

Media Release

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The National Debt Helpline urges Victorians to seek support

The National Debt Helpline (NDH) is urging people in Victoria experiencing financial stress due to the lockdown to seek free and independent advice.

“As we go into the second week of this lockdown, many Victorians will be suffering. It’s important they know they can speak with a qualified financial counsellor,” said Fiona Guthrie, CEO of Financial Counselling Australia (FCA).

“We are urging Victorians who have lost their jobs or had hours reduced to contact us. We care, we can help and we are free,” Ms Guthrie said.

NDH is also urging banks and lenders, utility providers and other suppliers of essential services to be mindful that Victorian customers may struggle to make ends meet during this period.

“We hope these organisations will understand that many people may experience financial hardship because of the lockdown and will need assistance with hardship arrangements. Please treat your customers with respect and empathy,” Ms Guthrie said.

NDH is a not-for-profit service that helps people in Australia tackle their debt problems. It is staffed by professional financial counsellors, whose advice is fully independent and confidential.

People can contact NDH financial counsellors by calling the helpline on 1800 007 007 or through live chat on [the website](#), 9:30am-4:30pm weekdays. They will be put through to a financial counsellor in their own state or territory.

The NDH website also has practical step-by-step guides on how to deal with bills and debt.

Financial counsellors can help people to get through the next few months. For example, by providing advice about people’s rights to access hardship support from creditors such as banks, telcos and utilities.

Financial counsellors are different to financial advisors and planners.

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