

# What is MoneyHelp



MoneyHelp is a not-for-profit service supported by the Victorian Government to provide free, confidential and independent information and financial advice to Victorians who are struggling to pay their rent or mortgage or facing job loss or reduced working hours.

Need more information?

Visit [www.moneyhelp.org.au](http://www.moneyhelp.org.au)

Or call 1800 149 689

Victorians who satisfy the above criteria can access MoneyHelp's free phone and email financial counselling service Monday to Friday 9.30am – 5pm on 1800 149 689 or by email through the MoneyHelp website

[www.moneyhelp.org.au](http://www.moneyhelp.org.au)

MoneyHelp encourages people to contact MoneyHelp for assistance with their money or debt problems. If they seek advice early they will have more options for managing their finances through what may be a period of limited income.

## What does MoneyHelp comprise?

MoneyHelp is a suite of products and services comprising:

- a free phone financial counselling service (including an interpreter service);
- a website with information and useful resources including sample letters, guides and fact sheets;
- a range of promotional products (including posters, flyers and wallet cards); and
- a liaison officer to promote the MoneyHelp service.

## Who funds and manages MoneyHelp?

MoneyHelp is funded by the Victorian Property Fund on the approval of the Minister of Consumer Affairs.

The MoneyHelp service is managed by Consumer Action Law Centre, a Melbourne-based community legal centre that provides free legal advice and representation to vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers.

## When to contact a MoneyHelp financial counsellor

When struggling with living costs, or faced with job loss or reduced working hours, it may be useful to get advice about managing your finances. Victorians are encouraged to contact MoneyHelp's financial counselling service if they:

- have more debt than they can manage;
- are receiving threatening letters from or being harassed by creditors or debt collectors;
- have been taken to court for the recovery of outstanding debts;
- are struggling to pay their rent or mortgage;

- are facing eviction or have been evicted from rented premises due to rent arrears;
- are not able to pay their gas, electricity, water or phone bills and are being threatened with disconnection; or
- are being pursued for uninsured car accident debt, tax debt and/or unpaid fines.

MoneyHelp's financial counsellors do not judge or chastise people about how they manage their money. Financial counsellors will reassure them they are not alone in experiencing financial hardship, confirm that managing on a limited income can be very challenging, and demonstrate how a person's efforts to resolve their debt issues can make a big difference.

## How does the MoneyHelp website work?

The MoneyHelp website offers multi-entry points for people seeking information, tools and tips regarding the management of their finances and debts due to unexpected changed circumstances.

The website can be used to prepare a budget, prioritise debts, learn about hardship programs and compare available debt payment options. The site is designed so a user can access information relevant to their particular circumstances directly from the home page, whether it's their mortgage, credit card, utility bill, child support payments or another debt.

Alternatively, the site can be toured to get an overview of how to manage on a limited income (regardless of one's employment status), stay positive, become aware of available help, and begin to look for a new job in the employment market.

The website provides tool and tips, including step-by-step guides on how to speak to creditors and sample letters to use when requesting consideration for condition of financial hardship.

## What is the role of the Liaison Officer?

MoneyHelp's Liaison Officer works with government and key stakeholders – including unions and peak employer bodies – to promote awareness of MoneyHelp, disseminate MoneyHelp information, and encourage Victorians struggling to pay their rent or mortgage or facing job loss to access the service before they make financial decisions.

## How can people get copies of MoneyHelp's fact sheets?

MoneyHelp's fact sheets can be downloaded from the MoneyHelp website [www.moneyhelp.org.au](http://www.moneyhelp.org.au). Alternatively they can be obtained from the Liaison Officer or MoneyHelp's financial counsellors.

## Who can obtain the MoneyHelp promotional products?

MoneyHelp flyers, posters and wallet cards can be ordered through the MoneyHelp website or from the Liaison Officer. These products are intended for use by organisations, businesses and government-funded services to promote MoneyHelp's financial counselling service to employers, employees, unions and other organisations whose income has been affected by the economic downturn.

## Key messages

- MoneyHelp provides a free phone financial counselling service (1800 149 689) to Victorians struggling to pay their rent or mortgage or facing job loss or reduced hours
- MoneyHelp's Liaison Officer works with government and key stakeholders to raise awareness of the MoneyHelp suite of products and services
- MoneyHelp's website [www.moneyhelp.org.au](http://www.moneyhelp.org.au) contains comprehensive information about job loss, debt and housing costs, as well as details about where to go for further help

*The funding for this fact sheet was provided by the Victorian Property Fund on the approval of the Minister for Consumer Affairs.*

*The information on this fact sheet is general and does not constitute legal advice.*

*MoneyHelp's products and services have been prepared for the information of Victorians who are struggling to pay their rent or mortgage, or facing job loss or reduced working hours. Phone 1800 149 689 to speak to a MoneyHelp financial counsellor. A financial counsellor will discuss a range of debt payment options based on an individual's circumstances.*

© Copyright MoneyHelp and Consumer Action Law Centre

Last updated April 2011