

COVID-19 Information Sheet - Western Australia (WA)

Disclaimer: The information below should not be considered an exhaustive list. Please contact organisations and services directly for the most up to date information and to enquire further about eligibility. Red Cross does not make any determinations about eligibility for any of the third party services listed.

Western Australia Government Announcements

- The [Western Australia government's COVID-19 webpage](#) provides advice on border restrictions, travel restrictions, and quarantine requirements, and has information available in [languages other than English](#).
- **COVID-19 vaccinations:** The rollout of the vaccine in Western Australia will commence from late-February 2021, with [priority groups](#) offered the first doses. It is recommended all adults get the COVID-19 vaccine when they are eligible. The vaccine will be free. For more information, visit the [WA government website](#).
- The WA government has extended the emergency period under the [Residential Tenancies \(COVID-19 Response\) Act 2020 \(the Act\)](#) until **28 March 2021**. This means that the existing laws, including the moratorium on rent increases will stay in place until this date.
- The [Residential Rent Relief Grant Scheme](#) is now in Phase 2 Emergency Period. If you received the grant in Phase 1 and remain unemployed, you may qualify for the grant again. This scheme is open to all temporary visa holders who have work rights. Information on applying for the grant is available [here](#).
- The [Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment](#) is available to people in WA 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 someone who has COVID-19 or has been in close contact with a person 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.

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

- From November 2020, relocation assistance will be available to people who [relocate to harvest and regional areas](#) to take up short-term agricultural work, including those on temporary visas, with the right to work in Australia. For more information about the scheme, and to lodge an application, [visit the website here](#).

- **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 specified industries.

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

- employed 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
- employed by a registered National Disability Insurance Scheme provider
- enrolled in a health care related course and you are supporting the health effort against COVID-19, as directed by health officials.

You **cannot** work more than 40 hours if you are employed in a supermarket. This measure ended on 1 May 2020.

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.

Food /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.
- [WA Connect](#) is an online directory for services in WA. It provides information on accommodation, financial assistance, emergency relief, food, toiletries, legal support, counselling, health, showers, employment, furniture, Centrelink and car repairs.

Organisation	Service	Contact	Hours/Location
St Vincent De Paul	ER/Food	1300 794 054	Call prior to 1pm Monday - Friday
Salvation Army	ER/Food	9305 2131	Merriwa 8am Wednesdays
Salvation Army	ER/Food	9401 3408	Heathridge Monday – Friday
Salvation Army	ER/Food	9260 9500	City Monday – Friday 9.00 – 14.00
Duncraig Information and Care Centre	ER/Food	9448 5111	Stirling Tues, Thur and Fri morning
Anglicare	ER/Food	9247 9705	Joondalup & Wanneroo Mon & Fri AM
Spiers Centre	ER/Food	9401 2699	Joondalup & Wanneroo M – F, 9 – 3
Uniting Aid	ER	9344 3840	Stirling Tuesday and Friday 9.00 – 14.00
Country Women's Association	ER	9321 6041	
Uniting Care West	ER	9206 6200	Merriwa M – Th, 9 – 2. Call Wed 10AM
Uniting Care West	ER	9220 1288	City Mon And Tue 8.30 -14.00
True North	Food	9403 1800	Mon – Wed & Fri 9.00 – 16.00
i60	Food	9562 3002	
Victory Life	Food	5 Niel Street Osborne Park	Tuesday – Friday
Financial Counselling Hotline	Financial Counselling	1800 889 364	All suburbs

Rent and Utilities

- The State Government has extended the emergency period under the Residential Tenancies (COVID-19 Response) Act 2020 (the Act) until **28 March 2021**. This means that the existing laws, including the moratorium on rent increases and some termination of tenancies will stay in place until this date.
- The [Residential Rent Relief Grant Scheme](#) is now in Phase 2 Emergency Period. If you received the RRR grant in the Phase 1 Emergency Period that expired on 29th September 2020 and remain unemployed, or secured employment and then returned to unemployment due to COVID-19, then you may qualify for the RRR grant again. This scheme is open to all temporary visa holders who have work rights. Information on applying for the grant is available [here](#).

Tenancy Western Australia (TWA)

- [Request for Rent Reduction](#) – Template Letter
- If you are a tenant and you need advice - please book your own appointment online under the **Get Help** Section. You can look [fact sheets](#) on various topics too.
- If you are unable to book online, please contact TWA on [\(08\) 9221 0088](#) or for country callers [1800 621 888](#), and leave a message with your name, and best contact details.
- In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, while Tenancy WA will still be operating. The office is closed and the advice line team will be working remotely from home. Your message will be sent to a staff member, who will call you back to arrange an appointment.
- **Advice line:** 9:00am-4:30pm Monday to Friday (except public holidays) [\(08\) 9221 0088](#) (Metropolitan) [1800 621 888](#) (Country Free Call)
- **Interpreting:** TWA uses interpreters to provide advice in languages other than English. Phone the [Translating and Interpreting Service](#) (TIS) on [131 450](#) then ask for Tenancy WA.

Energy and Water Ombudsman Western Australia

- Information sheets available in [languages other than English here](#).

Hardship Utilities Grants Scheme

- The Hardship Utility Grant Scheme (HUGS) assists Western Australian utility customers who are in financial hardship and are unable to pay their utility bills. The purpose of HUGS is to assist customers in financial hardship with their connection to essential services.
- *You need to contact your provider to determine if you are eligible.*
- **Eligibility:** You may be eligible if your utility provider assesses you in the following situation:
 - you contact your utility provider to discuss your outstanding debt and you are assessed as being in financial hardship and not in payment difficulty;
 - you have exhausted all your options with the utility provider and enter into a payment arrangement for at least 180 days to address the outstanding debt; and
 - after completion of the payment arrangement, if your outstanding bill is still more than \$300.
- You are not eligible for HUGS if:
 - You do not reside at the supply address;
 - You have used all your grant limit for the financial year;
 - You are assessed as not being in financial hardship;
 - You are a customer with bottled gas;
 - For Water Corporation, Busselton Water and Aquest customers, HUGS is only available for the owner-occupiers of residential properties

Housing / Homelessness

- [Entry Point Perth](#) – Phone: 6496 0001 or 1800 124 684
Entry Point Perth is a free assessment and referral service assisting people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in WA to access accommodation and support options.
- [Homeless Advisory Service](#) - provides information to primary and secondary homeless people that will assist them to seek their own accommodation. Telephone: 1800 065 892.
- **Crisis Care** is a telephone information and counselling service for people in crisis needing urgent help. To call Crisis Care, please call 9223 1111 or 1800 199 008.

- [WA Housing Hub](#) includes a range of resources on crisis accommodation in WA.
- [Multicultural Service Centre of WA - Multicultural Housing Services Program](#) Assists migrants and refugees experiencing difficulties in maintaining private rental tenancies. Phone: 9328 1544

Health and Medical Care

- For up-to-date COVID-19 coronavirus health and information and advice visit the Department of Health's [Healthy WA](#) website or call 13 COVID ([13 26843](#)).
- **Mental Health Emergency Line** - 1300 555 788 (Available 24/7)
- **Crisis Care** is a telephone information and counselling service for people in crisis needing urgent help. To call Crisis Care, please call 9223 1111 or 1800 199 008.
- [What if I don't have Medicare?](#)
 - Most travellers to WA will have travel insurance. To support the WA Health response to COVID- 19, the Minister for Health has confirmed that those people who are **not eligible for Medicare AND who present to WA Health facilities for assessment in relation to COVID-19 infection, will not be charged out of pocket expenses**
- The [Refugee Health Guide](#) includes 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. Information on referral pathways in Western Australia can be 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](#).

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 in WA

- [Study Australia website – COVID-19 International Student Information](#) and the [Department of Education, Skills and Employment \(DESE\)](#) provide information and links to supports. International students hotline (1300 981 621) / international.students@dese.gov.au

- The **Study Perth** Crisis Relief Fund has closed. Check the [website](#) for any information on the program reopening. Study Perth also has a free [international students jobs board](#).
- **University of Western Australia** has [general information](#) on COVID-19, and a number of [student support services](#).
- **Curtin University** has student support through [Curtin Connect](#).
- **Edith Cowan University** has [student supports](#) available, including student loans. For more information visit the [website](#).
- **Murdoch University** has a [Student Assistance Fund](#) available to eligible students.
- **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

- If you have a Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) or Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV), you are eligible to apply for the [Special Benefit payment through Centrelink](#). You will need to meet the other criteria for the 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 Western Australia, the SRSS Program is delivered by:
 - [MercyCare](#) (Phone: (08) 6298 9800)

- [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](#)

- [The Humanitarian Group](#)
 - The Humanitarian Group provides professional migration assistance, legal advice and education for people new to Australia who are disadvantaged in their access to legal services, including people seeking asylum.
 - Outreach Support Service: 9am to 3.30pm, Mondays only at Red Cross' Migration Support Programs Hub, 110 Goderich Street, East Perth (for Family Reunion visa options and General Legal Assistance). Clients must first attend our office at 445 Hay Street during our usual opening hours to be booked in for appointments at the Outreach Support Service.
 - TPV / SHEV Drop In Day: 2pm to 5pm, Tuesdays only at the Asylum Seeker Hub, Riverview Church, 1 Thorogood Street, Burswood.
 - Detention Advice Line: 08 6148 3650, from 1pm to 3pm, Thursdays only.