policy	November 2025



## Appendix A – Specialist Support Services

### Purpose

This appendix provides contact details for customers experiencing family and domestic violence (FDV). It includes emergency contacts, national/state FDV helplines, and Rottnest Island Authority utility contacts for confidential assistance.

### 1. Emergency Assistance

**Police / Ambulance / Fire – Dial 000**

### 2. Family and Domestic Violence Helplines (24/7)

**WA Women’s Domestic Violence Helpline – 1800 007 339**

Crisis counselling, safety planning, and referral to safe accommodation.

**Men’s Domestic Violence Helpline – 1800 000 599**

Support for male victims and advice for men who are concerned about their behaviour.

**1800 RESPECT – 1800 737 732 | 1800 RESPECT – National Helpline -**

<https://www.1800respect.org.au/>

National counselling, information, and referral service.

**Lifeline – 13 11 14 | Lifeline - <https://www.lifeline.org.au/>**

24/7 crisis support and suicide prevention.

### 3. Rottnest Island Authority – Utilities Support

For customers experiencing FDV who need help with water, electricity, or other utility accounts:

#### General Utilities Contact

**Office address:** Property Management Team, 1 Mews Road, Fremantle WA 6160

**Postal address:** Property Management Team, PO Box 693, Fremantle WA 6959

**Phone:** (+61) 8 9432 9300

**Email:** [leasing@rotnnestisland.com](mailto:leasing@rotnnestisland.com)

**Websites:** [Rottnest Island](#) | Rottnest Island Authority

<http://www.rotnnestisland.com/>



**Accessibility Services**

**TTY (hearing impaired):** 13 36 77

**National Translator Interpreter Service (TIS):** 13 14 50 (quote customer code C971733)

**Emergencies and Faults (Electricity/Utilities only)**

**Programmed Facility Management (PFM):** (+61) 8 9292 6000 (24 hours)

**Complaints**

**Email:** [Utilities.Complaints@rotnnestisland.com](mailto:Utilities.Complaints@rotnnestisland.com)

**Phone:** (+61) 8 9432 9300

**4. Accessibility**

All links are interactive and descriptive (not only “click here”) and comply with web accessibility standards.

Customers may request this information in alternative formats (print, large text, translation).

This appendix will be kept up to date to ensure accuracy of service contacts.



## Appendix B – Payment Difficulty and Hardship Assistance

This appendix explains how Rottnest Island Authority (**RIA**) will support customers affected by family and domestic violence (**FDV**) who are experiencing, or at risk of, payment difficulty or financial hardship. It sets out how debt management for FDV customers differs from standard hardship responses.

### 1. Principals

**Safety first:** No debt management or payment recovery action will compromise a customer's physical, emotional, or financial safety.

**Non-judgmental:** Customers will not be penalised or discriminated against due to circumstances of FDV.

**Flexibility:** Assistance will be tailored to individual needs, recognising the complex financial impacts of FDV.

### 2. Assistance Options for FDV Customers

Customers affected by FDV will have access to the following support measures, in addition to RIA's standard financial hardship assistance:

#### a) Payment Arrangement

Personalised and flexible instalment plans.

Ability to pause or reduce payments temporarily without penalty.

Longer payment terms than those offered under standard hardship arrangements.

#### b) Debt Management

Suspension of debt collection activities while FDV circumstances are being assessed.

Exclusion from external debt collection or legal action where FDV has contributed to arrears.

Debts may be re-evaluated to separate charges incurred by perpetrators from those of the victim, where reasonably possible.

#### c) Fees and Charges

Waiver of late payment, reconnection, and other penalty fees for FDV customers.

Interest will not accrue on overdue accounts while FDV hardship assistance is active.



#### **d) Service Continuity**

Affected customers are protected by a non-payment disconnection moratorium.

Customers may opt out of this moratorium with verifiable consent, and may opt back in later.

#### **e) Evidence Requirements**

Customers will not be asked for written evidence unless reasonably necessary to determine appropriate measures.

Acceptable evidence includes referral from a recognised support service, statutory declaration, or other documentation the customer is comfortable providing.

### **3. How FDV Support Differs from Standard Hardship**

#### **Standard Hardship Assistance *versus* FDV Hardship Assistance**

- Payment plans based on income and debt Payment plans tailored to ensure customer safety and wellbeing.
- Standard debt collection applies if no contact
- Debt collection suspended while FDV assistance is in place.
- Reconnection fees may apply
- Reconnection and penalty fees waived.
- Disconnection may proceed after non-payment Disconnection moratorium applies (opt-out only with consent).
- Written evidence may be required for hardship eligibility
- Evidence only requested if *reasonably necessary*, with flexibility.

### **4. Customer Awareness and Access**

Information about FDV assistance will be made available on RIA's website, in customer bills, and through frontline staff.

Customers can contact RIA directly, or be referred by support services.

### **5. Review and Monitoring**

RIA will review the operation of this appendix as part of the 5-yearly policy review or earlier if required by ERA. Effectiveness will be monitored through:

- Number of FDV disclosures and assistance cases.
- Feedback from customers and support services.
- Compliance checks against the Code of Practice (Family Violence) 2020.