

Media Release

The Hon Daniel Andrews MP
Premier



Thursday, 1 October 2020

DOUBLING HARDSHIP SUPPORT FOR VICTORIA'S MOST VULNERABLE

The Victorian Government is doubling an assistance payment for those experiencing significant financial hardship as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, as part of a \$50 million program to make sure people are not falling through the cracks.

The Government has commissioned the Red Cross to provide financial assistance, information and referrals to those doing it tough during the pandemic who are not eligible for Commonwealth support or the International Student Emergency Relief Fund.

People living in Victoria with limited income or savings who are on temporary or provisional visas and undocumented migrants are now able to apply for a payment of up to \$800 per person – helping them out with living expenses while things are tough. Those who have already received a payment under the program will be eligible for a \$400 top up on their original payment.

Families may be eligible for more, depending on how many people are in the family and their individual circumstances. Payments begin to flow within five days of a correctly completed application being received. Applicants may be eligible for an additional payment after eight weeks if they are continuing to experience financial hardship.

The Brotherhood of St Laurence is working with community organisations to identify people who may be eligible and support them to apply.

The vital program has already delivered 6,588 Extreme Hardship Support Program payments, worth over \$3.3 million, supporting 8,341 individuals.

The program has also connected around 20,000 people with other Victorian government supports, including rent relief, international student support, local food relief services, health protection advice and mental health support.

The Extreme Hardship payment builds on other Victorian Government announcements to support the vulnerable during this global crisis, including the \$45 million International Student Emergency Relief Fund.

We have supported Victorian workers with a \$450 self-isolation payment, meaning those who have to miss a shift by staying home to wait on a coronavirus test result aren't out of pocket as a result.

We also established a \$1500 payment for workers who can't earn an income because they have to isolate or quarantine at home, which is now funded by the Commonwealth.

Find out more about the Extreme Hardship Support Program and other financial support available for people and businesses impacted by coronavirus at: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/financial-support-coronavirus-covid-19>

Quotes attributable to Premier Daniel Andrews

"This virus doesn't discriminate, but its effects are felt more harshly by the most vulnerable among us – those without savings or work who are experiencing extreme hardship."

"Whether it's making sure getting tested doesn't mean missing payday or support for those doing it really tough we are acting to look after all Victorians during this crisis."

Quotes attributable to Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers Luke Donnellan

"This vital program is providing payments for people in extreme financial hardship who don't qualify for Commonwealth assistance – while also connecting them to other support programs."

"This is about ensuring our most vulnerable community members, who may be new to Victoria, have the supports they need to stay safe and help us slow the spread of coronavirus."