

## **Commonwealth Home Support Program Hardship Policy and Procedure**

### **Application Process**

- Individual clients must apply in writing either by form or by email for a waiver or a reduction in client contributions on the grounds of financial hardship.
- Applications must be submitted to the clients allocated Care-Partner.

### **Assessment Requirements**

- For an assessment for hardship to be completed, the applicant will be asked to provide evidence of hardship.
- The applicant has the right to decline to provide such evidence listed below, but this will impact the ability to assess for hardship.

### **Information Gathering for Assessment Purposes**

- Applicants will be asked to voluntarily provide reasonable evidence of financial hardship, which may include (but is not limited to):
- Proof of government income support (e.g. Centrelink statement).
- Evidence of outstanding medical or housing costs.
- Bank statements or other relevant financial information.
- Evidence must be submitted together with the application, in a secure and confidential manner.

### **Assessment Principles**

- Applications will be assessed consistently, fairly, and transparently.
- The City will apply a standard calculation framework, considering:
  - Income level and essential expenses. Any special circumstances (e.g. illness, carer responsibilities).
- Where approved, a waiver or reduction will specify:
  - Amount waived or reduced.
  - Duration of the waiver/reduction, with periodic review if ongoing hardship exists.

### **Transparency and Availability**

- The Financial Hardship Policy will be published on the City's website and made available on request.

### **Financial Counselling**

- The applicant can choose if they wish, to access one of the City's Financial Counselling services for an independent assessment and to advocate on the applicant's behalf.
- If financial counselling services are accessed and the financial counsellor determines that a reduction or fee waiver is appropriate, consent from the applicant to advocate on their behalf must be obtained.