Financial Hardship Policy & Application

VERSION 1, OCTOBER 2024

Purpose

This Financial Hardship Policy reflects 1688 Underwriting Pty Ltd ('1688') commitment to fair treatment of customers in times of financial stress. The policy is established to assist policyholders who are experiencing financial difficulty and to comply with the Insurance Council of Australia ('ICA') General Insurance Code of Practice ('the Code').

This policy applies to all insured customers, including individuals and small businesses, who hold policies underwritten by 1688 and are facing financial hardship. It covers situations where customers are having difficulty meeting their financial obligations, including but not limited to payment of premiums, excess, or outstanding debts related to their insurance claims

Financial Hardship

You are suffering Financial Hardship if you are:

- an individual Insured or a Third-Party Beneficiary who owes us money — including an excess — under an insurance policy we have issued; or
- an individual and we are seeking to recover money from you because we believe you caused damage or loss to either an Insured, or a Third-Party Beneficiary who we cover under an insurance policy.

You may be entitled to support if you experience difficulty in meeting your financial obligations to 1688. The support 1688 can offer does not include support with paying the premiums under an insurance policy we have issued.

We encourage you or your representative to tell us about your Financial Hardship so that we can work with you to discuss your situation and the options available to support you. For more details, refer to Part 10 of the ICA's code here.

If you need additional assistant with your financial hardship, you may contact the National Debt Helpline - 1800 007 007.

Applying for Financial Hardship Assistance

Policyholders seeking assistance should:

- Contact 1688 Customer Service via phone on 02 9128 2044 or email at Compliance@1688underwriting.com to notify us of their financial situation.
- Submit a financial hardship application form, which is available on our website or can be provided by our Customer Service team.
- Provide supporting documentation, such as:
- Proof of reduced income or unemployment;
- Medical certificates for serious illness/ disability or bills;
- Government support documentation such as Centrelink statements; and
- Bank statements or other financial information.

We will request information from you only if it is reasonably necessary for us to assess your application for Financial Hardship support. If, after we receive your application for Financial Hardship support, we need more information from you before we can make our decision, then we will:

- tell you the information we need as early as possible; and
- be specific about the information we need.

You have **21** Calendar Days from the date of our request to provide that information to us, unless we have agreed to a different timeframe.

Assessment Process

We will tell you in writing of our decision about whether to give you Financial Hardship support within 21 Calendar Days after we receive your application, unless we have asked you to provide us with more information.

If we do ask you for more information and:

- you provide all information we requested, then within 21 Calendar Days of receiving it we will tell you in writing, our decision about whether to give you Financial Hardship support; or
- you do not provide all information we requested within 21 Calendar Days (or by a later date we agree to), then within 7 Calendar Days of that deadline passing, we will tell you in writing, our decision about whether to give you Financial Hardship support.

Type of Assistance Available

Depending on your situation, we may offer the following forms of assistance:

- **Payment Plans:** We may arrange a payment plan that allows you to spread your premium or debt payments over an extended period.
- **Postponed Payments:** Temporary deferral of payments may be granted, providing relief for a specified period.
- **Waiver of Excess:** In cases of extreme financial hardship, we may consider waiving your excess for a claim.
- **Premium Reduction or Deferral:** We may explore options to reduce or defer your premium for a limited period.
- **Waiver of cancellation fees:** we may consider waiving your cancellation fees, if applicable.

We will confirm the agreed arrangement with you. Where possible this will be in your preferred method of communication. If we agree you are entitled to Financial Hardship support, but we are unable to agree about how you can be supported, then we will tell you in writing, about our Complaints process.

If we decide that you are not entitled to Financial Hardship support, we will tell you the reasons for our decision and about our Complaints process. Where possible, we will tell you this in your preferred method of communication.

If your circumstances change, then you may re-apply for Financial Hardship support in relation to the amount you owe. However, for any further application you make, it will be at our discretion whether we again put any recovery action on hold.

Other Matters

Standards for collecting money

We, as well as any Collection Agent or solicitor collecting money for us, will comply with the Debt collection guideline: for collectors and creditors (ASIC Regulatory Guide 96) published by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (‘ACCC’) and the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (‘ASIC’). We, as well as any Collection Agent or solicitor collecting money for us, are required to:

- understand the Financial Hardship requirements in the Code; and
- receive training to help identify whether you might need Financial Hardship support.

When we, our Collection Agent or solicitor, first communicates with you about any money owed, then we will ensure that this communication will provide you with information to show that the amount we are seeking to recover from you is fair and reasonable. This may include:

- information on the relevant loss and/or damage and the claim;
- the actual cost of completed repairs; and
- the evidence we relied on when we calculated the amount.

This communication will also include:

- information about our Financial Hardship process; and
- contact details to enable you to contact us to discuss Financial Hardship support or if you have any questions.

If our Collection Agent or solicitor communicates with you about money owed, then that communication will identify that they are acting on our behalf and will specify the nature of our claim against you. If you tell our Collection Agent or solicitor that you are experiencing Financial Hardship, then they must notify us and give you information in writing about our Financial Hardship process.

Bankruptcy

If you tell us that you intend to declare bankruptcy, then we will work with you (or your representative) to agree on the amount owed. We will also give you written confirmation of that amount for the purposes of your declaration of bankruptcy. If we cannot agree on an amount, then we will provide you with details of our Complaints process.

Confidentiality and Privacy

All information provided by policyholders in relation to their financial hardship situation will be treated confidentially and in accordance with our Privacy Policy. We will only collect, use, and disclose personal information as necessary to assess and manage the financial hardship request. For a copy of our Privacy Policy, please visit our website www.1688underwriting.com

Financial Hardship Application Form

Insured Name	
Policy Number	
Claim Number	

Applicant Details

Applicant 1 Full Name	
Applicant 2 Full Name	

Contact Details

Mailing Address	
State	
Postcode	
Contact Number	
Email*	

*We will use this email address for all written communication unless you advise us that you want to receive contact by post.

Dependants Details

Name	Age

Hardship Details

Please explain the reasons for your application:

Types of Assistance

What type of assistance would you require from 1688?

- **Payment Plans:** We may arrange a payment plan that allows you to spread your premium or debt payments over an extended period. If applicable, over what period of time are you able to pay?
- **Postponed Payments:** Temporary deferral of payments may be granted, providing relief for a specified period. If applicable, when will you be able to commence making payments?
- **Waiver of Excess:** In cases of extreme financial hardship, we may consider waiving your excess for a claim.
- **Premium Reduction or Deferral:** We may explore options to reduce or defer your premium for a limited period. If applicable, how much you can afford and when will you be able to commence making payments?
- **Waiver of cancellation fees:** we may consider waiving your cancellation fees, if applicable.