

Telecommunications hardship principles for COVID-19

30 June 2020

On 17 April 2020, the Morrison Government and the telecommunications industry agreed measures to help keep people connected through COVID-19, and assist with financial hardship as a result of the crisis. The measures were to be reviewed on 30 June 2020, or earlier if social distancing restrictions are eased.

Keeping Australians connected, including those who experience hardship and may be unable to pay their bills due to the COVID-19 crisis, remains a key priority for telecommunications providers and the Government.

Telecommunications providers will continue to offer assistance to consumers and small business customers in financial hardship who contact their service provider for assistance.

The telecommunications industry remains mindful of the circumstances of consumers and small business customers and of the comprehensive customer protection and financial hardship regulatory obligations under which the industry operates.

- The hardship principles remain in place for customers who have sought hardship assistance.
- Customers who have not entered into a financial hardship arrangement are encouraged to contact their provider for assistance if they are having any trouble paying their bill, and enter into a hardship arrangement.
- Customers who have entered into and comply with a financial hardship agreement will not be disconnected without their consent.
- Customers who can pay their bills should continue to do so, to help ensure the continued financial viability of telecommunications providers.

Providers that are offering assistance under the nbn co relief package will continue to include that as an option for as long as that package is available.

These principles will be reviewed on 30 September 2020.