

# Update for workers about ACBF/Youpla funeral insurance

## What is happening with ACBF / Youpla?

In March 2022 the funeral insurance business called **Youpla** (which used to be called the **Aboriginal Community Benefit Fund** or **ACBF**) went broke. This means that anyone who had a funeral policy with these businesses won't get the cost of their funeral covered.

### Who is affected by this?

Anyone who has or had an ACBF or Youpla funeral policy is affected by this. We know that thousands of community members across Australia had this funeral insurance.

### But wasn't this a savings plan?

No. This business was selling a type of insurance. They only paid for a funeral if you kept paying your premiums. It was always a bad deal.

### What are Liquidators and who is doing this for ACBF?

Liquidators are businesses that are appointed when a company has gone broke. They can distribute assets/money (if any) that the business still has. Liquidators have been appointed for ACBF and Youpla to see what can be done for people who have paid for funeral insurance.

The Liquidator for ACBF is **David Stimson - SV Partners**. People can contact SV Partners to find out what fund they were in and how much money they have paid.

### Will community members get any money back?

There is not enough money in any of the funds for people to get all of their money back. We are waiting to see how any leftover money will be distributed.

### Why did this happen?

It is possible that some money was wrongly taken from at least one fund. The liquidators are investigating to find out why this happened. We will keep you updated but we don't think the money will be returned any time soon, if at all.

### This is so unfair. It will hurt community and our elders.

We agree. We are working with other agencies and ACCOs and community to campaign for the Federal Government to step in and cover the cost of funerals in community. We are in regular contact with the liquidators who keep us updated on the what's happening.

### Does community know about this?

A lot of people won't know about this yet. Share this info with your community.



## What can people do if they had funeral insurance?

### 1. Get some free legal advice

Workers can call **Consumer Action's Worker Advice Service** to talk to a lawyer and get free advice to help their client. Call **03 9602 3326**.

Community can call the **Victorian Aboriginal Legal Service (VALS)** on **1800 064 865**.

Community can call **Consumer Action's Koori Help Line** on **1800 574 457**. We are expecting a lot of calls so tell people if you can't get through they should leave a message so we can get back to them.

### 2. Stop making payments!

The liquidators say that they will stop all direct debits, and that they will refund any direct debits taken after March 2022. But people should double check this with their bank or Centrepay.

### 3. Call the Liquidator (SV Partners)

Help your clients phone the liquidators. You should ask them what fund they were in and how much they've paid. Call **(07) 3310 2005** or email **youpla@svp.com.au**.

### 4. Complain to the ombudsman

Help your clients complain to the ombudsman. They are called the **Australian Financial Complaints Authority** (**www.afca.org.au/** and **1800 931 678**). This will put your complaint on the record. If you need help, call us for free legal advice.

### 5. Tell the government to make this RIGHT!

Talk to your local Members of Parliament about this and get them to raise it with government. You might want to call First Nations MPs and Senators.

If you or your clients want to share your story then we would love to hear from you. Contact - **Mark Pearce**, Media & Communications at Consumer Action **mark@consumeraction.org.au**.

### 6. Talk to a financial counsellor if they're in financial hardship

Workers and clients can call the **National Debt Helpline** on **1800 007 007**.

## What can people do to cover the cost of a funeral?

We can't provide financial advice but here are some options to consider.

1. If they can afford it, people might want to put money into a dedicated savings account, this is the best option. Or they might consider a pre-paid funeral or funeral bond.
2. If they have a superannuation account they might also have a form of life insurance, they should speak to their super fund about this.

The Moneysmart web site has some helpful information. **moneysmart.gov.au/indigenous/paying-for-funerals**

**WARNING:** Funeral insurance products only cover the cost of a funeral if people keep paying premiums. People should not sign up for another funeral insurance fund without getting some advice from a financial counsellor.

If people have lost a loved one and were expecting money from ACBF they could:

- ▶ Phone their local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Co-op for support
- ▶ See a free financial counsellor to consider other options to pay.

## I feel I need to talk to someone.

If you are feeling sad, angry, confused and lost and want to speak to a professional, there are services to talk to.

**13YARN**

**13YARN: 13 92 76**

This is a national crisis support line for mob who are feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping. They offer a confidential one-on-one yarning opportunity with a Lifeline-trained Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporter who can provide crisis support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. 13YARN empowers our community with the opportunity to yarn without judgement and provide a culturally safe space to speak about their needs, worries or concerns.

 **Lifeline**

**Lifeline: 13 11 14**