

COVID-19 Information Sheet - New South Wales (NSW)

Disclaimer: The information below should not be considered an exhaustive list and service delivery may change. Please contact organisations and services directly for the most up to date information and to enquire further about eligibility. Red Cross does not determine eligibility for the third party services listed.

NSW Government Updates

- The NSW government is updating lockdown areas on an ongoing basis, and the latest updates can be [found here](#). For a full list of rules, including essential work, mask wearing, and [travel](#), visit the [COVID-19 rules](#) page of the NSW government website.
- Information regarding the roadmap out of lockdown, [can be found here](#).
- Additionally, the [NSW Government Department of Health COVID-19 website](#), provides information on:
 - [COVID-19 clinics](#) and [testing sites](#) throughout Sydney and New South Wales.
 - A list of [Exposure sites and case locations](#).
 - A [vaccine eligibility checker](#), including your nearest vaccine site.
 - COVID-19 guidelines and [factsheets](#).
 - Where to get [Free legal advice](#) in NSW.
 - Support to pay [household energy bills](#).
- For information on the COVID-19 vaccination rollout in NSW, visit the [NSW Health government website](#). The vaccine will be free to everyone. Use [this online tool](#) to check when you will be eligible for an appointment.
- The [Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment](#) and [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) is available to people in NSW on temporary visas who have a visa with work rights, and also meet with other criteria including:
 - You have coronavirus (COVID-19)
 - You have been in close contact with a person who has COVID-19
 - You care for a child, 16 years or under, who has COVID-19
 - You care for a child, 16 years or under, who's been in close contact with a person who has COVID-19
 - You are caring for someone who has COVID-19
 - You are unable to go to work and earn an income
 - You have no appropriate leave entitlements, including pandemic sick leave, personal leave or leave to care for another person
- Home Affairs has updated the [COVID-19 and the Border / Staying in Australia webpage](#) with more detailed information for people with temporary visas:
 - [Visitor visa or Electronic Travel Authority \(ETA\)](#)
 - [Student and Temporary Graduate Visa](#)
 - Temporary Skill Shortage ([subclass 482](#)) or Temporary Work (Skilled) ([subclass 457](#))
 - [Working Holiday](#) Maker visa
 - [Seasonal Worker](#)
 - [Special Category](#) Visa
 - [Bridging Visa](#)
 - [Regional Visa](#)

- [My visa has expired](#)

From September 2020, concessions have been made for certain visa holders impacted by the pandemic. These concessions help if you have been disadvantaged by border closures, business restrictions or the economic downturn. If you hold, or held, a visa listed below during the COVID-19 concession period you may be eligible:

- [Skilled Regional \(Subclass 887\) visa](#)
- [Business Innovation and Investment \(Permanent\)\(Subclass 888\) visa](#)
- [Business Innovation and Investment \(Provisional\)\(Subclass 188\) visa](#)
- [Safe Haven Enterprise \(Subclass 790\) visa](#)
- [Temporary Graduate \(Subclass 485\) visa](#)

For information on the [Temporary Activity Visa \(subclass 408\)](#) visit the Home Affairs website.

How to stay COVID safe

- With the relaxing of restrictions, and opening of state and some international borders, Australian governments are encouraging everyone to remain COVID safe.

Physical distancing

- When and where possible, remain 1.5 metres away from other people.
- Avoid physical greetings such as handshaking, hugs and kisses.
- Take extra care if you are using [public transport](#).
- Avoid crowds and large public gatherings.
- Wear a mask when in public.

Workplaces & schools

- Follow the recommended government [health and hygiene advice](#).
- Avoid non-essential face-to-face meetings.
- Provide alcohol-based hand rub for all staff.
- Eat lunch at your desk or outside rather than in the lunchroom.
- Regularly clean and disinfect surfaces that many people touch
- Open windows or adjust air conditioning for more ventilation
- Stay at home if you are feeling unwell.

Employment & Work Rights

- **Temporary relaxation of working hours for student visa holders**

Due to exceptional circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to ensure the supply of critical services, the [Department of Home Affairs and Australian Border Force](#) will take a flexible approach to student visa holders working beyond their usual work limitations, but only in the sectors below.

You can work more than 40 hours a fortnight if you are:

- by an aged care Approved Provider or Commonwealth-funded aged care service provider with a RACS ID or a NAPS ID, before 8 September 2020
- by a registered National Disability Insurance Scheme provider before 23 April 2020

- enrolled in a health care related course and you are supporting the health effort against COVID-19, as directed by health officials
 - in the agriculture sector
 - in the tourism and hospitality sector
 - in a supermarket, or associated distribution facility, located in an area impacted by COVID-19 lockdown restrictions for the duration of the lockdown.
- From 01 May 2021, if you relocate to take up ongoing work, including an apprenticeship, for more than 20 hours a week for more than six months, you may be eligible to receive up to:
 - \$3,000 if you relocate to a capital city*
 - \$6,000 if you relocate to a regional area
 - An extra \$3,000 if you relocate with a dependent.

For more information on Relocation Assistance, visit the Australian Government's Department of Education, Skills & Employment [website here](#).

All workers in Australia have the same rights and protections at work, regardless of citizenship or visa status. Your employer must comply with Australian workplace and immigration laws, including their obligation to:

- Pay you the right pay rate for all time worked
- Provide a safe workplace.
- For information on [working](#) in Australia visit the [Home Affairs website](#).

The [Fair Work Ombudsman](#) provides education, assistance, advice and guidance to employers and employees, and can inquire into and investigate breaches of the Fair Work Act.

[Community Legal Centres NSW](#) are independent non-government organisations that provide free legal services to people and communities at times when that help is needed most, and particularly to people facing economic hardship and discrimination.

Food Support and/or Emergency Relief

- [AskIzzy](#) is a national database with links to supports including housing, food and clothing, health services, financial support, family violence assistance, and much more.
- The National Debt Helpline provides free financial advice, and [the NDH website](#) has information on topics such as rent, utilities and emergency financial assistance. The NDH is open Monday to Friday from 9:30am – 4:30pm, on 1800 007 007.
- **[Foodbank Emergency Relief packages](#)** are available for people who have been directed to self-isolate, and who:
 - cannot, or are genuinely struggling to afford food and groceries
 - have no family or friends able to help them with shopping, and no access to delivery
- **[Rapid Relief Team \(RRT\) Food Boxes](#)** are available for people who are in self-quarantine due to their vulnerability and who:
 - have lost income or their job, or are on a low income
 - have little or no support from friends or relatives
 - are struggling with meeting their bills

If you, or someone you know is in need, please call 1300 858 208.

Turbans 4 Australia

Food hampers and hot meals available in Liverpool & Parramatta, visit the website for more information and opening times.

Muslim Women Australia

In partnership with Penny Appeal, Human Appeal, and other organisations, MWA are providing food packages and cooked food for individuals and families. Call MWA on 02 9750 6916.

Nagle Centre Family Care & Support Service operated by St Vincent de Paul Society has a community kitchen open for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Check the link for up to date information.

Auburn Diversity Services

Support with household bills, for people living in Auburn, Lidcombe, Berilla and Regions Park 108 Silverwater Road, Auburn, phone: 02 8737 5500 / Email: info@adsi.org.au
ER referral form on website: www.adsi.org.au/services/emergency-relief

Christian Community Aid Service

12 Lakeside Road Eastwood, phone: 02 9858 3222
Email: administration@ccas.org.au
Must phone for an assessment.

Parramatta Community Food Care

18 Barney Street, North Parramatta, phone: 9630 3892
Centrelink card and ID proof. Service provides discounted food.
Service is open on Thursday - 6:00 pm- 8:00pm and Friday 10:30 am- 1:00 pm.

Islamic Women's Welfare Association

Emergency Food Relief each Monday and Thursday at 1:00pm, 181 Haldon St, Lakemba.

Golden Manna

Food hampers and hot meals available in Sadlier & Fairfield, visit the [Facebook page](#) or phone (02) 8103 3074 for more information and opening times.

Parramatta Mission Meals Plus Partnership

Address: 119 Macquarie St, Parramatta, phone: (02) 9891 2277
Meals Plus is open for breakfast and lunch M-F.
Breakfast: 8.00am-9.00am, lunch: 11.30am-1.00pm

St Vincent De Paul

72 Harris Street Harris Park, phone: 1800 606 724 (call to make an appointment)
Western Sydney Community Centre
Hania, Tuesday/Thursday/Friday at 2:00 pm at 98 Auburn Road, Auburn, phone: 9649 2063

The Parks Community Network Inc.

Assisting communities in SW Sydney to relieve poverty, distress, suffering, destitution, misfortune, and loneliness. Ph: 9609 7400 for information on food relief, NILS, and vouchers.

Salvation Army Auburn

166-170 South Parade Auburn, phone: 9646 3767

Make appointment for food vouchers etc.

The Hills Community Aid and Information Service

Please leave a message at (02) 9639 8620 or email enq@hca.org.au and staff member will call back.

Salvation Army Emergency Relief

St Vincent De Paul Bankstown – 9796 1176 / 1300 371 288 – phone for assessment

Anglicare

02 8774 7467 / 02 8624 8600 – Food Pantry. Phone for Assessment

ADRA

9829 6701 – Food Hampers. Phone to book.

South West Multicultural & Community Centre

Ph: 02 9603 2500

\$10/food hampers

Karma Kitchen (Hindu Council Benevolent Fund) – 0411 548 411 / 0412 399 164

Emergency Care packs: Fresh food parcel for people impacted by COVID-19

Western Sydney MRC

Food vouchers and brokerage services. Please call us on 8778 1200 to make an appointment.

Western Sydney Community Centre

02 9649 2063 – Fresh Food Pantry

Mohboba's Promise (Cumberland Area)

02 9887 1665 – phone for Assessment

Food support for Afghan Women and Children

C3 Church Fairfield

0425 352 199 on Monday, 0413 420 085 on Tuesday to Thursday

Food Hampers, call for Phone Assessment

Core Community Services Cabramatta

02 8707 0600 – phone assessment required for food vouchers

Exodus Foundation

02 8717 1531 – Hot/Frozen Take-away Meals

Food for Life, Salvation Army, Busby

0435 659 175

Heckenberg Community Connect

02 9607 0077

\$7.00 family meals that you cook yourself. Must RING BEFORE.

Islamic Women's Association

02 8764 6425 – phone for assessment.

St Vincent De Paul Society Care and Support Centre (Wagga Wagga)

207 Edward St, Wagga Wagga, phone 02 6921 2381

Rent and Utilities

- The temporary tenancy moratorium introduced to restrict when landlords could evict tenants due to rental arrears as a result of COVID-19 ended on 26 March 2021. From 27 March 2021, a six-month transitional period has begun. For more details on renting in NSW visit the [Fair Trading website](#). The Tenants Union of NSW has a [Renters Guide to COVID-19](#) providing information on rights of renters, with COVID-19 updates.
- [Western Sydney Tenants Union](#) – (02) 8833 0933. Support only available via telephone.

[Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW](#) has more information about customer assistance / hardship programs, and range of useful resources you may be eligible for if you are facing financial difficulties.

[Energy Accounts Payment Assistance \(EAPA\)](#)

- EAPA is a government scheme to help people who are having trouble paying their home electricity and/or gas bill because of a crisis or emergency. The vouchers are distributed to customers via a range of community welfare organisations.
- Where to find EAPA: list of [NSW Government EAPA distributors](#)
- **Before you seek assistance**
 - If you are having trouble paying your bill, speak to your energy company first. If you are unable to make arrangements with your supplier, contact a local community agency that distributes EAPA vouchers to make an appointment.
 - If you cannot get an appointment right away, let your supplier know you made an appointment for EAPA assessment. *Your supplier is not allowed to disconnect you if they know you have an appointment booked for an EAPA assessment.*

[Water Payment Assistance Scheme \(PAS\) Credits](#)

This scheme assists people experiencing financial hardship by providing credit to an account. It can help if you are having difficulty paying your Hunter Water, Sydney Water or Shoalhaven water bill.

- **Before you seek assistance**
 - If you are having trouble paying your bill you should speak to your water company first. Water suppliers may be able to suggest a payment scheme or arrangement to assist you manage your bills (see [customer assistance programs](#)).
- **Where can you get water credits?**

Many community welfare organisations offer PAS. These include:

 - St Vincent de Paul Society
 - The Salvation Army
 - Anglicare
 - The Smith Family
- **Who can get water credits?**

Anyone who is in financial hardship can apply for PAS assistance.

Holroyd Community Aid Incorporated

17A Miller street, Merrylands, NSW.

Ph: 9637 7391

Following an assessment, may be able to support partial coverage of gas/electricity bill. Evidence of financial hardship is required.

Cumberland Multicultural Community Centre

8 Factory St Granville, NSW. Ph: 9637 7600

May be able to provide support with electricity bill.

Assessment required.

Housing Support / Homelessness

- The temporary tenancy moratorium introduced to restrict when landlords could evict tenants due to rental arrears because of COVID-19 ended on 26 March 2021. From 27 March 2021, a six-month transitional period has begun. For more details on renting in NSW visit the [Fair Trading website](#). The Tenants Union of NSW has a [Renters Guide to COVID-19](#) providing information on rights of renters, with COVID-19 updates.

What are the rules during the transitional period?

A six-month transitional period means COVID-19 impacted tenants who accrued rent arrears between 15 April 2020 and 26 March 2021 (the moratorium period) will not be subject to the standard tenancy eviction rules for those arrears.

- Tenants and landlords will be assisted by Fair Trading to negotiate repayment plans for arrears accrued during the moratorium period.
- Landlords will only be able to evict these tenants for these arrears if they have first attempted in good faith to negotiate a repayment plan. It also has to be fair and reasonable to evict.
- If a landlord and tenant have agreed to a repayment plan, the tenant cannot be evicted unless they have failed to meet agreed repayments on two consecutive occasions.
- Tenants and landlords will continue to be able to apply to NCAT to terminate tenancy agreements on the basis of hardship.
- Termination proceedings already started during the moratorium period will continue under the rules in place during that time.

For more information on the scheme visit the [Fair Trading NSW website](#).

Housing support services in NSW.

- [St Vincent de Paul NSW](#) - Assistance Line for Accommodation: 13 18 12
- [Linked 2 Home](#) 1800 152 152. Homeless or at risk of homeless. Temporary accommodation may be available for those who are high risk. Referral made over the phone.
- [Barnardos](#): Transitional accommodation for families with children and young pregnant women - 16 to 24 years Phone: 02 8752 0300
- [Elsie Women's Refuge](#) (Wagga Wagga)
- [Micah House](#) (Wagga Wagga) – 53 Gurwood Street, Ph: (02) 6921 7337

- **Men2Home:** Parramatta Mission, in partnership with Mission Australia and SVDP operate the Western Sydney Single Men's Homeless program. Ph: 0419 696 673 / 8880 8234.
- **Mission Australia:** Western Sydney Homelessness Outreach Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Service (HOPARRS) supports people over the age of 21 years, and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Phone 1800 384 331.
- **Wesley Community Services:** Homelessness support for couples with children or singles with children who are Australian Citizens or permanent residents.
- **Hunter Homeless Connect** has local services in Newcastle and supports available for different categories i.e. housing, food, NILS and other helpful resources.

Health and Medical Care

- The National Coronavirus Health Information Line 1800 020 080 is for general advice or if you have symptoms. If you require translating or interpreting services, call 131 450.
- COVID19 – [what if I don't have Medicare?](#)
 - Most people that are not eligible for Medicare will have health or travel insurance. For those that do not have adequate insurance coverage, NSW Health will waive these costs. This includes the waiving of payment and debt recovery procedures for ambulance transfers of people suspected to have COVID-19 infection.
- People seeking asylum who are ineligible for Medicare can have their fees waived for some public health services in NSW. [Recent updates](#) clarify that these waivers apply to people at all stages of their asylum process, including those on a removal pathway. The services are:
 - Emergency care for acute medical and surgical conditions, including admission
 - Elective surgery for conditions listed as Clinical Priority Categories 1 and 2. For more information [click here](#).
 - Ambulatory and outpatient care required to maintain health status of asylum seekers with acute and chronic health conditions
 - Maternity services, including antenatal and postnatal care
 - Mental Health services (inpatient and community based)
 - Ambulance transport for emergencies
 - NSW Health Pathology services
 - Interpreting services
- The [Refugee Health Guide](#) includes health programs staffed by refugee nurses, doctors and other specialists that operate nationally, providing specialised mental and primary health care and service coordination to refugees and people seeking asylum. These services are familiar with working with people on uncertain immigration pathways and fluctuating Medicare status. Information on referral pathways in New South Wales are found [here](#).
- **Reciprocal Health Care Agreements:** Agreements with 11 countries that cover the cost of medically necessary care when Australians visit certain countries and visitors from these countries visit Australia. Those visiting Australia from the following countries may be eligible for medical care under Medicare while in Australia, information for each country is available [here](#).

- [Temporary Visa Categories Covered by Ministerial Orders \(eligible for Medicare\)](#)
- To support older people from culturally diverse backgrounds, the Australian Department of Health has funded the Multilingual Older Persons COVID-19 Support Line. The support line will run for six months from 10 February 2021 until 31 July 2021 will be offered in the following six languages – Arabic, Cantonese, Mandarin, Greek, Italian & Vietnamese. For more information visit the [PICAC Alliance website](#).
- For information on the COVID-19 vaccination rollout in NSW, visit the [NSW Health government website](#). The vaccine will be free to everyone. Use [this online tool](#) to check when you will be eligible for an appointment.

Information for the LGBTQI+ community

- Information on health and counselling services, social groups, legal support, multicultural specific services, and other services can be found on this [national LGBTQI+ directory](#).

Information for International Students

- Visit the [Study NSW International Student Welfare Services Hub](#) for the latest information about the support services that are available to international students.
- **University of New South Wales:** COVID-19 statement and [student information](#) is available on its website. 常见问题答疑- 新型冠状病毒肺炎, also available in [Mandarin](#).
- **Western Sydney University** is implementing a staged return to campus. Details about the plan is available on their [website](#).
- **University of Wollongong** website has updated information on its [return to campus](#) plan and other general [COVID-19 information](#).
- **University of Sydney** website has [university specific information](#) and updates regarding COVID-19, and links to [support services for students](#).
- **The University of Newcastle** provides general COVID-19 [updates on their website](#), and its [Student Hardship Fund](#) is available students. Needing extra support.
- **Charles Sturt University** has information regarding [returning to campus](#) and support.
- **University of Technology Sydney (UTS)** has general campus and support information [available on its website](#).
- **University of New England** is implementing a [phased return to campus](#) in 2021, and has other [general COVID-19 information](#) available.

- **Southern Cross University [website](#)** has updated information about student support and return to campus in 2021. If you need to contact the University because your situation is affected by the COVID-19 outbreak please use this dedicated email: SCUAssist@scu.edu.au.

Information for New Zealanders living in Australia

New Zealand citizens in Australia on a Special Category Visa (SCV) may be able to access a range of payments, depending on their circumstances.

- Those who came to Australia prior to 26 February 2001 generally have protected status and have the same access to all Australian payments as permanent residents and Australian citizens, where eligible, including JobSeeker Payment.
 - New Zealanders who came to Australia after 26 February 2001 and have non-protected status can access family payments, such as FTB, paid parental leave payments and childcare subsidy, where eligible. If they have been continuously living in Australia for at least 10 years since February 2001, they can also access JobSeeker Payment or Youth Allowance for a one-off period of up to six months.
 - New Zealanders on an SCV may be eligible for the JobKeeper Payment if they meet the qualifying criteria, <https://treasury.gov.au/coronavirus/jobkeeper>.
 - New Zealand citizens may also be able to claim the Age Pension or, in limited circumstances, Disability Support Pension or Carer Payment, under the Social Security Agreement between Australia and New Zealand.
- For further general information:
<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/subjects/payments-visa-holders>
 - Individuals needing specific advice on their circumstances should contact Services Australia:
<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/contact-us>

Additional Information for People Seeking Asylum and Refugees

- People seeking asylum who are ineligible for **Medicare** can have their fees waived for some public health services in NSW. [Recent updates](#) clarify that these waivers apply to people at all stages of their asylum process, including those on a removal pathway. The services are:
 - Emergency care for acute medical and surgical conditions, including admission
 - Elective surgery for conditions listed as Clinical Priority Categories 1 and 2. For more information [click here](#).
 - Ambulatory and outpatient care required to maintain health status of asylum seekers with acute and chronic health conditions
 - Maternity services, including antenatal and postnatal care
 - Mental Health services (inpatient and community based)
 - Ambulance transport for emergencies
 - NSW Health Pathology services
 - Interpreting services
- If you have a Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) or Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV), you are eligible to apply for the [Special Benefit payment](#). Click the link for more information.

- [Status Resolution Support Services \(SRSS\)](#)
 - The SRSS program supports people who are awaiting a government decision on a visa application, including people seeking asylum. It provides temporary support for people facing significant barriers who are unable to support themselves.
 - In New South Wales, the SRSS Program is delivered by:
 - [Life Without Barriers](#) Ph 02 9508 4100 (Rockdale) / 02 8830 7601 or 02 8830 7602 (Parramatta) / info@lwb.org.au
 - [Settlement Services International](#). Contact information is [here](#).

- [Humanitarian Settlement Program \(HSP\)](#)
 - The HSP is a national program funded by the Australian Government to help refugees to establish themselves when they first arrive in Australia.
 - People granted the following visas are eligible to access the HSP on arrival:
 - Refugee (subclass 200, 201, 203 and 204) visa
 - Global Special Humanitarian (subclass 202) visa
 - Other visa holders are also eligible to access the HSP, but only to receive [Specialised and Intensive Services \(SIS\)](#). These include:
 - Protection (subclass 866)
 - Temporary Protection (subclass 785), Temporary Humanitarian Stay (subclass 449), Temporary Humanitarian Concern (subclass 786) and Safe Haven Enterprise (subclass 790).
 - SIS is a component of the Humanitarian Settlement Program (HSP) available to humanitarian entrants and other eligible visa holders who have complex needs:
 - [HSP Service Provider Locations](#)