

GLOBIRD ENERGY PTY LTD

FAMILY VIOLENCE POLICY

1. OVERVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This is GloBird Energy's policy for dealing with customers experiencing family and domestic violence (**Policy**).

Customers can see this family violence policy on our website at www.globirdenergy.com.au and can request a free copy by contacting us as follows:

Telephone:	13 3456 or 1300 516 888 (中文)
Email:	customerservice@globirdenergy.com.au
Address:	PO Box 398, Ringwood Vic 3134

If your first language is not English, interpreter services can be arranged, if necessary, by contacting TIS – Translating & Interpreting Service – which is a free service. Their number is 131450 for most languages, or call 1300 516 888 for Chinese (中文).

We understand that exposure to family and domestic violence can cause substantial and significant emotional, psychological, economic, social, and behavioural harm to our customers.

We are committed to providing safe support to our customers impacted by family and domestic violence.

1.2 OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to provide customers affected by family violence with an entitlement to safe, supportive, and flexible assistance from us in managing their personal and financial security.

This policy will adhere to the requirements of the Energy Retail Code of Victoria, however, will be applied across all states GloBird Energy provides energy services in.

1.2 DEFINITION AND EFFECTS

Family violence has been defined in Victorian legislation as behaviour toward a family member which is physically, sexually, emotionally, psychologically, or economically abusive, coercive, or threatening.

The Royal Commission acknowledged that *“although every experience is unique, family violence is not a one-off incident for many victims. It is a pattern of behaviour that involves an escalating spiral of violence. This can include physical and sexual, as well as psychological, emotional or financial – all designed to intimidate, undermine, isolate and control. It can also include violence or threats of violence against children, other family members and pets.”*

Abuse can continue even after a relationship ends, with financial abuse being just one strategy used to control victims post separations and a significant contributor to a person's poverty.

Family violence is also associated with short- and long-term impacts on physical and mental health. For some victims, the effects of family violence can be amplified due to disadvantages resulting from their cultural and linguistic background, disability, age, race, sexuality, gender identity, or social economic status.

1.3 CUSTOMERS' ENTITLEMENT

All customers facing family and domestic violence are entitled to our assistance. We will work with affected customers to ensure their privacy, safety, and support them through this period, by providing them with flexible assistance in managing their personal and financial security.

We will listen to our customers without judgement and with sensitivity and respect.

Any discussions regarding personal information will be kept confidential and be maintained in line with our policies and relevant legislation.

We will assist customers experiencing payment difficulties due to family and domestic violence.

1.4 SCOPE

This policy applies to residential and small business customers, being customers who purchase energy principally for personal, household, or domestic use.

Customers who experience or at risk of experiencing domestic and family violence are encouraged to seek our support.

1.5 COMMENCEMENT

This policy takes effect on 1 January 2020.

2. MINIMUM STANDARDS

2.2 OVERVIEW

The objective of the assistance is to provide minimum standards of conduct when assisting customers who are affected by family violence. By providing a minimum standard of assistance, we aim to ensure the safety, security and financial means of the impacted customer.

We provide seven forms of Minimum Standards. An affected customer is entitled to all types of help detailed below.

2.3 ACCESSING ASSISTANCE

Customers wishing to receive assistance from us will need to contact us as soon as they identify that they are in a family violence situation.

Our contact details are as follows:

Telephone:	13 3456 or 1300 516 888 (中文)
Email:	customerservice@globirdenergy.com.au
Address:	PO Box 398, Ringwood Vic 3134

If your first language is not English, interpreter services can be arranged if necessary, by contacting TIS – Translating & Interpreting Service – which is a free service. Their number is 131450 for most languages, or call 1300 516 888 for Chinese (中文).

2.4 FORMS OF OUR MINIMUM STANDARDS

Training

We have systems and processes in place to us to meet our obligations with respect to customers safety in a family violence situation.

As part of the initial induction and ongoing training of our front-line staff, we cover this family violence policy and make sure they understand how to:

- a) understand the nature and consequences of family violence
- b) how to engage effectively with customers affected by family violence
- c) how to apply our family violence policy
- d) how to look for the signs of family violence

Account Security

GloBird Energy will provide a safeguard for every family violence affected customer. We will keep all information and any personal details provided confidential, safe and secured.

We will not disclose or provide access to confidential information about an affected customer to any other person/s (including a person who is or has been a joint account holder) without the consent of the affected customer.

Accounts will be flagged with an alert to avoid disclosing the personal and financial circumstances of the customer affected by family violence.

We will take reasonable steps to ensure the best interest of the affected customer in dealing with their energy accounts. We will offer the affected customer the option of putting a password of their choice on their account as a further safeguard to protect contact information being disclosed to the perpetrator who may already hold personal information about the account holder, such as their date of birth, or a maiden name.

We will communicate by:

- a) eliciting the customer's preferred method of communication
- b) offering alternative options of communication if the customer's preferred method is not practicable

- c) comply with the agreed communication method
- d) keeping a record of the arrangement - We will keep records of our best endeavours efforts to provide a customer with a safeguard while they are in a family violence situation.

Customer Service

Customers affected by family violence will only need to disclose their situation once. Accounts will then be flagged with an alert to identify the affected customer and records of the conversation will be documented allowing for an effective engagement with the customer.

A customer will be able to access our family violence assistance options without having to repeatedly disclose their family violence experience every time they contact us.

All family violence customers will be treated with respect, sensitivity and empathy. We take our customers privacy seriously. All customers information remains private and confidential and is in line with our Privacy Policy available online at www.globirdenergy.com.au/legal/privacy

Our experienced staff are trained to be respectful and sincere when dealing with the person who is experiencing family violence. They will work with the customer to build trust in a supportive way.

Debt Management

GloBird Energy understands that before we take action to recover any arrears from an affected customer, we will look at the potential impact of debt recovery action at the time of the affected customer.

We will assist the affected customer with the arrears and a payment arrangement through our payment difficulty program.

We understand that joint accounts are more complex. A joint debt can be used by perpetrators to coerce and control their victims as a form of economic abuse meaning the family violence affected customer is often left financially responsible for services from which they receive little or no more benefit.

We will look at any joint accounts, whether other persons are jointly or severally responsible for the energy usage that resulted in the accumulation of the debt, before we take any action to recover any arrears.

In some cases, we may consider collecting only half of the energy debt from each individual on the account even though we have the legal rights to pursue the debt as a whole.

With the consent of the affected customer, we can establish a separate account to be set up in their sole name from the date the abusive partner has left the property or set up and new account for a new property ensuring the security and safeguard of this account.

Family Violence as potential cause of Payment Difficulty

Family violence, including financial or economic abuse, can often result in payment difficulties. Customers experiencing a form of family violence can also reveal why a customer may have struggled to engage with us in the past. For example; limited contact, sporadic payments, a complete failure to remain in contact or make any payments.

We will offer appropriate, relevant and individualised hardship and payments difficulties assistance whether the account is active or closed. The support provided will depend on individual circumstances. We will take a customer's experience of family violence and the consequences of that experience into consideration when assessing what support is appropriate.

The type of assistance can vary depending on your circumstances. When providing assistance to customers, we will take information provided by customers on face value and not require evidence or substantiation of a customer's circumstances, unless we have good reason to suggest otherwise.

We will not commence or continue with proceedings for the recovery of arrears from a residential customer who is receiving assistance under this Policy.

For full version of our hardship policy and our payment assistance policy is available online at www.globirdenergy.com.au/legal/

External Support

Help is available for customers to access specialist family violence assistance.

Assistance in accessing the support from the Department of Human Services or Services Australia is available such as Utility Relief Grant, financial help and other support programs through the following services:

- <https://services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/concessions-and-benefits>
- <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/family-and-domestic-violence/how-we-can-help-you-family-and-domestic-violence-concerns#a3>
- <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/crisis-and-special-help>
 - Family violence prevention and support
 - Indigenous family violence strategy
 - Sexual assault support
 - Victims of crime
 - Integrated family violence strategy
 - Financial help
 - Social work services

Services include individual counselling, specialised support groups, and referral services

More information is available at:

- services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/family-violence
- services.dhhs.vic.gov.au/family-violence-prevention-and-support-programs
- providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/family-violence
- www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/family-and-domestic-violence

We may suggest some extra support by referring you to support agencies, and some are listed below:

- www.whiteribbon.org.au/find-help/domestic-violence-hotlines/
- www.vic.gov.au/family-violence-support
 - www.1800respect.org.au/
 - <https://orangedoor.vic.gov.au/>
 - www.lifeline.org.au
 - www.ntv.org.au/get-help/
 - mensline.org.au/
 - www.kidshelpline.com.au/
 - www.relationships.org.au/
 - www.berrystreet.org.au/our-work/building-stronger-families/family-violence
 - www.dvrcv.org.au/
 - www.safesteps.org.au/
 - <https://intouch.org.au/>

Please visit your local council webpages for support services in your area.

Call **000** for Police and Ambulance help if you are in immediate danger.

Evidence

We will not require the customer to provide documentary evidence to access family violence assistance in relation to account security, customer service, payment difficulty and referrals.

We may seek documentary evidence only when considering debt management and recovery, or de-energisation of supply. We will consider the customer's ability to access various forms of documentary evidence and to make any request in such a way that it is safe, supportive and flexible.

3. COMPLAINTS

We manage customer complaints in accordance with Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations.

If you have a complaint about our Family Violence Policy, you can contact GloBird Energy on **133 456** or email customerservice@globirdenergy.com.au

We will endeavour to resolve your issue as quickly as possible at the first point of contact. However, if this hasn't been achieved, you can escalate your concern to a senior manager or our complaints department.

If you still feel that your concern hasn't been resolved after that, an independent dispute resolution may be available through your states Energy and Water Ombudsman, which can be contacted via:

Ombudsman's contact details

Energy and Water Ombudsman VIC

Telephone: **1800 500 509**

Website: www.ewov.com.au

Email: ewovinfo@ewov.com.au

Address: Lev 8, 360 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne Central Tower Vic 3000

Submit a complaint: <https://www.ewov.com.au/complaints/online-complaint-form>

New South Wales: Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW

Telephone: **1800 246 545**

Website: www.ewon.com.au

Email: complaints@ewon.com.au

Address: Reply Paid 86550, Sydney South NSW 1234

Submit a complaint: <https://www.ewon.com.au/page/making-a-complaint>

Energy and Water Ombudsman SA

Telephone: **1800 665 565**

Website: www.ewosa.com.au

Address: GPO Box 2947, ADELAIDE, SA 5001

Submit a complaint: <http://www.ewosa.com.au/index.php/about/submit-a-complaint>

Energy and Water Ombudsman Queensland

Telephone: **1800 662 837**

Website: www.ewoq.com.au

Address: Level 16/53 Albert Street, Brisbane City QLD 4000

Submit a complaint: <http://www.ewoq.com.au/submit-a-complaint>

Energy and Water Ombudsman Tasmania

Telephone: **1800 001 170**

Website: www.energyombudsman.tas.gov.au

Address: 86 Collins St, Hobart TAS 7000

Submit a complaint: <https://www.energyombudsman.tas.gov.au/enquiries-and-complaints>

ACT Civil and Administrative Tribunal

Telephone: **02 6207 1740** (select option #1)

Website: www.acat.act.gov.au

Address: Level 4, 1 Moore Street, Canberra City ACT

Email: ewcomplaints@act.gov.au

4. PRIVACY

GloBird Energy is committed to protecting the personal information of our customers. No one will know you are in a family violence customer. Our team is experienced with assisting customers in these types of situations.

Your privacy is important to us and we take our customer's privacy seriously and with respect. Any information we need to know about your situation will be managed in accordance with the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1988(Cth)* and the *Australian Privacy Principles (APPs)*.

Our Privacy Policy available online at www.globirdenergy.com.au/legal/privacy

5. GOVERNANCE

Our family violence policy will be reviewed no less than once every two years.

6. CONTACT US

If you'd like more information about how we can help you with family violence and payment difficulties, please call us on **133 456** or email customerservice@globirdenergy.com.au

You can find a copy of this policy at www.globirdenergy.com.au/legal/

Language assistance is available, call 131 450

If you are hearing impaired assistance is available, call National Relay Service on TTY number 133 677

DISCLAIMER: The Energy Retail Code, which sets out retailers' obligations and minimum customer entitlements, takes precedence over this family violence policy in all circumstances.