

## **Telecommunications hardship principles for COVID-19**

**11 January 2021**

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 have been reviewed periodically.

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 specific [hardship principles](#) in place 17 April to 30 June remain in place for customers who sought hardship assistance during that time.
- All 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, regardless of when they entered that agreement.
- 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 31 March 2021.