

Resource Information – International Students in the Context of COVID-19

Disclaimer: This document has been developed by Australian Red Cross and is a general guidance document only and should not be considered a definitive, in-depth assessment. Eligibility for assistance is determined by appropriate authorities.

IMPORTANT: The below is not a comprehensive listing, please check information in your specific state/territory and with your university/institution.

<p>International Students (subclass 500) Visa: Home Affairs updated Guidance for International Students <i>Includes translated links at top of page in a range of languages</i> General: Home Affairs COVID-19 Updates <i>includes drop down box to translate information into a range of languages</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study Australia website - COVID-19 International Student Information (website includes a drop down box (top right) to translate pages into a range of languages) and the Department of Education, Skills and Employment (DESE) • Advice only (no financial assistance) - International students hotline (1300 981 621) / international.students@dese.gov.au <p style="text-align: center;">Working</p> <p>(Information below is from Home Affairs website):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certain student visa holders are temporarily permitted to work more than 40 hours per fortnight to support the supply of essential goods and services for Australians if they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ employed in the health sector, enrolled in a health related course (such as nursing or medicine) and are directed by a health official to assist in the effort against COVID-19 ○ employed by registered supermarkets (this temporary measure will cease on 1 May 2020 for supermarkets) ○ employed in aged care by an Approved Provider or Commonwealth-funded aged care service provider ○ employed by a registered National Disability Insurance Scheme provider. ○ See Temporary relaxation of working hours for student visa holders. <p style="text-align: center;">Accessing Superannuation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary residents may be able to access up to \$10,000 of their superannuation in this financial year (until 30 June 2020) to assist in supporting themselves through the coronavirus crisis. More information is available on the ATO website here. • The Australian government announced on 4 April that international students who have been in Australia longer than 12 months who find themselves in financial hardship will be able to access their Australian superannuation. Students will need to use MyGov for this process. <p style="text-align: center;">Housing/Renting Queries</p> <p>The links below are specifically focused on international students.</p>
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- [International students affected by the coronavirus travel ban](#) (VIC)
- [Information for international students](#) (Tenants Queensland)
- [Information for international students affected by the Coronavirus travel ban](#) (SA)
- [Overseas Students affected by the Coronavirus travel ban](#) (TAS)
- [Fair Trading](#) has information *on renting and property in context of coronavirus, including for international students*

For more general information on renting support, please also check the updates on COVID-19 at the webpages below:

- [New South Wales](#) – Tenants Union of NSW
- [Australian Capital Territory](#) – Tenancy Advice Service ACT
- [Northern Territory](#) – Tenants Advice Service
- [Queensland](#) – Tenants Queensland /
- QLD Government [COVID-19 Residential Rental Hub](#) - A one-stop shop for information about renting during COVID-19. Information hotline 1800497161 – Monday to Friday (8am to 8pm) and from 9am-5pm Saturday and Sunday and texting (SMS) "Hi" to 0480 000 782.
- [South Australia](#) – Tenants information and Advisory Service
- [Tasmania](#) – Tenants Union of Tasmania
- [Victoria](#) – Tenants Victoria
- [Western Australia](#) – Tenancy WA

Financial Counselling

- Free Financial Counselling is available via the [National Debt Helpline](#). More information is available on the website or call 1800 007 007

Specific State/Territory Announcements

South Australia:

On 21 April 2020 the [SA State Government](#) announced that it will provide further funding, on top of the funds made available by the University of Adelaide, Flinders University and the University of South Australia. Each university will distribute funds to international students both currently enrolled or studying in a pathway course, and suffering hardship. The **International Student Support Package** includes:

- \$10 million fund for university students significantly impacted by COVID-19 restrictions at the University of Adelaide, Flinders University and University of South Australia to distribute to their pathway and international students.
- A \$500 emergency cash grant to other international students significantly impacted by the restrictions, currently enrolled in a course, living in South Australia and who meet the criteria
- And a one-off \$200 assistance payment per student living with South Australian families provided to homestay families.
- **Applications for one-off grants to international students are now open.** For further information, visit www.studyadelaide.com or apply directly [here](#).

Victoria:

- On 29 April, the Victorian Government announced it would provide [Emergency Support for Victoria's International Students](#) by establishing a \$45 million **International Student Emergency Relief Fund**.
- The fund provides one-off payments of up to \$1100 to students in need while expanding emergency provisions for those experiencing exceptional circumstances.
- The payments will require co-contributions from university hardship funds, build on existing Victorian Government support provided to international students through the Study Melbourne Student Centre such as free legal aid and mental health services.
- **Applications for the International Student Emergency Relief Fund are now open.** [Find out how to apply](#)
- **F&Q about the fund for:** [University and TAFE students](#) and [Private providers students](#)

- [Study Melbourne](#) has created a series of information, [F&Q](#), links and resources aimed at supporting international students during COVID-19. They also have social work services who may be able to assist with material aid, food vouchers and rent. Contact: 1800 056 449.

- More than 150,000 international students currently living in Victoria are also eligible for the Victorian Government's [rent relief program](#), including subsidies of up to \$2,000, and those legally allowed to work in Victoria are eligible for the Working for Victoria initiative, which helps people who have lost their jobs to find new employment.

- [Consumer Affairs Victoria](#) includes information for students affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) travel ban and are unable to travel to Victoria and need to cancel their rental accommodation before moving in, or change the date of moving in. includes [renting information - Simplified Chinese](#), [renting information - Traditional Chinese](#).

Queensland:

- As announced by [Study Queensland on 19 May](#), the QLD Government has boosted its state-wide international education assistance and recovery package to \$15 million. As part of this, an additional \$10 million will now be made available to support international students experiencing severe financial hardship as a result of COVID-19. Currently, the Queensland Government is working on a process to distribute additional funding to Queensland-based universities and TAFE Queensland to top-up their bursaries and student support services and one-off payments to private VET and ELICOS students.
 - **University and TAFE Queensland students** should contact their institution student support team which will undertake a process to assess eligibility for financial support.

[TAFE Queensland](#) / [Australian Catholic University](#) / [Bond University](#) / [Central Queensland University](#) / [Federation University](#) / [Griffith University](#) / [James Cook University](#) / [Queensland University of Technology](#) / [Southern Cross University](#) / [Torrens University](#) / [University of Queensland](#) / [University of Southern Queensland](#) / [University of the Sunshine Coast](#)
 - **International students at private education and training providers**
 - May be eligible for a one-off \$500 payment. It could take up to 2 weeks to receive this in your bank account.
 - Applications via online portal which will be open soon. The portal will remain open until all allocated funding is exhausted.
 - Follow the [Study Queensland Facebook page](#) to know when the portal is open and to keep up to date with announcements
 - [Eligibility information](#)
 - In the meantime, international students needing immediate crisis support should reach out to their education and training provider or the [Queensland Student Hub network](#).
- The [Queensland government has allocated \\$2.2 million to helping international students](#). The package covers access to professional support counsellors, isolation care-packs, pre-prepared meals and other living expense payments to students. Students will be able to connect with professional support counsellors through the Online Student Hub – a digital platform that will link caseworkers with students to guide them through mental health, visa, crisis accommodation and other essential needs. Multicultural Australia will provide the online counselling resources. Students in demonstrated financial hardship may also be referred to GIVIT for emergency assistance.

- [Study Queensland](#) has updates and resources for international students on COVID19 and operates a 24/7 hotline. Contact 1 800 QSTUDY (1800 778 839) for advice.

Australian Capital Territory

- On 28 April 2020, the ACT Government announced **Temporary visa holders and international students** affected by COVID-19 who are ineligible for Commonwealth assistance programs, will be able to access support through a [\\$450,000 ACT Government support package](#).
 - Under the new funding package, the RASH Coordination Committee – made up of groups working with asylum seekers including Companion House – will receive \$140,000 to provide urgent support to asylum seekers living in Canberra.
 - The Australian Red Cross will also see an extension to their existing emergency support program, receiving \$160,000 to assist other temporary visa holders including people on temporary work visas and safe haven enterprise visas.
 - The Red Cross will also work with tertiary institutions to provide \$150,000 in ACT Government support to international students who have been impacted by COVID-19 and fallen onto financial hardship.
 - More information: Temporary visa holders and international students can contact 02 6234 7695 or via email: hspcanberra@redcross.org.au.

New South Wales

- Visit the [Study NSW International Student Welfare Services Hub](#) for the latest information about the support services that are available to international students.
- [NSW Government supporting international students through COVID-19](#): The NSW Government announced on 15 May 2020, that it will fund temporary crisis accommodation for stranded international students as part of a \$20 million package. The package includes a temporary housing scheme, targeted at students in genuine need and delivered through approved student accommodation or homestay providers. It also provides increased support via the International Legal Service NSW, making available 50,000 free subscriptions to the multilingual My Legal Mate student app. A new 24/7 international student support service, through the NSW Government COVID-19 hotline (13 77 88), will offer free advice and information about other measures, including the moratorium on rental evictions and medical, mental health, legal and emergency support. **More information:** Contact the NSW Government COVID-19 hotline (13 77 88)

Tasmania:

- [Consumer, Building and Occupation Services](#) has information for international students
- On 22 April, the Tasmanian government announced up to \$3million to assist temporary visa holders affected by COVID-19, including:
- immediate extension of eligibility for [Pandemic Isolation Assistance Grants](#), if they can demonstrate genuine financial hardship as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. This will provide an immediate payment of \$250 per individual or up to \$1000 per family
- for those whose country is safe to return to, assist with travel advice, and if necessary due to genuine financial hardship we will on a case by case basis assist with financial support to do so.
- To register your interest in support to return to your country of origin, call the public health hotline on 1800 671 738 by 23 May 2020

Western Australia:

- **Study Perth** established the [StudyPerth Crisis Relief \(SPCR\)](#). SPCR is a program established to address the acute needs of international students affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions. The SPCR is accessible, via application, to provide support services to international students in acute need with regard to:
 - Food
 - Shelter
 - Rights and Support
 - Health and Wellbeing
- Study Perth also has specific [COVID-19 Information for Students](#)
- The **Multicultural Services Centre of Western Australia** has now extended support to temporary residents in Australia, including international students. Services include emergency relief, housing support, employment related assistance, health and well-being support and family and domestic violence services. More information is [here](#).
- The **WA Office of Multicultural Interests** also provides information to multicultural communities - www.omi.wa.gov.au
- The Department of Jobs, Tourism, Science and Innovation has provided the following information for students who may be having trouble paying their accommodation as a result of COVID-19 and loss of jobs:
 - Department of Communities: Crisis Care - Phone 1800 199 008 / Translating Service Phone 13 14 50

- Entrypoint Perth - a free assessment and referral service for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Western Australia <http://www.entrypointperth.com.au>

Northern Territory

- The Northern Territory Government has established the Worker and Wellbeing Fund Worker for people who have lost their jobs because of coronavirus (COVID-19) are not already receiving financial and/or wellbeing support, including Centrelink benefits. It includes support for [International Students and Visa Holders Emergency Relief](#).
- Red Cross have partnered with Melaleuca Refugee Centre to provide emergency relief for international students and visa holders and Territorians who have lost their job or their income has been reduced because of coronavirus (COVID-19) and are not eligible for other supports including Centrelink. Please contact Red Cross on +61 403 987 018 to access emergency relief and support.
- [StudyNT](#) has created care packages for international students who affected by COVID-19 and in self-isolation. To get in touch with StudyNT, you can fill out their online form [here](#).

Universities providing COVID-19 Support (non-exhaustive list)

South Australia:

- [Flinders University](#) has developed a [\\$12.5 million Flinders Student Support Package](#) to support assist students who are experiencing financial hardship as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, includes emergency support payments up to \$500, a new **Matthew Flinders Scholarship** program, with scholarships valued up to \$2,000, to support the continuation of the studies etc. Apply [here](#).
- **University of Adelaide** has announced a [Student Support Package](#), including academic support, well-being planning and emergency financial assistance for:
 - IT support for remote learning,
 - Accommodation for students in crisis, **and**
 - Food for students in crisis.
- **University of South Australia** has announced a [Student Hardship Fund](#) open to all students (including international students) currently enrolled for onshore study at UniSA, who are in financial crisis and struggling with the costs of living and studying as a result of COVID-19.

	<p>Students are asked to complete an online application through which they will provide evidence of their individual circumstances. Students can apply for the support for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Increased financial costs due to technology, equipment or other added requirements for studying off-campus and/or online,▪ Loss of employment,▪ Reduced hours of employment,▪ Inability to pay rent/board/mortgage,▪ Inability to pay utility bills,▪ Additional transport and accommodation expenses, including accommodation, food and incidentals required for medically advised self-isolation,▪ Medical expenses incurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic that can not be recovered through a personal health insurance policy. <p>Victoria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ RMIT University has announced a \$10 million support package for students. Students can apply for emergency financial grants and technology grants. While the former is for students who are affected by by job loss, housing insecurity or other financial matters associated with COVID-19, the latter is to help students with their IT equipment and internet needs to continue studying remotely.○ La Trobe University launched the COVID-19 Financial Assistance Program and is offering two grants:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Technology Bursary– Provision of a laptop and/or \$150 to support students who do not have access to computers or the internet at home▪ Crisis Support Bursary – One-off, \$3000 payment for individual students experiencing a significant financial crisis and housing insecurity.○ Swinburne University of Technology has established the Swinburne Student Emergency Fund for eligible, current local and international students. The Student Emergency Fund enables students that have been impacted by disasters such as bushfires, floods, droughts or a health pandemic to access financial support through a one-off grant of up to \$1,000. Students who are not eligible for Centrelink are prioritized.
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- **Monash University** has launched a \$15 million [Student Compassionate and Hardship](#) package to support vulnerable students during the COVID-19 crisis. The support is in two phases. In the first phase, emergency payment up to \$500 were given from April 7 to cover essential living expenses. The second phase started April 14 Monday, in which eligible students can get:
 - A payment of up to \$7000, or
 - A payment of up to \$5000 available to students who have incurred reasonable costs in China, Iran or Australia associated with the original inbound bans on travel from these countries.
 - The total amount a student can get is \$7,500 dollars.
- **Deakin University** has set up a [COVID-19 Financial Assistance Scheme](#) and announced additional funding of up to \$25 million to support international students for the next six months, case-managed, individual approach to assist.
- **Victoria University** has established different kinds of grants and financial [support package](#) to assist students in distress due to COVID-19.
 - **Emergency financial grant** for students impacted by self-isolation/quarantine requirements or job losses. This grant is for essential living or study expenses related to food, healthcare, textbooks and materials (non-tech) for study up to the value of \$100.
 - **Technology grant** to support students in pursuing studies that have transitioned to digital platforms (e.g. voucher to support the purchase of a wifi dongle up to the value of \$100).
 - **Crisis housing support** for students who have encountered hardship as a result of the loss of paid employment. Rental assistance grants up to the value of \$500.
 - It offers support even if the sponsor of an international student is facing hardship due to the **situation**.
- **University of Melbourne** has two grants to support students affected by COVID Support and funding for students: the [COVID Emergency Support Fund](#) and [COVID-19 Student Support Grants](#)
- **Australian Catholic University** - ACU offers short-term student loans to students who are in urgent need of financial assistance, through the [Student Loan Scheme](#)

Western Australia:

- **University of Western Australia** has also developed a [financial hardship grant](#), providing immediate assistance to students who demonstrate significant financial hardship. This is in addition to arranging emergency food assistance with the support of Foodbank Australia and support to find housing.
- **Curtin University** is offering an \$8 million worth of assistance package to its students. Housing support and financial bursary is available for students who are facing difficulties at the moment. It is a need-based scholarship, available to domestic and international students, enrolled in a minimum 25 credit points in semester 1 of 2020.
- **Edith Cowan University** has announced various support mechanisms for students, including a reduction of the Student Services and Amenities Fee. It has also established a Support Grant of \$2,000 for eligible students. University's Student Guild is providing \$50 grocery e-vouchers also.
- **Murdoch University** has a \$2 million assistance fund for students severely affected financially by the coronavirus and a bursary worth \$25 a week to reduce food bills for international students. The university has announced a student assistance fund aiming to safeguard physical and mental health and well being of the students. It has a study support fund for part-time students amounting \$500 each and, and full time students can apply for up to \$1,000. For those students facing more struggle, additional financial support is also available, which will be decided on a case by case basis.
- **Southern Cross University** has established an [Emergency Relief Fund](#) to support students who are experiencing financial distress because of COVID-19. Eligible students may apply for payments of up to \$500. Repeat applications are permitted no less than fortnightly in exceptional circumstances, with a total limit of \$1,500 paid to qualifying individuals. Email SCUassist@scu.edu.au for direction and support with the application process. (Southern Cross University has three campuses located at the Gold Coast, Coffs Harbour and Lismore, with branch campuses in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth).

New South Wales:

- **University of New South Wales** has announced various types of support to students, including emergency e-vouchers up to \$200 for urgent needs and emergency grant up to [\\$2,000](#) to students who are facing multiple issues associated with COVID-19.
- **Western Sydney University** is giving current international students (who are onshore in Australia) a 10 per cent fee reduction, as well as offering other support measures. The university offers a range of [financial assistance](#) to assist students with education-related

costs and basic living expenses. This is in addition to the one-off grocery voucher and free nutritious meals available on a regular basis.

- **University of Wollongong** is offering a [living expense grant](#) up to \$1,500 and internet boost/software purchase loan. Students' applications will be assessed case by case basis.
- **University of Sydney** has [financial assistance for international students due to Covid-19 travel restrictions](#). The university website says financial assistance for international students is currently closed, but [general bursaries](#) are available. This can be used to cover essential living and study expenses.
- **The University of Newcastle** has announced a \$1 million worth [student hardship fund](#), to support students to pay for their meals, bills and accommodation. Students can also access a range of additional support services [here](#).
- **Charles Sturt University** is offering a [COVID-19 Student Support Grant](#) of up to \$500 as a one-time payment to students who have been impacted due to COVID-19. Students in most need can get this amount. While full time students are eligible for \$500 support, those with less study load will get pro-rata amount. Charles Sturt has campuses in Bathurst, Orange, Dubbo, Albury-Wodonga, Wagga Wagga, Goulburn Port Macquarie and Canberra as well as Parramatta and Manly.
- **University of Technology Sydney** is providing accommodation and housing support for students. Students who need support can contact UTS Student Legal Service at studentlegalservice@uts.edu.au.
- **Macquarie University** is offering up to \$1000 loans to needy students, in addition to an existing loan and grant scheme offering up to \$2000. It includes e-vouchers up to \$250 to pay for urgent essentials, one-time grant of up to \$2,000 for assisting their study, and up to \$2,000 interest-free loans which can be used for moving house etc
- **University of New England** has a [Student Emergency Assistance Fund – COVID 19](#). The University has campuses in Sydney, Tamworth, Taree, Coonabarabran, Gunnedah, Moree, Narrabri, Inverell, Tenterfield, Guyra. For an update on how campuses are operating, check the [COVID-19 Information](#) page.
- **Southern Cross University** has established an [Emergency Relief Fund](#) to support students who are experiencing financial distress because of COVID-19. Eligible students may apply for payments of up to \$500. Repeat applications are permitted no less than fortnightly in exceptional circumstances, with a total limit of \$1,500 paid to qualifying individuals. Email SCUassist@scu.edu.au for

direction and support with the application process. (Southern Cross University has three campuses located at the Gold Coast, Coffs Harbour and Lismore, with branch campuses in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth).

Queensland:

- **Griffith University** is providing interest-free student loans to help students with the cost of education and living expenses. [Eligible students can apply for a loan](#) of up to \$1,000 to be repaid within 12 months for domestic students or six months for international students.
- **James Cook University** has established a food pantry in Cairns and Townsville to help students with basic necessities.
- **University of Southern Queensland** has developed a new needs-based personalised financial support package, the COVID-19 Student Financial Assistance Scheme. This will include:
 - Living expenses (payments will be dependent on the situation)
 - Provision of technology (one-off payments of up to \$1000 AUD)
 - Provision of learning resources (one-off payments of up to \$500 AUD)
- **University of Queensland** is offering short-term hardship grants or emergency loan of up to [\\$2,000](#) to a limited number of students. This can be used for rent or bond utility bills, public transport, required study-related equipment, medical expenses etc, but not for tuition fee, overseas health cover, credit card repayment etc.
- **Southern Cross University** has established an [Emergency Relief Fund](#) to support students who are experiencing financial distress because of COVID-19. Eligible students may apply for payments of up to \$500. Repeat applications are permitted no less than fortnightly in exceptional circumstances, with a total limit of \$1,500 paid to qualifying individuals. Email SCUassist@scu.edu.au for direction and support with the application process. (Southern Cross University has three campuses located at the Gold Coast, Coffs Harbour and Lismore, with branch campuses in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth).

Northern Territory:

- **Charles Darwin University** has announced more than [25 scholarships](#) to support students affected by job loss, a transition to online study, self-isolation cost etc.

	<p>ACT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Australian National University has set up an Emergency Grants for COVID-19 and committed additional \$1 million to provide emergency support to students. This is in addition to the \$20 million bursaries announced in early March to help students affected by the travel restrictions from mainland China. Students can apply for an emergency grant to cover accommodation, travel, grocery vouchers, textbooks, medical costs etc. Undergraduate students have to approach ANUSA and Postgraduate students to send an application to PARSA for assistance.○ University of Canberra has advised international students in hardship to send an email to welfare@canberra.edu.au detailing their hardship, so that the cases would be handled individually.<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The UCX Food Pantry has partnered with Canberra Relief Network to provide relief hampers for students. Students need to register before 12pm on Mondays to avail themselves of this.▪ A dedicated email address internationalstudent@canberra.edu.au has also been established to provide assistance to international students who may be affected by travel restrictions. <p>Tasmania:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• University of Tasmania is offering a Fast Track Safety Net Grant of up to \$350 for support with living costs and study resources and Safety Net Grant Scheme which offers discretionary grants of up to \$2,000.
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