



## Australian Government

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### Department of Social Services

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# Coronavirus (COVID-19) information and support

The department is supporting individuals and families affected by Coronavirus through a range of measures.

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## Government Response to Coronavirus

The Government is providing a range of measures to address the global health crisis related to Coronavirus. Please visit [The Treasury's webpage](#) for more information on the economic response to Coronavirus on 12 March 2020 and 22 March 2020, including fact sheets and an overview of the package.

Please visit the [Minister for Families and Social Services' webpage](#) for Ministerial announcements on the Department of Social Services related measures.

Please visit the [Department of Health's webpage](#) for general health information on Coronavirus.

## Coronavirus Supplement

On 22 March 2020, the Government announced it will provide a temporary Coronavirus Supplement of \$550 a fortnight to new and existing income support recipients from 27 April 2020 for six months. People will receive their usual payment plus \$550 each fortnight for the six month period.

The Coronavirus Supplement will be provided to people receiving:

- JobSeeker Payment
- Sickness Allowance
- Youth Allowance for jobseekers
- Parenting Payment Partnered
- Parenting Payment Single
- Partner Allowance
- Sickness Allowance
- Farm Household Allowance.

## Expanding Eligibility and Qualification for Payments

From 27 April 2020, the Government has also put expanded eligibility and qualification criteria in place for six months. Eligibility for JobSeeker Payment and Youth Allowance for jobseekers will also be expanded to assist:

- sole traders and self-employed people. They will be able to meet mutual obligation requirements by continuing to operate their businesses.
- people caring for someone infected or in isolation as a result of contact with Coronavirus.

The Government will temporarily waive, for certain payments:

- the assets test
- the Ordinary Waiting Period (already waived until 12 June 2020)
- the Liquid Assets Waiting Period
- the Seasonal Workers Preclusion Period
- the Newly Arrived Residents Waiting Period.

Also from 27 April 2020, access to payments will become easier with a temporary removal of the requirement for an Employment Separation Certificate, proof of rental arrangements and verification of relationship status.

## Two Economic Support Payments

On 12 March 2020, the Government announced it will provide an Economic Support payment of \$750 to approximately 6.6 million Social Security and Veterans' income support recipients, Farm Household Allowance (FHA) recipients, Family Tax Benefit (FTB) recipients and holders of a Pensioner Concession Card, Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC) or Commonwealth Gold Card who were eligible on 12 March 2020.

On 22 March 2020, the Government announced it would extend the eligibility for the first Economic Support payment to people who were eligible for their payment or card between 12 March 2020 and 13 April 2020 (inclusive). The Government also announced it would provide a second Economic Support payment, also of \$750 to people eligible for any of the payments or cards in the first round of payments on 10 July 2020 so long as they **do not** receive the Coronavirus Supplement with their payment.

To be eligible for the first Economic Support payment you must be residing in Australia and be receiving one of the following payments or hold one of the following concession cards:

- Age Pension
- Disability Support Pension
- Carer Payment
- Parenting Payment
- Wife Pension
- Widow B Pension
- ABSTUDY (Living Allowance)
- Austudy
- Bereavement Allowance
- Newstart Allowance
- Youth Allowance
- Partner Allowance
- Sickness Allowance
- Special Benefit
- Widow Allowance
- Family Tax Benefit, including Double Orphan Pension
- Carer Allowance
- Pensioner Concession Card holders
- Commonwealth Seniors Health Card holders
- Veteran Service Pension; Veteran Income Support Supplement; Veteran Compensation payments, including lump sum payments; War Widow(er) Pension; and Veteran Payment
- DVA PCC holders; DVA Education Scheme recipients; Disability Pensioners at the temporary special rate; DVA Income support pensioners at \$0 rate
- Veteran Gold Card holders

- Farm Household Allowance.

Eligibility for the second Economic Support payment is for the same group of people but only if they **do not** receive the Coronavirus Supplement with their payment,

Services Australia and the Department of Veterans' Affairs will automatically deliver the first Economic Support payment from 31 March 2020 (subject to the passage of legislation) and the second Economic Support payment from 13 July 2020.

Please visit the [Services Australia website](#) for more information on each individual payment.

## Crisis Payment

Changes are also being made to crisis payment to ensure people who are in financial hardship and need to self-isolate receive the support they need.

## Isolation Related Temporary Exemptions From Mutual Obligations

Current income support recipients who cannot meet mutual obligation requirements due to isolation should call [Services Australia](#) and can be granted a Major Personal Crisis exemption, without having to provide evidence such as a medical certificate.

Students receiving Youth Allowance (student) or other study related payments who are in Australia but unable to attend studies due to Coronavirus would be taken to have a reasonable excuse for not meeting study activity requirements for their payments. Individuals in this situation must contact Services Australia to advise them of the circumstances.

## Simplifying Income Reporting

The Government is also creating flexibility associated with the commencement of the Simplifying Income Reporting Act, which was due to start on 1 July 2020. This will allow for the commencement date to be set taking into account the effect of the Coronavirus on income support recipients and Services Australia resources.

## Information for DSS Grant Recipients – Coronavirus

[Information for DSS grant recipients in relation to Coronavirus](#), 20 March 2020.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **How do people claim the Coronavirus Supplement?**

Services Australia will automatically pay the Coronavirus Payment to eligible recipients each fortnight from 27 April 2020.

### **Is the Coronavirus Supplement taxable?**

Yes.

### **Will the Coronavirus Supplement be subject to income management or credited to Cashless Debit Cards?**

Yes. The supplement will be income managed or credited to Cashless Debit Cards in the same proportions as a person's payment.

### **Do people have to wait until 27 April 2020 to apply for a payment?**

People can apply for a payment as soon as they need it.

Current eligibility and qualification criteria will apply to applications until 27 April 2020.

If a person qualifies for a payment from before 27 April 2020 and has to serve a waiting period (other than the Newly Arrived Residents Waiting Period), they will receive a payment back to the date of their claim once the waiting period is suspended.

People serving a Newly Arrived Residents Waiting Period will receive payment from the 27 April 2020 or the date of their claim, whichever is later.

### **Do I need to contact Services Australia to receive either the first or the second Economic Support Payment?**

No. The payment will be paid automatically to eligible recipients. Where Services Australia does not have bank details, they will contact eligible recipients to get these details.

**Will I receive multiple Economic Support payments?**

The rate of payment will be \$750 per eligible recipient or card holder from the end of March and/or from 13 July 2020 depending on eligibility. Eligible recipients will receive one Economic Support Payment only in each round, even if they receive more than one qualifying payment or card.

**When will I receive the Economic Support Payment?**

Services Australia and the Department of Veterans' Affairs will automatically deliver the first payment from 31 March 2020 and the second payment, if eligible, from 13 July 2020 (subject to the passage of legislation).

**My claim for a qualifying payment or card has not yet been processed. Will I still get the Economic Support Payment?**

If you have lodged a claim for one of the qualifying payments or concession cards between 12 March 2020 and 13 April 2020, and the claim is subsequently granted from a date on or before that period, you will receive the payment.

**Will I get paid the Economic Support payment if I'm a part rate Age Pensioner?**

Yes. You will receive the full \$750.

**Will I get paid the Economic Support payment if I receive Family Tax Benefit as a lump sum?**

Yes. Recipients who claim Family Tax Benefit as a lump sum after the end of the financial year will be eligible for the payment if they are eligible for Family Tax Benefit in the 2019-20 and/or 2020-21 financial year and will receive the Economic Support payment as part of their lump sum payment.

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