

## Hardship applications up as water customers continue to feel impact of pandemic

Hundreds of Victorian water customers are continuing to receive assistance to cope with the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, according to the latest data from the state's regulator.

The Essential Services Commission data shows water businesses are continuing to reach out to customers, including small business and other non-residential customers.

Commission water director Marcus Crudden says water businesses have generally been proactive in ensuring customers are aware of existing support programs as well as [new support measures](#) developed in response to the pandemic.

"It is encouraging to see fewer customers' water supply is being restricted and there has been a pause on initiating legal action for non-payment of bills," he said.

However, Mr Crudden says ongoing support will be important with the impact of the pandemic still being felt.

"On average, more customers received hardship grants from their water business in January than in December and November.

"The January weekly average of 559 customers awarded hardship grants was 12 per cent higher than December's average of 500, which was also three per cent higher than the November average," he said.

Mr Crudden says however the number of customers applying for government Utility Relief Grants dropped in January compared to December and November.

"The average weekly application rate was 421 in January, down from 506 in December and 550 in November," he said.

The [coronavirus data report](#) is now available on the commission's website.

**About the data:** Data is reported weekly by water businesses and is not audited by the commission. We are collecting a small subset of data included in our annual water performance report.

**For further information call: David Jarwood, Senior Media Adviser, 0492 805 003**

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