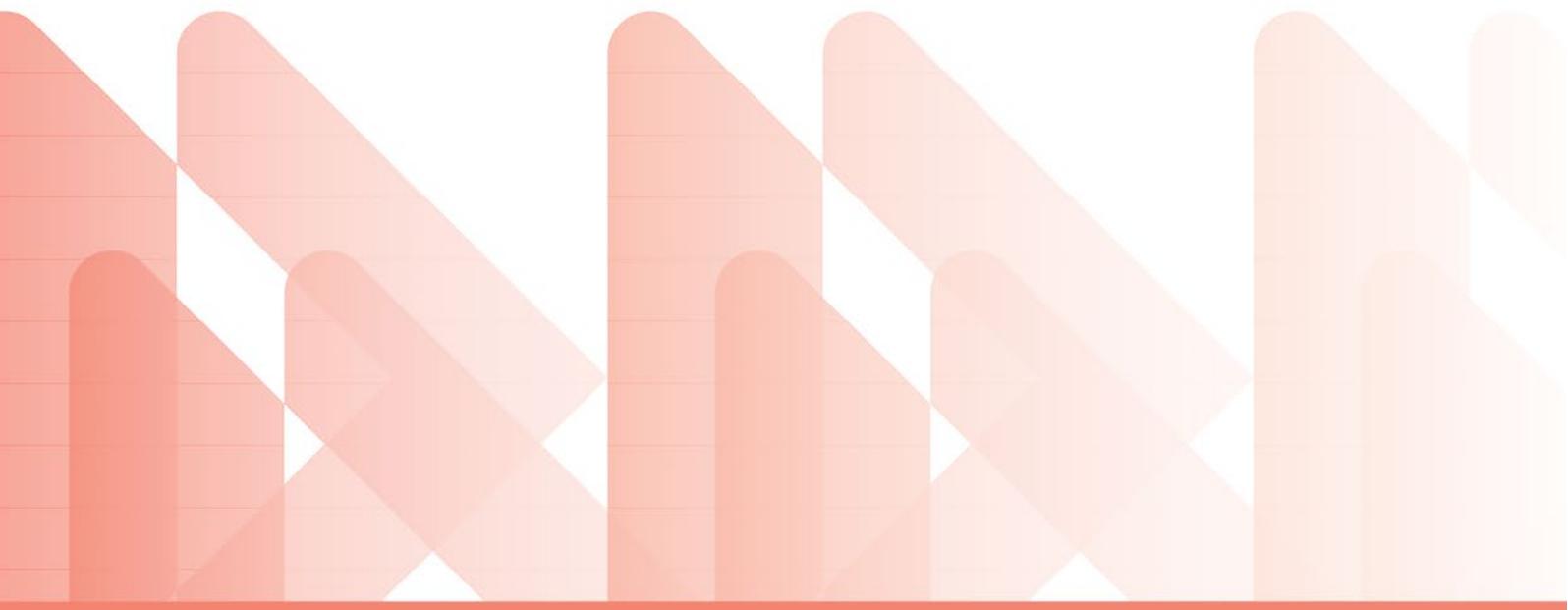




Services
Australia

Services Australia talking points COVID-19 Disaster Payment Victoria

September 2021



Contents

Support and information for people claiming COVID-19 Disaster Payment for Victoria.....	3
What is the COVID-19 Disaster Payment?	3
Who can get the COVID-19 Disaster Payment?	3
If they get a Centrelink or Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) payment	4
If they don't get a Centrelink or DVA payment	5
What do people need to know?	5
How do people claim the COVID-19 Disaster Payment?	6
What extra support is there for people that use child care?	6
Where can people find more information?	7
Visiting service centres – restricted services	7

Support and information for people claiming COVID-19 Disaster Payment for Victoria

What is the COVID-19 Disaster Payment?

- The Australian Government is paying the COVID-19 Disaster Payment to help workers unable to earn income due to the Victoria COVID-19 public health order.
- Public health orders may involve a COVID-19 hotspot, lockdown or period of restricted movement.

Who can get the COVID-19 Disaster Payment?

- People must meet the general eligibility rules as well as the rules for the COVID-19 health order that affected them.
- People need to meet all these general eligibility rules:
 - be 17 years or older
 - not getting the [Pandemic Leave Disaster Payment](#), Dad and Partner Pay, Parental Leave Pay, a state pandemic payment or a state small business payment for the same period
 - lost hours of work and income and didn't have enough pandemic-related paid leave entitlements
 - unable to work and earn their usual income of 8 hours or more or a full day's work because they were in the COVID-19 hotspot and are subject to restricted movement order or they live or work from other areas of Victoria.
 - not getting their usual income and their employer is not getting Retaining Domestic Airline Capability payments on their behalf
 - lived or worked in or visited a [Commonwealth-declared](#) COVID-19 hotspot in Victoria that is subject to restricted movement order or they lived or work from other areas of Victoria*.

*People meet the requirement of living or working in a Commonwealth-declared COVID-19 hotspot if both of these apply:

- they live or work in an area which isn't locked down
- they can't work because they're unable to cross into or out of the lockdown area.
- People need to use any appropriate pandemic-related paid leave entitlements before they can get the payment.
- Pandemic-related leave is any leave entitlement paid by their employer when they lose hours or income due to a state public health order or lockdown.
- People are not required to take annual leave, unpaid leave, paid sick or carer's leave, long service leave or compassionate leave to get the payment.
- If someone decides to take paid leave, they will not have lost income and won't be eligible for COVID-19 Disaster Payment.

Victorian construction industry shut down

- People can claim this payment if they are unable to work and earn income because of the construction shut down in these areas:
 - Greater Melbourne
 - City of Ballarat

- City of Greater Geelong
- Surf Coast Shire
- Mitchell Shire.
- They must meet all other eligibility rules.
- They can make a claim for [COVID-19 Disaster Payment](#) from 24 September 2021 for the period 17 -23 September 2021.
- People can check the key dates for claiming by going to the Services Australia [website](#).

Regional Victoria lockdown

- The relevant period of restricted movement and Commonwealth COVID-19 hotspot declaration for all of Victoria excluding Greater Melbourne and City of Greater Shepparton ended on 9 September 2021.
- People's payments stopped if they lived in an area that was no longer under a COVID-19 hotspot declaration or subject to restricted movement or lockdown.
- If they're still unable to work and earn income because of the Victorian lockdown or restricted movement, they can still claim a payment.
- They must meet all of the following:
 - live or work in any area of Victoria
 - unable to earn their usual income of 8 hours or more or a full day's work because of the restricted movement order
 - meet all other eligibility rules.
- They'll need to select the **I am impacted by a COVID-19 restricted movement/lockdown, but was not living, working or present in a COVID-19 hotspot area** option in the claim.
- They can make a new claim from 17 September 2021.
- People may need to let Services Australia know which LGA they lived or worked in or visited. They can check which LGA applies to them on the [Victorian Government website](#).
- If people aren't eligible for COVID-19 Disaster Payment and [need a payment](#), Services Australia has other help available.
- If they need longer term financial help, they may be able to get a payment such as [JobSeeker Payment](#).

If they get a Centrelink or Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) payment

- If a person meets all the eligibility rules and gets a Centrelink or DVA payment, they can claim for COVID-19 Disaster Payment.
 - They must also either:
 - report employment income to us or DVA at least once between 12 June 2021 and the date they are claiming for
 - had declared ongoing employment income on or after 12 June 2021 and the date they are claiming for.
 - If they're blind and getting Age Pension or Disability Support Pension this rule does not apply.
 - They must be getting one of the following payments:
 - Age Pension
 - Austudy
 - Carer Payment

- Disability Support Pension
 - JobSeeker Payment
 - Parenting Payment
 - Special Benefit
 - Farm Household Allowance
 - Youth Allowance
 - Widow Allowance
 - Partner Allowance
 - ABSTUDY Living Allowance
 - Education Allowance under the Veterans' Act
 - Income support supplement under the Veterans' Act
 - Service pension under the Veterans' Act
 - Veteran payment under the Veterans' Act.
- If they're eligible, they'll get \$200 for each week of the relevant period.
 - They'll continue to get their regular Centrelink payment on their usual payment dates.
 - People can check the key dates for claiming on the Services Australia [website](#).

If they don't get a Centrelink or DVA payment

- If a person meets all the eligibility rules and is not getting a Centrelink or DVA income support payment, they can claim for COVID-19 Disaster Payment.
- They must be an [Australian resident](#) or hold a visa that gives them the right to work in Australia.
- People can check their visa details and conditions, including their right to work in Australia, using the [Department of Home Affairs' VEVO](#) system.
- If customers are eligible, they'll get \$450 if any of the following apply:
 - they lost at least 8 hours of work
 - they lost less than 20 hours of work
 - they couldn't work a full day for that week.
- If they lost 20 hours or more of work that week, they'll get \$750.
- People can check the key dates for claiming on the Services Australia [website](#).

What do people need to know?

- To get the payment, people must meet all the eligibility rules on at least one day during the relevant period.
- COVID-19 Disaster Payment is tax free and they don't need to include it in their tax return or report it to Centrelink as income.
- Once Services Australia grants someone's claim for COVID-19 Disaster Payment, they won't need to claim again if:
 - lockdown continues without a break
 - the person doesn't report any change in their circumstances.
- Services Australia will pay them automatically for every relevant period.

- A person can report a change in their circumstances by:
 - completing the **Update your circumstances** task in their Centrelink online account if they claimed online
 - calling **180 22 66** if the claimed over the phone
 - [telling DVA](#) if they're getting a DVA payment.
- Please tell them not to call to check on their payment unless it's been longer than 7 days from the date the claim opens.

How do people claim the COVID-19 Disaster Payment?

- If someone is a member of a couple, they can both claim this payment. They and their partner will need to make separate claims and both meet the eligibility requirements.

Australian residents

- Australian residents must claim online.
- To claim online, they need a [myGov](#) account linked to a [Centrelink online account](#). If they don't have a myGov account, they need to [create one](#).
- If their myGov account isn't linked to Centrelink, they can prove who they are through myGov to link to Centrelink.
- New customers can submit their claim after linking their myGov and Centrelink online accounts. Identity documents will be requested as part of that process. People do not need to go into a service centre to confirm their identity.

Eligible working visa holders

- People who hold a visa which gives them the right to work in Australia must call us on **180 22 66** to claim. Phone lines are open Monday to Friday 8 am to 5 pm.
- People can check the Services Australia [website](#) for updates to phone hours.
- People can also call the [Multilingual Phone Service](#) on **131 202** to talk to Services Australia in their language.

Note: calls from a home phone to '13' numbers from anywhere in Australia are charged at a fixed rate. That rate may vary from the price of a local call and may also vary between telephone service providers. Calls to '1800' numbers from a home phone are free. Calls from public and mobile phones may be timed and charged at a higher rate.

To talk to a Financial Information Service Officer

- Services Australia deliver the Financial Information Service (FIS). It provides free and confidential information and education about financial matters.
- People can talk to a FIS Officer about their financial circumstances by calling **132 300**, and say 'Financial Information Service' when we ask why they're calling.
- A FIS Officer can give people information that's relevant to their personal situation. A FIS Officer won't give advice or promote investment products, or act on a customer's behalf with other agencies or businesses.
- For more information about FIS go to servicessaustralia.gov.au/fis

What extra support is there for people that use child care?

- Families can access additional allowable absences if their child attends care in a declared COVID-19 hotspot.
- They can only access these absences if an area is declared as a COVID-19 hotspot for more than 7 days.
- These families won't have to use their regular 42 allowable absences.
- They don't need to do anything to get these absences. If eligible, they'll apply automatically.
- More information about the Child Care Subsidy is available at servicesaustralia.gov.au/childcaresubsidy
- If your child attends care in an area that is no longer a COVID-19 hotspot, these additional absences won't apply to you.

Where can people find more information?

- Go to the Services Australia website servicesaustralia.gov.au/covid19disasterpaymentvictoria
- People can watch a COVID-19 Disaster Payment support and information playlist on the Services Australia [YouTube](#) channel
- Go to servicesaustralia.gov.au/yourlanguage where they can read, listen to or watch information in your language.
- People can watch a video about myGov, available in other languages, by going to youtube.com/playlist
- For information in other languages about how to create a myGov account, go to servicesaustralia.gov.au/mygov
- People can stay up to date with the latest news by:
 - subscribing to Services Australia's [news channels](#)
 - following Services Australia on [social media](#).

Visiting service centres – restricted services

- If new customers claim other payments, they may need to go to a service centre to confirm their identity documents. If so, the online claim will prompt them.
- In line with health advice, Services Australia limit the number of staff and customers inside their service centres. Customers may need to check in and wear a face mask.
- In a lockdown area, customers should only visit Services Australia if it's essential. They can do most of their Centrelink, Medicare or Child Support business with Services Australia online through myGov.
- If they can't do their business online, they can call Services Australia.
- Some service centres aren't booking appointments. Customers can check if this affects their local service centre by going to servicesaustralia.gov.au/findus

Disclaimer: This information is accurate as at 22 September 2021. The information contained in this publication is intended only as a guide to payments and services. It's their responsibility to decide if they wish to apply for a payment and to make an application, with regard to their particular circumstances.

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