

Media Release

Jaclyn Symes MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council

Attorney-General

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Tuesday, 1 November 2022

MORE SUPPORT FOR FLOOD-AFFECTED VICTORIANS TO RECOVER

Flood-affected Victorians will get more help to continue their recovery from the recent flood events, with more than \$152 million in further funding to help with housing, household bills, legal support and access to local services.

As the recovery from the recent flood event continues, it's important to provide safe housing for those most vulnerable so they aren't forced to choose between an unsafe roof over their head or not having one at all.

More than \$15 million will help people who have complex needs and were displaced by floodwaters avoid becoming homeless through securing alternative accommodation and new tenancies. It will also provide extra counselling and more family violence and case management services.

It's vital that those affected by disaster remain close and connected to their community – the funding will also go towards important initiatives that encourage people to stay together such as playgroups, repairing Neighbourhood Houses and Men's Sheds, and other family services.

Victorians whose uninsured houses have been severely damaged by floodwaters will get help to make their place safer.

A funding package of more than \$20 million will help councils assess the damage to houses and businesses so that the recovery can start as soon as possible, and expand the state-wide clean up program to make houses including rentals and small businesses safe from hazards like asbestos or electrical faults.

This means that Victorians can return to their homes and reopen their businesses sooner.

More support to help pay for the necessities will be offered with one-off water bill rebates of \$600 to urban customers who were inundated or had over-floor flooding, and \$300 to other customers affected by flooding but not inundated.

Emergency hardship payments will be established for eligible temporary visa holders similar to the existing Personal Hardship Assistance Program (PHAP) of \$580 per adult and \$290 per child.

Temporary visa holders can apply for these payments if they are ineligible for the PHAP due to their home not being impacted by the floods but are unable to continue working due to flood impact at their workplace, and are ineligible for Federal income support or payments.

A further \$15 million will go to the Council Flood Support Fund to allow 10 extra rural and regional councils to receive the \$500,000 payment. Additional funding will also be available for the most impacted councils to help them tackle the task of cleaning up and rebuilding.

More than \$22 million will help establish up to 16 regional recovery hubs with access to vital services to make sure people can keep getting in-person help for relief payments and other support they need.

This will help those who may have limited internet access or aren't as familiar with using the internet, as well as culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) communities.

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The Flood Recovery Program will get an \$11 million boost, helping more people to get support with housing, health and wellbeing, financial and legal counselling alongside practical assistance with accessing grants and completing paperwork, and advice for business owners whose livelihoods have been affected by the floods.

Almost \$8 million will go towards helping Victoria Legal Aid, local Community Legal Centres and Aboriginal legal services offer important legal help to flood-affected people on matters like family violence, housing and social security.

Aboriginal community-controlled organisations will also get \$2 million to provide relief and assistance to flood-affected locals who need help.

An additional \$13 million will be spent on making sure everyone who's been affected by the floods knows what support is available to them, including for additional community workers at Emergency Recovery Victoria to provide greater access to available recovery support.

Targeted advertising and communications in partnership with trusted community organisations will be rolled out, with a particular focus on making information about recovery support clear to young people, CALD communities and Aboriginal Victorians.

The Victorian Government will continue to work collaboratively with the Commonwealth Government on eligibility of funding and support under cost-sharing arrangements.

Anyone looking for information on what support is available to them should visit the [Emergency Recovery Victoria website](#) or call the Flood Recovery Hotline on 1800 560 760.

Quote attributable to Minister for Emergency Services Jaclyn Symes

"Recovery takes time – we've been clear that we're with communities for the long haul and will support them with whatever they need to stay close to their community and get back on their feet."

Quote attributable to Minister for Housing Danny Pearson

"A safe roof over your head is one of the most vital steps in recovery – this extra funding will help people worry about one less thing and be able to focus on what else they need to recover."

Quote attributable to Minister for Water Harriet Shing

"We know that taking the pressure off household bills is an important part of supporting flood-affected residents – these rebates will ease some of the pressure being faced by customers as relief and recovery efforts continue."

Quote attributable to Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Youth Ros Spence

"We are ensuring culturally and linguistically diverse communities and young people receive the vital supports they need."