

MANAGING YOUR FINANCES WHEN DISASTER STRIKES



Seek advice early

The sooner you obtain professional guidance from your insurance company or broker the better. In times of natural disasters, workload is increased, and time frames will lengthen to settle claims.

- Most banks have special terms to help you if you have money troubles. Talk to your bank about your situation – it might be able to do something to help you while you're recovering. Visit your bank's website and click on the 'Financial Hardship' link or search for 'Financial Hardship' or 'Natural Disaster' for more information.
- Contact all credit providers and advise of the situation and seek a moratorium (freeze) on payments for at least 90 days and that such relief be granted without adverse credit report listing.
- Your telecommunications company will have options for customers in financial difficulty, which includes natural disasters. Advise your provider about the loss of services and discuss the account to be frozen at date of disconnect.
- Contact your water, gas or electricity suppliers directly to ask how they can help you which may include hardship policies or payment plans.
- If you are renting, check your rights with the Rental Tenancies Authority. You may need to seek other rental accommodation.
- Microfinance organisations such as Good Shepherd Microfinance provide safe, fair and affordable financial services for people on low incomes. For example, if you need to replace essential items – like a fridge or washing machine – Good Shepherd Microfinance offers no interest and low interest loans.
- Maintain connection with the community to see if there are any Recovery Grants on offer.
- Charities such as Red Cross, St Vincent de Paul, the Salvation Army and GIVIT can help with food, shelter and household items.

- Let your employer know what has occurred and that you may require some flexibility in working hours to deal with financial matters.
- In major disasters, local, State or Federal Governments may provide some financial support, but this is usually limited. Contact your local government to see what assistance may be available and request relevant application documents.
- If you don't know where to start, it might help to discuss your options with a financial counsellor. National Debt Helpline 1800 007 007.



Other sources of assistance may be found at:

<https://www.disasterassist.gov.au/Pages/home.aspx> and <https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/help-emergency>

TIPS FOR MAKING AN INSURANCE CLAIM

As we said before, seek advice early.

Accurate evidence

- Photograph everything that may be subject to a claim.
- You must have clear documentation for assessors.
- Discuss the best process for clean up with your insurer (*ie: do not rush in and clean up, instead ensure that you have photographic evidence of the damage*). Damaged items should not be disposed of if they are relevant to your claim.

Keep a record of conversations and communication

- Keep a record of all the calls you have with your insurer. Making note of the date and time and the person you spoke with and the details of the conversation.
- Keep in contact with your insurer and request an update on the process if things are taking longer than expected.

For any further counselling support please contact **Converge International** on 1300 OUR EAP (1300 687 327).

MORE INFORMATION

T 1300 our eap (1300 687 327)
E info@convergeintl.com.au
convergeinternational.com.au

