

**Worker Help****Line:**

03 9481 0655

**Legal****Assistance****Line:**

03 9481 0355

**Payments available to assist with relief and recovery**

- An individual impacted by disaster may become eligible for new or existing payments.
- Disaster Payments and Disaster Allowances can become available through Centrelink for specified local government areas affected by declared disasters.
  - Disaster payment is a one-off lump sum payment, and Disaster Allowance is a temporary income support payment for people who have lost income as a direct result of the disaster. The payments each have specific eligibility requirements.
  - When applying for Disaster Allowance we recommend keeping records of documents which show loss of income as Centrelink may later review eligibility.
  - More information can be found here [www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/natural-disaster-support](http://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/natural-disaster-support)
- Crisis Payment (for other extreme circumstances) is available for relocation due to a disaster. Specific eligibility criteria apply and can be found on Centrelink's website.
- State Governments will often release emergency payments to assist with relief and recovery.
  - We recommend accessing the 'VicEmergency' website [www.emergency.vic.gov.au](http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au)
  - The 'Relief & Recovery' page will show current disasters, state payments available and contact details for more information on available payments.
  - [www.vic.gov.au/emergency-recovery-victoria](http://www.vic.gov.au/emergency-recovery-victoria) also has updated information on current and past disasters and available support, including payments.

**Identification documents**

- Identification documents are often required to apply for new payments. Where a person loses their identity documents due to a disaster, an Alternative Identity Form can be used to temporarily establish identity for the purpose of receiving payments.

**Updating Centrelink information - change of circumstances and postal address**

- Centrelink recipients must update Centrelink within 14 days of any change in circumstances that *might* affect their payment. This includes relocation and changes in care of children. Updating changes in circumstances reduces the risk of overpayments and future debts.
- Centrelink will sometimes send important notices and correspondence via post, particularly where legislation requires. Centrelink recipients should update their postal address with Centrelink if necessary. Many post offices allow post to be sent to their care.

**Pause on mutual obligations**

- Mutual obligations may be automatically paused by Workforce Australia, or can be paused upon individual request of a recipient. Workforce Australia's website will provide updated details of locations with paused obligations, check these regularly as they can be changed or extended.

**Leaving the principal home and insurance payouts – effect on Centrelink payments**

- Centrelink recipients who relocate from their principal home due to a disaster, can seek to have their home be exempted from the assets test under 'temporary vacation of property' provisions for up to 24 months. These exemptions are not automatic and usually need to be requested
- There are also provisions which allow insurance payouts to be exempted from the assets test.

**Debts and compensation preclusion periods**

- Being impacted by a disaster can be considered a 'special circumstance' for the purpose of seeking a compensation preclusion period reduction or waiver of a Centrelink debt.