

Information Sheet - New South Wales (NSW)

Disclaimer: The information below should not be considered an exhaustive list and service delivery may change. Please contact organisations and services directly for the most up to date information and to enquire further about eligibility. Red Cross does not determine eligibility for the third party services listed.

Australian Government Updates

- The [NSW government COVID-19 website](#) provides information on:
 - Coronavirus testing centres, with an online [search tool](#)
 - There is also information for people living in [Central Coast and Wollongong](#), [regional and rural NSW](#), or traveling to NSW from [interstate](#).

Health and Wellbeing

- With the relaxing of restrictions, and opening of state and some international borders, Australian governments are encouraging everyone to continue to be COVID aware and stay safe. For more information please follow the recommended government [health and wellbeing advice](#).

Employment & Work Rights

- From 1 July 2023, work restrictions for student visa holders will be re-introduced and capped at the increased rate of 48 hours per fortnight. This ensures that student visa holders are able to focus on obtaining a quality Australian education and qualification, while remaining able to support themselves financially, gain valuable work experience, and contribute to Australia's workforce needs. For more information please refer to the [Work restrictions for student visa holders \(homeaffairs.gov.au\)](#) website for more information.
- 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](#)
 - <https://www.redcross.org.au/workrighthub/>

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.

- Seasonal work opportunities are now available in parts of rural NSW. For more information visit the [Help Harvest NSW website](#).

[Community Legal Centres NSW](#) are independent non-government organisations that provide free legal services to people and communities at times when that help is needed most, and particularly to people facing economic hardship and discrimination.

Food Support and/or 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.

Auburn Diversity Services

Support with household bills, for people living in Auburn, Lidcombe, Berilla and Regions Park
108 Silverwater Road, Auburn, phone: 02 8737 5500 / Email: info@adsi.org.au
ER referral form on website: www.adsi.org.au/services/emergency-relief

Christian Community Aid Service

12 Lakeside Road Eastwood, phone: 02 9858 3222
Email: administration@ccas.org.au
Must phone for an assessment.

Parramatta Community Food Care

18 Barney Street, North Parramatta, phone: 9630 3892
Centrelink card and ID proof. Service provides discounted food.
Service is open on Thursday - 6:00 pm- 8:00pm and Friday 10:30 am- 1:00 pm.

Turbans 4 Australia

Food hampers and hot meals available in Clyde, visit the website for more information and opening times.
Call: 0432 017 000
Email: turbans4australia@gmail.com

Parramatta Mission Meals Plus Partnership

Address: 119 Macquarie St, Parramatta, phone: (02) 9891 2277
Meals Plus is open for breakfast and lunch M-F.
Breakfast: 8.00am-9.00am
Lunch: 11.30am-1.00pm

St Vincent De Paul

Contact 12 18 12 to find out what support is available to you.

The Parks Community Network Inc.

Assisting communities in SW Sydney to relieve poverty, distress, suffering, destitution, misfortune, and loneliness. Ph: 9609 7400 for information on food relief, NILS, and vouchers.

Salvation Army Auburn

166-170 South Parade Auburn, phone: 9646 3767
Make appointment for food vouchers etc.

The Hills Community Aid and Information Service

Please leave a message at (02) 9639 8620 or email enq@hca.org.au and staff member will call back.

Salvation Army Emergency Relief

St Vincent De Paul Bankstown – 9796 1176 / 1300 371 288 – phone for assessment

Anglicare

02 8774 7467 / 02 8624 8600 – Food Pantry. Phone for Assessment

ADRA

9829 6701 – Food Hampers. Phone to book.

[Nagle Centre Family Care & Support Service St Vincent de Paul Society - Campbelltown](#)**South West Multicultural & Community Centre**

Ph: 02 9603 2500

\$10/food hampers

[Karma Kitchen \(Hindu Council Benevolent Fund\)](#)

Serving freshly cooked vegetarian meals on Saturdays lunch at Prince Alfred Park Square (cnr of Victoria Rd and Church St) in Parramatta NSW.

[Western Sydney MRC](#)

Food vouchers and brokerage services. Please call us on 8778 1200 to make an appointment.

[Western Sydney Community Centre](#)

02 9649 2063 – Fresh Food Pantry

Pathways Community (Cumberland area)

02 9636 7400 – phone for Assessment. Foodbank Collection by Appointment Only.

[Core Community Services Cabramatta](#)

02 8707 0600 – phone assessment required for food vouchers

[Exodus Foundation](#)

02 8717 1531 – Hot/Frozen Take-away Meals

[Food for Life, Salvation Army, Busby](#)

0435 659 175

[Islamic Women's Association](#)

02 8764 6425 – phone for assessment.

[St Vincent De Paul Society Care and Support Centre](#) (Wagga Wagga)

207 Edward St, Wagga Wagga, phone 02 6921 2381

Other Emergency Relief providers for temporary visa holders

- [Rev. Bill Crews Foundation \(Exodus Foundation\)](#) – (02) 8752 4600
- [Settlement Services International](#) - (02) 8799 6700
- [Western Sydney MRC](#) – (02) 8778 1200
- [Prosper \(Project Australia\)](#) – (02) 8660 1000
- [House of Welcome](#) – (02) 9727 9290
- [Jesuit Refugee Services](#) (JRS) – (02) 9098 9336
- [Asylum Seeker Centre](#) – (02) 9078 1900

Rent and Utilities

- The Tenants Union of NSW has a [Renters Guide to COVID-19](#) providing information on rights of renters.
- [Western Sydney Tenants Union](#) – (02) 8833 0933. Support only available via telephone.

[Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW](#) has more information about customer assistance / hardship programs, and range of useful resources you may be eligible for if you are facing financial difficulties.

[Energy Accounts Payment Assistance \(EAPA\)](#)

- EAPA is a government scheme to help people who are having trouble paying their home electricity and/or gas bill because of a crisis or emergency situation. The \$50 EAPA vouchers are distributed to customers via a range of community welfare organisations.
- Where to find EAPA: list of [NSW Government EAPA distributors](#)
- **Before you seek assistance**
 - If you are having trouble paying your bill, speak to your energy company first. If you are unable to make arrangements with your supplier, contact a local community agency that distributes EAPA vouchers to make an appointment.
 - If you cannot get an appointment right away, let your supplier know you made an appointment for EAPA assessment. *Your supplier is not allowed to disconnect you if they know you have an appointment booked for an EAPA assessment.*
- **Who can get EAPA?**
 - If you are in financial hardship due to a crisis or emergency situation you can apply for EAPA voucher assistance.

[Water Payment Assistance Scheme \(PAS\) Credits](#)

This scheme assists people experiencing financial hardship by providing credit to an account. It can help if you are having difficulty paying your Hunter Water, Sydney Water or Shoalhaven water bill.

- **Before you seek assistance**
 - If you are having trouble paying your bill you should speak to your water company first. Water suppliers may be able to suggest a payment scheme or arrangement to assist you manage your bills (see [customer assistance programs](#)).
- **Where can you get water credits?**

Many community welfare organisations offer PAS. These include:

 - St Vincent de Paul Society
 - The Salvation Army
 - Anglicare
 - The Smith Family
 - Some community or neighbourhood centres.
- **Who can get water credits?**

Anyone who is in financial hardship can apply for PAS assistance.

Holroyd Community Aid Incorporated

17A Miller street, Merrylands, NSW.

Ph: 9637 7391

Following an assessment, may be able to support partial coverage of gas/electricity bill. Evidence of financial hardship is required.

[Cumberland Multicultural Community Centre](#)

8 Factory St Granville, NSW. Ph: 9637 7600

May be able to provide support with electricity bill.

Assessment required.

Housing Support / Homelessness

[Linked 2 Home](#) 1800 152 152. Homeless or at risk of homeless. Temporary accommodation may be available for those who are high risk. Referral made over the phone.

[St Vincent de Paul NSW](#) - Assistance Line for Accommodation: 13 18 12

[Barnardos](#): Transitional accommodation for families with children and young pregnant women - 16 to 24 years Phone: 02 8752 0300

[Elsie Women's Refuge](#) (Wagga Wagga)

[Micah House](#) (Wagga Wagga)
53 Gurwood Street, Ph: (02) 6921 7337

Men2Home: Parramatta Mission, working in partnership with Mission Australia and St Vincent de Paul Society operate the Western Sydney Single Men's Homeless program.
Phone: 0419 696 673 or 02 8880 8234

[Mission Australia](#): Western Sydney Homelessness Outreach Prevention and Rapid Rehousing Service (HOPARRS) supports people over the age of 21 years, and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Phone 1800 384 331

[Wesley Community Services](#): Homelessness support for couples with children or singles with children who are Australian Citizens or permanent residents.

[Hunter Homeless Connect](#) has local services in Newcastle and supports available for different categories i.e. housing, food, NILS and other helpful resources.

Health and Medical Care

- People seeking asylum who are ineligible for Medicare can have their fees waived for some public health services in NSW. [Recent updates](#) clarify that these waivers apply to people at all stages of their asylum process, including those on a removal pathway. The services are:
 - Emergency care for acute medical and surgical conditions, including admission
 - Elective surgery for conditions listed as Clinical Priority Categories 1 and 2. For more information [click here](#).
 - Ambulatory and outpatient care required to maintain health status of asylum seekers with acute and chronic health conditions
 - Maternity services, including antenatal and postnatal care
 - Mental Health services (inpatient and community based)
 - Ambulance transport for emergencies
 - NSW Health Pathology services
 - Interpreting services
- The [Refugee Health Guide](#) includes Refugee Health 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. These services are familiar with working with people on uncertain immigration pathways and fluctuating Medicare status. Information on referral pathways in New South Wales 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 \(eligible for Medicare\)](#)

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

- Visit the [Study NSW International Student Welfare Services Hub](#) for the latest information about the support services that are available to international students.
- [Sydney Community Forum](#) (Study NSW Partnership) » Financial, food and mental health support.
- [Overseas Health Cover](#) » Understand what your provider can cover
- Please visit this site to explore support options in your area: <https://askizzy.org.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.

- From 1 July 2023, New Zealand citizens who have been living in Australia for four years or more will be eligible to apply directly for Australian citizenship. They will no longer need to first apply for and be granted a permanent visa. These changes apply to New Zealand citizens holding a Special Category (subclass 444) visa (SCV) who arrived in Australia after 26 February 2001. Protected SCV holders will continue to be eligible to apply directly for Australian citizenship.
 - With effect from 1 July 2023:
 - All New Zealand citizens holding an SCV will be considered permanent residents for citizenship purposes.
 - New Zealand citizens granted an SCV before 1 July 2022 will have their period of permanent residence for citizenship purposes backdated to 1 July 2022.
 - New Zealand citizens granted an SCV for the first time on or after 1 July 2022 will be considered a permanent resident for citizenship purposes from the date of their SCV grant.
 - For more information visit [Department of Home Affairs](#) website for more information
 - 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 as well as other centrelink benefits. 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

- People seeking asylum who are ineligible for **Medicare** can have their fees waived for some public health services in NSW. [Recent updates](#) clarify that these waivers apply to people at all stages of their asylum process, including those on a removal pathway. The services are:
 - Emergency care for acute medical and surgical conditions, including admission
 - Elective surgery for conditions listed as Clinical Priority Categories 1 and 2. For more information [click here](#).
 - Ambulatory and outpatient care required to maintain health status of asylum seekers with acute and chronic health conditions
 - Maternity services, including antenatal and postnatal care
 - Mental Health services (inpatient and community based)
 - Ambulance transport for emergencies
 - NSW Health Pathology services
 - Interpreting services

- If you have a Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) or Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV), you are eligible to apply for the [Special Benefit 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 New South Wales, the SRSS Program is delivered by:
 - [Life Without Barriers](#) Ph 02 9508 4100 (Rockdale) / 02 8830 7601 or 02 8830 7602 (Parramatta) / info@lwb.org.au
 - [Settlement Services International](#). Contact information is [here](#).

- [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](#)