

Stay Connected

Assisting domestic customers in need

Power and Water Stay Connected funding

Customers who are experiencing financial difficulties and are not able to pay their Power and Water electricity or water bills can get help and advice from a community welfare agency.

Participating community agencies may provide assistance in the form of e-voucher/s (electronic vouchers) which can only be used against the customer's Power and Water accounts for their home.

Who can apply?

Customers can apply direct to a participating welfare agency, or Power and Water may refer customers to these agencies for assistance through our Stay Connected program.

How are applications assessed?

Each financial year Power and Water distributes funding to participating welfare agencies and financial counselling service providers to help domestic customers who are experiencing hardship. These agencies will determine eligibility and assistance on behalf of Power and Water. Applicants residing outside of Australia are not eligible.

Customers seeking assistance in paying their domestic Power and Water bill due to financial difficulties are assessed by a welfare agency. Assessment is similar to that for other forms of assistance such as emergency relief, food, clothes and help with other bills. In the majority of cases, it is expected that the applicant's circumstances will be because of:

- a lack of, or decrease in income or significant, unavoidable expenses.
- family circumstances such as a death, desertion, accident or natural disaster such as flood or drought, which can result in unexpected expenses.

What is the maximum amount?

The agency's normal case management procedures for assessing a customer's needs will be used to assess the amount of assistance. However, the total value of assistance cannot be used to put an account in credit. No change or refunds will be provided to customers by Power and Water where an account is in credit by Stay Connected e-voucher assistance.

It is expected, where possible, the customer makes some financial contribution to the settlement of the account. The purpose of Stay Connected assistance is to help financially disadvantaged people in a difficult situation. It is not intended that Stay Connected e-voucher assistance be used as ongoing income support.

Power and Water respects the independence of the agency's assessment and reserves the right to disallow funding assistance at the discretion of the General Manager Retail. e-voucher assistance may be disallowed by Power and Water where funding is requested:

- by more than one agency.
- for payment of charges other than consumption, connection and related charges for electricity and water.

e-voucher funding requests may not be accepted by Power and Water for payment of charges such as meter replacement, revenue protection, recovery fees, and/or sundry items which may or may not be related to illegal activity.

Customers assessed as requiring ongoing assistance (more than one bill) should engage with an agency officer liaising with Power and Water. (These customers may be considered for a Stay Connected payment arrangement).

How can the vouchers be used?

e-voucher assistance can only be used to help pay the customer's domestic Power and Water account and only the bill of the customer to whom they were arranged. Power and Water e-voucher assistance must only be issued for Power and Water accounts for domestic (home) consumption and fixed daily charges for electricity, water and sewerage services.

What about disconnected services and debt collection?

Where disconnection has taken place, or is imminent, the agency should advise the customer to phone Power and Water on 1800 245 092 to determine if Stay Connected assistance can be applied in order to reconnect the service.

If the debt is unable to be resolved, other options such as Power and Water credit management of hardship customers (Power and Water Stay Connected Policy) can be discussed.

When should assistance be considered?

As far as possible, agencies should manage the distribution of Stay Connected e-voucher funding evenly throughout the year.

Funding is valid for issue during that financial year.

When an agency has a potential Stay Connected e-voucher candidate, the agency representative contacts Power and Water. If the case is accepted, Power and Water issues an approval reference number. The applying agency then has 36 hours to lodge the official application for the Stay Connected e-voucher on behalf of their applicant.

Agencies are advised that, where a client has received funding assistance for the previous bill, it will appear on the customer's next invoice.

Please remember

An original bill or notice issued by Power and Water, must be provided to the agency. The Power and Water bill or notice must be in personal name(s).

- e-vouchers cannot be used against a commercial account.
- e-vouchers are redeemable only against the customer number and name provided for the approval reference number.

- No change or refunds will be given where e-vouchers exceed the amount due.
- e-vouchers cannot be used to put an account in credit.

Additional information

We will continue to discuss with customers any difficulties they may be having in paying their bills and negotiate appropriate payment arrangements. To assist with paying your bills visit powerwater.com.au or call 1800 245 092 and ask about our different methods of payment:

- Direct payment (direct debit) from your financial institution
- BPay through your bank
- NT Government payroll deduction
- Centrepay deductions
- Voucher payment booklets
- Payment at a Post Office (please allow two to three days to be received by Power and Water)
- Cash, EFTPOS or cheque
- Credit card (Master Card, BankCard or Visa) by telephoning 1800 644 849, available 24 hours a day or Online payment via Net Direct at powerwater.com.au

For agency use Checklist

Call Power and Water on 1800 245 092, and request transfer to Credit Management

Please have the following available:

- The customer name
- The Power and Water customer identification number
- The customer's Power and Water bill or notice
- Name of agency
- Agency contact number
- Authoriser name