

## Financial support for individuals affected by the Victorian floods and storms, December 2023 and January 2024

**Worker Help  
Line:**  
03 9481 0655

**Legal  
Assistance  
Line:**  
03 9481 0355

This sheet outlines the relief and recovery payments that are available for communities impacted by the Victorian Floods and Storms that commenced on 24 December 2023.

The assistance is available for communities and councils within the following local government areas:

Alpine	Greater Bendigo	Murrindindi
Baw Baw	Loddon	South Gippsland
Benalla	Macedon Ranges	Strathbogie
Campaspe	Mansfield	Wellington
East Gippsland	Mitchell	Yarra Ranges
Gannawarra	Mount Alexander	

### Emergency relief payments if your home has been impacted

#### Victorian Government Emergency Relief payment:

- The Victorian Government has released emergency payments for eligible community members whose homes have been impacted by the floods and storms, to assist with immediate and essential needs like emergency food, shelter, clothing, medication and accommodation.
- This includes a one-off payment of \$640 per adult and \$320 per child, up to a maximum of \$2240 per eligible family.
- You may be eligible for a relief payment if you have unmet relief needs and:
  - your principal place of residence is, or was, in an evacuation warning area, and the floods or storms have damaged your home; *or*
  - your home has flooded above the floor.
- To apply, contact your local council. You can search for your local council and their contact details at: [www.vic.gov.au/know-your-council](http://www.vic.gov.au/know-your-council)
- For further assistance or information, call VicEmergency on 1800 226 226 or visit the website [www.emergency.vic.gov.au](http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au)

### Payments if you have had to relocate or leave your home

#### Victorian Government emergency re-establishment assistance

- You may be able to access financial help to return home if:
  - you cannot live in your home because it is damaged or destroyed; *or*
  - you cannot access your home for more than 7 days because of flooding.
- To register, call the Victorian Government Emergency Recovery Hotline on 1800 560 760.

#### Centrelink Crisis Payment:

- You may be eligible to get a one-off Crisis Payment from Centrelink if you've had to change where you live due to the Floods or Storms and it's unreasonable for you to return to your home in the near future.
- You need to be receiving a Centrelink income support payment, or be eligible for one, to receive Crisis Payment.
- If eligible, Centrelink will make payment that is equal to one week of your basic rate of pay.
- Specific eligibility criteria apply which can be found online at <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/crisis-payment>
- Apply directly with Centrelink using your online MyGov account, attend a Centrelink centre or call your regular Centrelink payment line.

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## Other payments and updates

- In some cases, severe floods and storms can be declared a natural disaster event by the Australian Government. After a declaration, Disaster Recovery Payment and Disaster Recovery Allowance may be released through Centrelink.
- SSRV will update this factsheet if further disaster related payments become available through Centrelink.

## Resources

- **VicEmergency** [www.emergency.vic.gov.au](http://www.emergency.vic.gov.au).  
The 'Relief & Recovery' page has information about Government support payments. VicEmergency can be contacted at 1800 226 226.
- **Emergency Recovery Victoria** [www.vic.gov.au/emergency-recovery-victoria](http://www.vic.gov.au/emergency-recovery-victoria).  
This website also has information on current and past disasters and available support, including payments.
- **Disaster Legal Help Victoria** [www.disasterlegalhelp.org.au/](http://www.disasterlegalhelp.org.au/)  
This website has information about how to access legal support if you have legal issues because of flooding, contains financial support information, and can put you in touch with other support organisations.
- **Social Security Rights Victoria** [www.ssrv.org.au](http://www.ssrv.org.au)  
We encourage you to phone us if you have been impacted by the Floods or Storms and require Centrelink information or legal assistance.
- Our Legal Assistance Line is open Monday to Thursday, 10-1pm and 2pm-4pm.
- You can call us on 03 9481 0355.

## Centrelink tips if you have been affected by Victorian floods and storms

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### Legal

#### Assistance

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#### **Keep your Identification documents in safe and accessible location.**

- Identification documents are often required to apply for new Centrelink payments.
- If you have lost your identity documents due to a disaster, an Alternative Identity Form can be used to temporarily establish your identity with Centrelink for the purpose of receiving payments.

#### **Update your Centrelink information – including any 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.

#### **If you have been forced to leave your principal home- you may be eligible for assets exemptions.**

- Most Centrelink payments are subject to asset testing which will impact how much Centrelink will pay you.
- 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.

#### **Seeking a pause of 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.

#### **If you have a Centrelink Debt or Compensation Preclusion Period**

- 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. If you would like further information, please contact SSRV.

SSRV is committed to supporting those in Victoria affected by floods and storms.  
If you have any questions or would like further information, please call SSRV to discuss on  
03 9481 0355.