

TIPS FOR APPROACHING LANDLORDS, BANKS AND UTILITY COMPANIES

Following the recent government-mandated cessation of non-essential activities, the budgets, cash flow and financial plans of gymnastics clubs have been heavily impacted.

As such, it is imperative that you make early and regular communication with those involved in the ongoing business overheads about your financial situation.

Below are tips on how to approach discussions with your landlord, bank and utilities companies around financial support and considerations in these difficult times.

1. LANDLORDS

When you enter into a lease, you are taking on a serious financial commitment. The duty to pay rent is a key term of the lease contract – you have agreed to pay the rent for the whole term of the lease.

Although the landlord doesn't have to agree to a rent reduction – if you have a good relationship with your landlord and you've met all of the other lease terms, it may be worth working to negotiate a rent reduction for a specific length of time.

Prepare your case

It's important to carefully develop your case and back it up with evidence, which could include:

- Financial data (i.e. always paid rent on time)
- Examples of other businesses similar to yours

In light of a potential economic downturn, the landlord may be persuaded that it's better to have a steady stream of less money, rather than attempting to find a new tenant in these tough economic times.

Falling behind in rent

It's vital that you speak with your landlord before the situation gets out of control i.e. allowing rent to fall into arrears or submitting late payments.

Lease support

You can speak with an expert in regards to your obligations under retail or commercial leases, and receive advice on how to deal with any landlord issues – Call **1300 795 534** or contact the [Small Business Commissioner](#).

More information can be found [here](#).

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2. BANKS

If you require financial assistance, it is important to get in contact with your bank as soon as possible and let them know your current circumstances. As a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic, banks across Australia have made a number of concessions for their customers so they are willing to work with you.

It's vital to be open and honest with your bank, as this allows them to understand your current circumstances and lets you explain how things have changed and whether you expect them to improve in the future.

The bank may seek the following information:

- Evidence of your financial position (i.e. income, expenses, assets and liabilities)
- Evidence of employment and income
- Evidence of any medical circumstances

If you are offered a hardship arrangement and you accept, you'll need to ensure that you can meet your side of the arrangement. If you can't, you should contact your bank as soon as possible and discuss the situation.

It's also important to keep a record of all your discussions with your bank.

Individual bank contact details can be found [here](#).

3. UTILITY COMPANIES

Gymnastics Australia has partnered with [Make it Cheaper](#) to provide all affiliate members with a free energy cost comparison to help save on your energy bills.

Their energy savings experts will review your current rates and make recommendations based on what you could actually save. They also facilitate any change in provider to help save you additional costs.

More information can be found [here](#).

Whilst the NSW Government is yet to release a state-specific energy bill rebate for businesses, energy suppliers stand ready to provide scalable, accessible and tailored assistance to all affected customers.

It is crucial that customers work with their retailer if they are able to help minimize their costs and discuss sustainable long-term payment options. Given the varied nature of small businesses, retailers commit to working with any impacted customer to deliver sustainable solutions that will assist them at this time.

All energy providers have existing affordability programs (i.e. hardship programs), however, the support measures differ between retailers.

They could include:

- Payment extensions
- Payment plans
- Assistance with accessing grants and concessions

The Australian Government's Department of Industry, Science, Energy and Resources also offers [Courses and Webinars program](#) for small businesses in NSW covering energy management advice to assist with saving costs.

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