

## Income support and Centrelink entitlements for temporary visa holders

### Who is this Infosheet for?

In response to the outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID-19), the Commonwealth Government has introduced several income support payments for workers and job seekers to help keep people employed and provide income support during this difficult time. This Infosheet provides information about these new income support entitlements, as well as regular income support and Centrelink entitlements, for people seeking asylum and refugees who hold temporary visas in Australia.

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### IMPORTANT

- **These Centrelink payment and income support entitlements are subject to change frequently. This Infosheet is up to date as at 5pm Friday 6 August, 2020. You should check to see if there are any newer versions of this Infosheet on the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (ASRC) website, [www.asrc.org.au](http://www.asrc.org.au) before relying on this information.**

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### What are the new income support payments?

On 9 April 2020 the Federal Government introduced changes to social security support available to people who have lost their job, whose employer cannot continue to pay them their full salary or who are experiencing financial hardship for other reasons due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The changes created the following new income supplements and support payments:

- ***JobKeeper subsidy***

The JobKeeper Subsidy is a payment of \$1500 per employee to eligible businesses and organisations. It was initially to be in place until 27 September 2020, however on 21 July 2020 the Government announced it is extending the JobKeeper Payment for a further six months until 28 March 2021.

To receive the payment both the employer and employee need to meet the eligibility requirements.

Employers will be eligible for the subsidy if:

- their business has a turnover of less than \$1 billion and their turnover has fallen by more than 30 percent;
- their business has a turnover of \$1 billion or more and their turnover has fallen by more than 50 percent;
- they are a not-for-profit organisation and their turnover has fallen by more than 15 percent.

People who are self-employed will also qualify as long as the business satisfies the requirements outlined above and the employee is eligible (see below).

To be considered an eligible employee for the JobKeeper subsidy, employees meet the following criteria:

- are currently employed by the eligible employer (including those stood down or re-hired)
- were employed by the employer on 1 March 2020;
- are at least 16 years old;
- are a full-time, part-time, or long-term casual (employed for more than 12 months as at 1 March 2020);
- are an Australian citizen, a permanent resident or the holder of a Protected Special Category Visa Holder, a non-protected Special Category Visa Holder or a Special Category (Subclass 444) Visa Holder.

Other temporary visa holders, including holders of Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs), Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEVs) and Bridging visas are not eligible (see 'Am I eligible for any of these new income supplements or financial support payments?' below for more information.

#### ▪ **JobSeeker payment**

The JobSeeker payment is the new name for a number of Centrelink payments that have been combined into a single new payment because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The JobSeeker payment provides financial assistance to people who are:

- studying;
- unemployed or underemployed;
- unable to work due to illness or injury;

People who previously received Newstart unemployment payments or Student Allowance payments will now receive the new JobSeeker payment. To be considered eligible for JobSeeker payments you must be an Australian citizen or a permanent resident.

Temporary visa holders, including holders of Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs), Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEVs) and Bridging visas are not eligible (see 'Am I eligible for any of these new income supplements or financial support payments?' below for more information.

#### ▪ **Coronavirus Supplement**

The Coronavirus Supplement is temporary payment of \$550 per fortnight, to assist people who have lost their job or have had their work hours or income reduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Everyone who is already receiving one of the following payments will automatically receive the additional Coronavirus Supplement:

- JobSeeker Payment (or Newstart);
- Partner/Widow/Sickness Allowance;
- Youth Allowance or Student Allowance;

- Special Benefit.

- **One-off Economic Support Payment**

The Economic Support Payment is a one off payment of \$750 which will be paid to all people living in Australia current in receipt of Government benefits (a Centrelink payment). A second \$750 payment was provided to people in receipt of a Government benefit after 13 July 2020 and a third is planned for December 2020.

### Am I eligible for any of these new income supplements or financial support payments?

Below is a guide to current income support payment eligibility for temporary visa holders (including non-COVID-19 related payments):

Visa held	Normal Centrelink/income support eligibility	COVID-19 Pandemic Centrelink and income support payment eligibility
Bridging visa A (subclass 010) (with or without work rights)	Eligible to apply for Status Resolution Support Services (SRSS) – must meet SRSS requirements to receive SRSS	<b>NOT</b> eligible for COVID-19 Pandemic Jobseeker or JobKeeper payments
Bridging visa C (subclass 030) (with or without work rights)	Eligible to apply for Status Resolution Support Services – must meet SRSS requirements to receive SRSS	<b>NOT</b> eligible for COVID-19 Pandemic support payments.
Bridging visa E (subclass 050 and 051) (with or without work rights)	Eligible to apply for Status Resolution Support Services – must then SRSS requirements to receive SRSS	<b>NOT</b> eligible for COVID-19 Pandemic support payments.
Temporary Protection Visa (Class XD)	Eligible to apply for most Centrelink support payments (i.e. Newstart allowance, student allowance, disability pension)	<b>NOT</b> eligible for Jobseeker or JobKeeper payments  <b>Eligible</b> to apply for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Special Benefit</li> <li>- Coronavirus Supplement</li> <li>- Economic Support Payments</li> </ul> You must then meet the requirements for those payments
Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (Class XE)	Eligible to apply for most Centrelink support payments (i.e. Newstart allowance, student allowance, disability pension)	<b>NOT</b> eligible for Jobseeker or Jobkeeper payments  <b>Eligible</b> to apply for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Special Benefit</li> <li>- Coronavirus Supplement</li> </ul>

		- Economic Support Payments You must then meet the requirements for those payments
Permanent Protection Visa (Class XA)	Eligible to apply for most Centrelink support payments (i.e. Newstart allowance, student allowance, disability pension)	<b>Eligible</b> to apply for: - JobSeeker - JobKeeper - Coronavirus Supplement - Economic Support Payments You must then meet the requirements for those payments

**I hold a Bridging visa with work rights and I have lost my job/been stood down due to COVID-19 pandemic, what are my income support options?**

As a Bridging visa holder you are not eligible for the Jobseeker or Jobkeeper payments introduced on 8 April 2020 by the Commonwealth Government. Right now, these payments are only available for Australian Citizens, permanent residents

However, you might be eligible for SRSS payments and casework support, even if you applied for SRSS in the past and were refused. In Victoria, the Adult Multicultural Education Services (AMES) and Life Without Barriers can assist asylum seekers to apply for SRSS and provide ongoing casework support for people who are deemed eligible for SRSS.

You might be eligible for SRSS if you are:

- an illegal maritime arrival (IMA) and have lodged a valid Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) or Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) application and are waiting for a decision from the Department or the Immigration Assessment Authority (IAA);
- a non-IMA and have lodged a valid protection visa application and are waiting for a decision from the Department of Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT);
- a holder of a Bridging Visa E (BVE);
- facing significant barriers that are impacting on your ability to resolve your immigration status even if you do not have a valid application before the Department, the IAA or the AAT.

To contact AMES and find out how to get help, call 132637. If you need an interpreter ask the person who answers the phone to call you back with an interpreter and tell them the language you speak.

To contact Life Without Barriers, call the closest office to you:

Dandenong  
Level 2, 1-7 Langhorne Street  
Dandenong VIC 3175  
Phone: 03 8752 8500

Epping  
Shop 5, 560-610 High Street

Epping VIC 3076  
Phone: 03 8405 4400

Sunshine  
137 Harvester Road  
Sunshine VIC 3020  
Phone: 03 9313 2400

If you need an interpreter, ask the person at Life Without Barriers who answers the phone when you call one of the above numbers to call you back with an interpreter.

You can also contact the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre on (03) 9326 6066 between 10am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

### **Other assistance available in Victoria**

#### ***Red Cross***

If you hold a temporary visa, such as a TPV or SHEV or Bridging visa, and you are not eligible for any Centrelink payments or SRSS, you might be able to receive some financial and material assistance from the Red Cross as part of their COVID-19 pandemic emergency relief support.

For more information about the Red Cross emergency relief visit this website: <https://www.redcross.org.au/news-and-media/news/help-for-migrants-in-transition#what-are-the-funds-for>

#### ***Asylum Seeker Resource Centre***

You can also contact the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre on (03) 9326 6066 between 10am and 5pm, Monday to Friday to enquire about emergency relief.

**Disclaimer:** This fact sheet provides general information to people seeking asylum in Australia through the onshore protection visa application process and to holders of permanent Protection Visas, Temporary Protection Visas or Safe Haven Enterprise Visas. This fact sheet is not legal advice. You should not rely on this fact sheet to make decisions about your immigration matter. We strongly recommend that you get independent legal advice from a registered migration agent if you have question about your specific circumstances. For information about registered migration agents please visit: <https://www.mara.gov.au>. **Last updated: 6 August 2020.**