

Fines and Domestic Violence

Your Rights and Responsibilities

What's in this Factsheet?

- I have lots of fines, I can't pay them and feed me and the kids – what can I do?
- I have lost my licence because of my fines– can I get it back?
- Is there anyone who can help me sort out my fines?

To contact the Fines Payment Unit (FPU) call: (08) 207 6288 or 1800 659 538

I have lots of fines, I can't pay them and feed me and the kids – what can I do?

- The first thing to do is to find out how many unpaid fines you have.
- To check what unpaid fines you have:
 - contact the -FPU; and
 - if you have court fines, contact the Court Registry of your local court.
- The next thing to do is to look at your budget – can you manage to pay the fines?
- If you can pay off the fines – contact the-FPU or the Court Registry and make arrangements to pay off the fines.
- If you can't pay off the fines and you are struggling to meet your living costs such as housing, food, medicines and clothing, there are ways to deal with the fines:
 - you can arrange to pay by instalments by contacting the FPU
 - if you cannot meet the suggested instalment plan you can make an application before a magistrate and suggest an alternative instalment plan
 - you might be able to ask to do community service work
 - in some cases, you can apply to have the fine/s written off because of financial hardship caused by domestic violence, illness, homelessness, carer's responsibilities etc. You will need to show that you do not have sufficient savings or income to pay for basic things like rent, food, clothing and medicines.

With fines, there are important time limits so it is a good idea to seek assistance as soon as possible. Fines will not go away – you need to act as soon as possible, or it will only cost you more!

I have lost my licence because of my fines – can I get my licence back?

- Firstly, you cannot drive any vehicle while your licence is suspended.
- Restrictions can be lifted immediately if you pay all the enforcement orders in full.
- But if you don't have the money to do this, you should enter an instalment plan with the FPU – you need to contact the office on -1800 659 538

Remember there are serious penalties, including going to jail if you drive your car while your licence is suspended.

Is there anyone who can help me sort out my fines?

- Often you are very stressed and find it difficult to let government agencies, such as the -FPU, know what is happening.
- Financial Counsellors can help you plan your finances. In relation to your fine/s they can negotiate with the-FPU or they can help you arrange with Centrepay* for payments to be made from your pension or benefit.
- Many community organisations provide Financial Counselling such as Uniting Communities and Anglicare.
- You may also want to talk your support worker, Legal Aid or someone at your local community legal centre for advice, or to see if they can contact the-FPU for you.

If you need the contact details for your local community legal centre or legal aid office ,
For community legal centres (CLC)

- For your nearest community legal centre, go to: www.nacclc.org.au or www.saccls.org.au
- For Legal Aid call 1300 366 424 or www.lsc.sa.gov.au

*Centrepay is a free direct bill-paying service offered to customers receiving payments from Centrelink.

Always remember there are charities and organisations in your area that offer emergency relief. For example, you can get vouchers to help with electricity bills, gas bills, phone bills and buying food. Talk to your support worker or your local council for the names of these organisations.