

# Support for Young People and Families amidst COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

## **EMERGENCY RELIEF PACKAGES**

- Victorians in self-isolation due to Coronavirus with no access to food and essential supplies will receive emergency relief packages via the Victorian Government.
- Each eligible household will receive a two week supply of essential goods including items such as:
  - Long-life milk, pasta, cereal, canned vegetables and sugar
  - Soap, toothpaste and deodorant
  - Additional items may also be supplied based on the needs of the households e.g. Nappies and baby formula
- These packages will be delivered to your door.
- **How to access the package?**
  - Call Victoria's dedicated coronavirus hotline on 1800 675 398.

## **SERVICES AUSTRALIA (CENTRELINK) SUPPORTS**

- From April 27, job seekers will receive a \$550 supplement to existing payments, bringing the total to \$1,100.
- Two separate \$750 payments will also be made to social security, veteran and other income support recipients and eligible concession card holders.
- These payments will be made automatically on March 31 and July 13.

## **WAITING PERIODS WAIVED FOR SOME NEWLY-ARRIVED RESIDENTS**

- Due to COVID-19, the Australian Government has temporarily removed the waiting period for some newly-arrived residents to access the following: JobSeeker Payment, Youth Allowance, Austudy, Parenting Payment Single and Partnered, Farm Household Allowance and Special Benefit. See [Services Australia website](#) for more information.

## **Coronavirus Supplement**

- **What:** \$550 per fortnight added to existing income support recipients. You will receive your usual payment plus \$550 per fortnight.
- **When:** From 27<sup>th</sup> April for 6 months.
- **Who:** People receiving:
  - JobSeeker Payment
  - Sickness Allowance
  - Youth Allowance for jobseekers
  - Parenting Payment Partnered
  - Parenting Payment Single
  - Partner Allowance
  - Sickness Allowance
  - Farm Household Allowance.
- **How do I get this payment?**
  - If you are already receiving one of the welfare payments listed above you don't have to do anything to get this payment. Services Australia will automatically give it to you.
  - If you are not receiving welfare then you'll need to apply.

## **JobSeeker Payment and Youth Allowance**

- From 27 April 2020 these people can also apply for JobSeeker and Youth Allowance payments:
  - People caring for someone infected or in isolation as a result of contact with Coronavirus
  - People earning less than \$1,075 per fortnight
  - People who have lost their job
  - Casual workers or self-employed people whose income has reduced
  - Sole traders and self-employed people. They will be able to meet mutual obligation requirements by continuing to operate their businesses.
- **How to apply for JobSeeker or Youth Allowance**
  - You can apply [online at MyGov using a Centrelink account](#), or [contact Services Australia by phone for more details](#).

➤ **If you are making a new claim**

○ **To get your payment faster:**

- Claim online or through your mobile. If you don't have internet, then claim over the phone.
- From April 20, 2020 new applicants can call to verify their identity
- To claim online, if you do not already deal with Services Australia you will need to:
  - 1. Set up a myGov account
  - 2. Call to verify your identity
  - 3. Get link over the phone to your online Centrelink account
  - 4. You can also declare your rent to get "Rent Assistance".

➤ **Flexible job seeking arrangements**

- Those receiving JobSeeker Payments have an obligation to actively look for work or build their skills, but the Government is making sure this can be done flexibly and safely.
- If you have caring responsibilities or need to self-isolate you can seek an exemption from your job seeker obligations without the need for medical evidence.
- Activities can be rescheduled if you cannot attend as a result of the Coronavirus.
- Your obligations will be tailored to your needs.
- Job seekers are encouraged to stay job ready, connected to their employment services provider and up to date on potential job opportunities.

➤ **Partner income test increased for JobSeeker**

- The partner income test for the JobSeeker payment has been increased to \$79,762 per annum (from \$48,000) which will enable more couples to access much-needed support during the Coronavirus pandemic. This means, if one person in a couple has lost their job, they will now be able to access the Jobseeker payment if their partner earns under \$79,762 per annum. ([Full announcement](#)).

## **Two Additional Economic Support Payments**

- **What:** The Government will also provide an Economic Support payment of \$750 to approximately 6.6 million people.
- **Who:** People receiving or who are card holders of:
  - Age Pension
  - Disability Support Pension

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- Carer Payment
  - Parenting Payment
  - Wife Pension
  - Widow B Pension
  - ABSTUDY (Living Allowance)
  - Austudy
  - Bereavement Allowance
  - Newstart Allowance
  - Youth Allowance
  - Partner Allowance
  - Sickness Allowance
  - Special Benefit
  - Widow Allowance
  - Family Tax Benefit, including Double Orphan Pension
  - Carer Allowance
  - Pensioner Concession Card holders
  - Commonwealth Seniors Health Card holders
  - Veteran Service Pension; Veteran Income Support Supplement; Veteran Compensation payments, including lump sum payments; War Widow(er) Pension; and Veteran Payment
  - DVA PCC holders; DVA Education Scheme recipients; Disability Pensioners at the temporary special rate; DVA Income support pensioners at \$0 rate
  - Veteran Gold Card holders
  - Farm Household Allowance.
- **How do I get this payment?**
- Services Australia and the Department of Veterans' Affairs will automatically deliver the first Economic Support payment from 31 March 2020 (subject to the passage of legislation) and the second Economic Support payment from 13 July 2020.
- The Government will provide a second Economic Support payment, also of \$750 to people eligible for any of the payments or cards in the first round of payments on 10 July 2020 so long as they **do not** receive the Coronavirus Supplement with their payment.

➤ **Who can get the second payment?**

- You can receive the second payment if you are receiving any of the benefits above or are a card holder of any of the above and you do not receive the Coronavirus Supplement.

**If you're in isolation and can't do what Centrelink is asking from you**

- Current income support recipients who cannot do what Centrelink asks you to do to receive payments because you are in isolation should call [Services Australia](#).
- You can be granted a Major Personal Crisis exemption, without having to provide evidence such as a medical certificate.
- Students receiving Youth Allowance (student) or other study related payments who are in Australia, but unable to attend studies due to Coronavirus would be taken to have a reasonable excuse for not meeting study activity requirements for their payments. Individuals in this situation must contact Services Australia to advise them of the circumstances.

**JOBKEEPER PAYMENT**

➤ **What is the JobKeeper payment?**

- The Australian Government announced on 30 March 2020 a \$130 billion JobKeeper payment to help keep more Australians in jobs and support businesses affected by Coronavirus.
- Affected employers will be able to claim a fortnightly payment of \$1,500 per eligible employee from 30 March 2020, for a maximum of 6 months.
- Eligible employees will receive a minimum of \$1,500 per fortnight, before tax.

➤ **Who is eligible?**

- Eligible employees include Australian citizens, the holder of a permanent visa, or a Special Category (Subclass 444) Visa Holder.
- Full time and part time employees, including stood down employees, would be eligible for the JobKeeper Payment. Where a casual employee has been with their employer for at least the previous 12 months they will also be eligible for the Payment.

➤ **How to register?**

- To register interest, Employers need to visit the Australian Taxation Office website: <https://www.ato.gov.au/general/gen/JobKeeper-payment/>

➤ **More information:**

- [Fact sheet for Employers](#)
- [Fact sheet for Employees](#)

## **INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

- **Study Melbourne** – Study Melbourne is committed to ensuring all international students studying or commencing their studies in Melbourne and Victoria who are impacted by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak stay informed and supported.

Visit [Study Melbourne website](#) for more information.

## **EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

- **Victorian Government website** – Workers who have recently lost their job or casuals who no longer have shifts can register their interest in receiving more information about the Working for Victoria Fund via the [Victorian Government website](#).
- **Job matching** – Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS) and the Victorian Trades Hall Council will be working with the Victorian Government to develop a scheme that matches people out of work with jobs that need doing during the pandemic. That might be hospitality workers helping feed people in isolation, or it could be factory workers helping clean trains and trams. The Victorian Government has announced \$500 million to establish this [Working for Victoria](#) Fund.

## **MENTAL HEALTH & SAFETY SUPPORTS**

- **Beyond Blue**
  - Offers counselling and referrals by phone and webchat on **1300 22 4364**
  - They have produced a guide to [mental wellbeing during the Coronavirus outbreak](#).
- **Kids Helpline**
  - Free 24/7 counselling service for young people aged 5 – 25, phone **1800 551 800**
  - **Web Chat:** Visit <https://kidshelpline.com.au/get-help/webchat-counselling> and scroll down to the 'connect now' button
  - **Email:** [counsellor@kidshelpline.com.au](mailto:counsellor@kidshelpline.com.au)
- **Lifeline**
  - Available 24 hours/7 days on **13 11 14**, by text: **0477 13 11 14** (6pm – midnight AEDT, 7 nights) and [online chat](#) (7pm – midnight, 7 nights)
- **1800RESPECT**
  - Offers a sexual assault domestic violence counselling service
  - A list of [safety apps for mobile phones can be found at their website](#).

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➤ **Safe Steps**

- 24/7 family violence crisis response phone line – **1800 015 188**.

➤ **DVRCV and DVVic** are collating information, resources and responses to frequently asked questions on COVID-19 and family violence at the [Lookout website](#) and [DVRCV website](#).

➤ **InTouch (Multicultural Centre Against Family Violence)**

- If you are experiencing family violence and need support call the toll free number – **1800 755 988**
- [InTouch website](#)