**Financial support, emergency relief and health and wellbeing services for CALD communities**

**12 May 2020**

**Financial support**

Refugees on a permanent visa (e.g. subclasses 200, 201, 202, 203, 204 and 866) are eligible for **JobSeeker, the Coronavirus Supplement, Economic Support Payments** and **JobKeeper Subsidy.**

Refugees on a Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) or a Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) are eligible for Special Benefit (same rate as JobSeeker), the Coronavirus Supplement and the Economic Support Payments. They are not eligible for the JobKeeper Subsidy. However, if a person on a SHEV receives Special Benefit for more than 30 months, this may affect their eligibility for another visa via the SHEV Pathway. Students over 18 on a SHEV or TPV studying full time are not eligible for these supports.

People seeking asylum, including those on a Bridging Visa, are not eligible for any of these payments.

Australian citizens and permanent residence are eligible for JobSeeker. The usual two-year waiting period for permanent residents has been waived during the COVID-19 crisis.

This means that refugees on a permanent visa (subclasses 200, 201, 202, 203, 204 and 866), as well as those who have Australian citizenship are eligible for JobSeeker.

The **Coronavirus Supplement** is available to people receiving the following 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.

This means that refugees on TPVs or SHEVs who are receiving Special Benefit, as well as refugees on permanent visas who are receiving other Centrelink payments (such as JobSeeker) are eligible for the full Coronavirus Supplement.

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.

Most people receiving income support from Centrelink are eligible for the Economic Support Payment. This includes refugees on TPVs or SHEVs who are receiving Special Benefit, as well as refugees on permanent visas.

The **JobKeeper** subsidy is available to those people who:

* 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

This means that people on temporary visas, including refugees on Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEVs), as well as people seeking asylum on Bridging Visas are **not** eligible for the JobKeeper Subsidy.

Refugees on Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) and Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEVs) are **not** eligible for JobSeeker or JobKeeper. However, they are eligible for Special Benefit, which is the same rate as JobSeeker, as well as the Coronavirus Supplement and the Economic Support Payments (outlined above).

**Special Benefit** is a Centrelink payment for people who are not eligible for any other Centrelink payment (for example, because of their visa). Currently, refugees on TPVs and SHEVs are eligible for 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. Refugees on TPVs or SHEVs who are over 18 years old and studying full time are **not** eligible for Special Benefit. However, they can study part time provided they meet other obligations (such as looking for work).

**People seeking asylum**

Currently, people seeking asylum, such as those on a bridging visa, are **not** eligible for JobSeeker, the Coronavirus Supplement, Economic Support Payments or the JobKeeper Subsidy. You may be able to receive support through the Status Resolution Support Service (SRSS) and should contact your caseworker about this.

**Victoria** announced a relief payment of up to $1,100 as part of a broader emergency support package, available to international students. Individual universities have also committed direct financial support to international students. A range of community organisations, faith groups and others are also offering support of food, housing and basic services, however I am not aware of whether these organisations have received additional funding to meet demand.

**Emergency relief**

The Victorian Government is providing emergency relief for Victorians self-isolating due to coronavirus (COVID-19). People with no access to food and essential supplies will receive emergency relief packages under the program. Each eligible household will receive a two-week supply of essential goods. Please note, this program is for people in mandatory self-isolation, who have little or no food, and no network of family and friends to support them.

**Specialist Refugee Health and Wellbeing Services**

[**The Refugee Health Program**](https://victorianrefugeehealthnetwork.createsend1.com/t/j-l-qmuikl-l-yu/)s are providing services via a remote model. Staff are delivering consultations via telephone and telehealth services where possible, and screening all clients before any onsite appointments.

[**The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre**](https://victorianrefugeehealthnetwork.createsend1.com/t/j-l-qmuikl-l-jl/) continues to deliver a range of services.

[**Cabrini Asylum Seeker and Refugee Health Hub**](https://victorianrefugeehealthnetwork.createsend1.com/t/j-l-qmuikl-l-jj/)  is now operating largely through telehealth.

[**Monash Refugee Health and Wellbeing**](https://victorianrefugeehealthnetwork.createsend1.com/t/j-l-qmuikl-l-jt/) is operational and using telehealth and telephone consults where possible.

[**Royal Children’s Hospital – Immigrant Health Service**](https://victorianrefugeehealthnetwork.createsend1.com/t/j-l-qmuikl-l-tl/) is conducting outpatient appointments via telehealth wherever possible. Visitors to the hospital are limited to parent/guardian or temporary carer.

[**The Royal Children’s Hospital – Immigrant Health Service**](https://www.rch.org.au/immigranthealth/about_us/COVID-19_Immigrant_health/) website is also hosting an [**extensive directory**](https://www.rch.org.au/immigranthealth/about_us/COVID-19_Immigrant_health/) with helpful information and resources during the COVID-19 emergency.

[**The Victorian Foundation for Survivors of Torture (**](https://victorianrefugeehealthnetwork.createsend1.com/t/j-l-qmuikl-l-ty/)[**Foundation House**](https://victorianrefugeehealthnetwork.createsend1.com/t/j-l-qmuikl-l-tj/)[**)**](https://victorianrefugeehealthnetwork.createsend1.com/t/j-l-qmuikl-l-tt/) remains operational and mental health services are being offered by phone and video-conferencing technologies.

[**Utopia Refugee and Asylum Seeker Health**](https://victorianrefugeehealthnetwork.createsend1.com/t/j-l-qmuikl-l-td/) continues to operate in Melbourne’s West, Monday-Friday 9 am-5 pm and is also offering healthcare facilitated telehealth linkage with specialists/hospitals if clients are unable to do so.

[**Multicultural Centre for Women’s Health**](https://victorianrefugeehealthnetwork.createsend1.com/t/j-l-qmuikl-l-ji/) (MCWH) is working with bilingual health educators to develop a series of multilingual health education videos on a range of health issues for refugee and migrant women. To keep updated on the progress, [**join their mailing list here**.](https://victorianrefugeehealthnetwork.createsend1.com/t/j-l-qmuikl-l-jd/) They are also advertising [**upcoming radio health sessions here**](https://www.mcwh.com.au/covid-19/)**.**

[**PANDA (perinatal mental health)**](https://victorianrefugeehealthnetwork.createsend1.com/t/j-l-qgjho-l-g/) has a National Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Helpline, operating Monday to Friday, 9am – 7.30pm AEST/AEDT). Call [**1300 726 306**](https://victorianrefugeehealthnetwork.createsend1.com/t/j-l-qgjho-l-w/). **Free telephone interpreting services available.**

[**Shifra**](https://shifra.app/en/community-health/covid-19) is an online platform with culturally-sensitive sexual and reproductive health information in local languages. Information is currently available Arabic and English with more languages coming soon. The website also aims to help users find respectful health services that specialise in migrant and refugee health. Shifra has some information about [**COVID-19**](https://shifra.app/en/community-health/covid-19)in Arabic and English.