

Family violence survivors getting more support from utilities in wake of royal commission

20 August 2019

Water

A new report has found customers experiencing family violence are getting more support from water businesses after customer protections were strengthened by the state's independent economic regulator.

The research report looked at how the state's water businesses were implementing new rules developed by the Essential Services Commission following the [Royal Commission into Family Violence](#).

Commission director Marcus Crudden says the research shows water companies are acting with more sensitivity toward victims of family violence.

"The research shows water businesses are demonstrating a greater willingness to check on client safety and improving support for customers experiencing financial difficulty in the wake of changes we made to the [water customer service codes in 2017](#)," he said.

The commission has also recently made [changes to the Energy Retail Code](#) requiring energy companies to better support victims of family violence.

The [research](#) involved interviews with 21 financial counsellors from across Victoria, six community advocate organisations and family violence service providers.

Two-thirds of counsellors said support for victims had improved since the code changes in 2017 and that most clients seeking support had a positive experience.

The commission has released the research along with a [new better practice guide](#) for both water and energy businesses to implement safe and effective family violence responses.

The guide features practical advice and in-depth case studies from major organisations including Carlton Football Club, Commonwealth Bank, Telstra, Yarra Valley Water and Australia Post.

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[Better practice in responding to family violence: A guide to promote better practice](#)

View our better practice guide in HTML.

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[Water code outcomes review 2019: family violence changes](#)

View our report on the outcomes for customers following the family violence changes to the water customer service codes.

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