

Government Funded Income Support during COVID 19: Who's eligible and who's left behind

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HIV/AIDS Legal Centre (HALC)

Note: The information contained in this presentation is not a substitute for legal advice and does not take in to account your personal circumstances



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What Income support is available?

- **JobSeeker payment**

- provides financial help for people over 22 who are unemployed, underemployed or who are sick or injured and cannot work. Those previously on Newstart and other payments have now been moved to the new JobSeeker payment. \$565.70 per fortnight for a single person with no children

- **Youth Allowance**

- People aged 21 (those who can't meet JobSeeker) and younger are able to access Youth Allowance for job seekers (Not covered further in this presentation)

- **The Coronavirus supplement**

- is a temporary fortnightly payment of \$550 per fortnight, to assist people who have lost their job or have reduced wages during this period.

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What Income support is available?

- **The JobKeeper Subsidy:**
 - is a payment of \$1500 per employee to eligible businesses and non-profit organisations.
- **\$750 Economic Support Payment**
 - a one-off payment of \$750 for people who are receiving certain Government benefits. 2 payments. 1 in March- April and another from May goes until 13 July 2020 to those receiving certain Government benefits on 10 July 2020.
- **Special Benefit**
 - Special Benefit is a Centrelink payment for people who are not eligible for any other Centrelink payment and are in severe financial hardship
- **Status Resolution Support Services (SSRS) Payment:** A regular payment to help with basic living costs while you're waiting to hear about your immigration status.

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What are the Residence Rules for Centrelink

- You're an Australian resident if you live in Australia and are either:
 - an Australian citizen
 - a permanent residence visa holder
 - a protected Special Category visa (SCV) holder (f you arrived in Australia on a New Zealand passport and were either in Australia on 26 February 2001 OR in Australia for 12 months in the 2 years immediately before this date and were assessed as a protected SCV holder before 26 February 2004.
- If you're a New Zealand citizen who arrived in Australia after 26 February 2001, you're generally a non-protected SCV holder. This means you are not an Australian resident for social security purposes.

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Who is eligible to get these payments- JobSeeker

- between 22 and Age Pension age
- meet residence rules
- income and assets are under the test limits
- unemployed and or looking for work.
- You're sick or injured and are unable to do your usual work or study for a short time.

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Who is eligible to get these payments-The Corona Virus Supplement

- You'll automatically get the supplement if you're getting one of these payments:
 - JobSeeker Payment, Partner Allowance, Widow Allowance, Sickness Allowance and Wife Pension
 - Youth Allowance for job seekers
 - Youth Allowance for students and apprentices
 - Austudy for students and apprentices
 - ABSTUDY for students getting Living Allowance
 - Parenting Payment partnered and single
 - Farm Household Allowance
 - Special Benefit.
- Is not linked to how much of the above benefits you are receiving, as long as you get even \$1 of the above benefits, you can get the supplement

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Who is eligible to get these payments- \$750 Economic Support Payment

- The Economic Support Payment is a one-off payment of \$750 for people who are receiving certain Government benefits. The first payment was announced for people who were receiving Government benefits between 12 March 2020 and 13 April 2020. A second Economic Support Payment will be provided from 13 July 2020 to those receiving certain Government benefits on 10 July 2020.
- You won't get the Second Economic Support Payment if you get the Coronavirus Supplement.
- Most people receiving income support from Centrelink are eligible for the Economic Support Payment

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Who is eligible to get these payments- JobKeeper Subsidy

- 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 per cent (of at least a month); or
 - their business has a turnover of \$1 billion or more and their turnover has fallen by more than 50 per cent (of at least a month); or
 - they are a not-for-profit enterprise and have their turnover has fallen by more than 15 per cent.
- Eligible employees are employees who:
 - are currently employed by the eligible employer (including those stood down or re-hired)
 - were employed by the employer at 1 March 2020
 - are full-time, part-time, or long-term casuals (a casual employed on a regular basis for longer than 12 months as at 1 March 2020)
 - are at least 16 years of age
 - are an Australian citizen, the holder of a permanent visa, a Protected Special Category Visa Holder, a non-protected Special Category Visa Holder who has been residing continually in Australia for 10 years or more, or a Special Category (Subclass 444) Visa Holder
 - are not in receipt of a JobKeeper Payment from another employer

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Who is eligible to get these payments- Special Benefit

- Special Benefit is paid at the same rate as JobSeeker (above) and has similar criteria about working. However, people who are studying full time are not eligible for Special Benefit.
- To get this you must be:
 - in severe financial hardship for reasons beyond your control
 - unable to earn enough to support yourself and your family
 - unable to get another income support payment.
- While the residence rules generally apply, there is an exemption which allows for temporary protection visa holders (and similar visa subclasses) and provisional partner visa holders (those have not had their permanent partner visas granted) to be granted the special benefit

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Who is eligible to get these payments- SSRS Payments

- You may be eligible to receive SRSS if you are:
 - unlawful and living in the Australian community
 - an illegal maritime arrival (IMA) and have lodged a valid Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) or Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) application
 - a non-IMA and have lodged a valid protection visa application
 - a holder of a Bridging Visa E (BVE)
 - facing significant barriers that are impacting on your ability to resolve your immigration status
 - recently released from immigration detention.

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The people left behind

- **Casual workers** who were working for their employers for less than 12 months and workers who hold **Temporary Visas and Bridging Visas** are not eligible for JobKeeper Subsidies to keep their jobs
- Most **temporary visa holders** and **bridging visa holders** are not entitled to **any** income support payments: these include our most prized **skilled workers** that hold temporary skill shortage visas
- The special benefit has much more stringent requirements than, for example, JobSeeker and thus can be very difficult to obtain.
- SSRS payments are restricted to 90% of the (now former) NewStart Allowance and have extremely strict eligibility criteria. For example, if you have work rights on your visa then you are generally not eligible even if a pandemic causes you to lose your job, or if there is a family member (who could be a sister or aged mother) who is working

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What other support is available:

- International students
 - Change of limit to working conditions;
 - early release of super;
 - universities offering financial support;
- All temporary visa holders including student visa holders;
Limited financial support from Red Cross from the Red Cross Safety Net Support for essentials like food/medicine
- You may be eligible for Red Cross Safety Net Support if you:
 - are in Australia on a temporary basis
 - are in urgent financial hardship
 - cannot access Centrelink, Medicare or similar services
 - have no income, savings or other financial support (including from family overseas).

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HIV/AIDS Legal Centre

Who We Are

- The HIV/AIDS Legal Centre (HALC) is a not-for-profit, specialist community legal centre. We are funded to provide free and comprehensive legal assistance to financially disadvantaged people in NSW with HIV or Hepatitis-related legal matters. HALC delivers services to people from vulnerable social and cultural backgrounds, including people from the LGBTQI community, people suffering from mental illness, sex workers, injecting drug users and culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

What We Do

- HALC is the only full time funded HIV/AIDS specialist legal centre in Australia. HALC provides direct legal assistance to clients in a wide range of legal practice areas. We rely on government funding to act for clients who are facing financial hardship or are particularly vulnerable.

Our Team

- Our team currently consists of four permanent **full** time solicitors and migration agents, who manage all client matters. We also have a number of volunteers including law students and solicitors dedicated to providing legal assistance to clients. Volu

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Questions and Contact Info

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