

Centrelink payments for people affected by the 2019 North Queensland flood

If you've been affected by the floods you may be eligible for the one-off Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment. You may also be eligible for the Disaster Recovery Allowance, which is payable for 13 weeks.

What is the Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment (AGDRP)?

- A one-off payment
- \$1000 per adult
- \$400 per child under 16yrs.

Am I eligible the AGDRP?

You may be eligible for the AGDRP if you:

- are at least 16 years, or
- are receiving a Centrelink income support payment, and
- are adversely affected by the floods.

"Adversely affected" means you have suffered serious injury, harm or damage to property from the floods.

For example:

- you have been seriously injured
- you are the immediate family member of an Australian citizen or resident who died
- flood water has covered the interior floor of your principal place of residence
- your principal place of residence has been declared structurally unsound
- sewerage has contaminated the interior of your principal place of residence
- you are the principal carer of a dependent child who has experienced any of the above.

Your 'principal place of residence' is the place you usually live. It doesn't include holiday homes or investment properties.

Do I need to meet residency criteria?

To be eligible, you must be:

- an Australian permanent resident/citizen or
- a protected Special Category visa holder from New Zealand or
- a non-protected Special Category visa holder from New Zealand who has paid tax in Australia for at least one year in the past three financial years or will do so before 3 February 2020.



How can I apply for the AGDRP?

Centrelink say the fastest way to claim is by calling 180 22 66.

Claim forms are also available:

- online
- from your local disaster recovery centre
- from your nearest Centrelink office.

If you are a Non-Protected Special Category visa holder from New Zealand who has paid tax in Australia for at least one year in the past three financial years or will do so before 3 February 2020, you should claim using the *Far North Queensland Floods, February 2019 – Ex-gratia Disaster Recovery Payment* claim form.

Otherwise, use the *Far North Queensland Floods, February 2019 – Australian Government Disaster Recovery Payment* claim form.

You can lodge your claim:

- online
- at your nearest Centrelink office
- by fax to 1300 727 760
- by post to:

Emergency Processing Centre
Reply Paid 7815
Canberra BC ACT 2610

If you're affected by family and domestic violence you can call Centrelink on 132 850 between 8am and 5pm (local time) Monday to Friday and ask to speak with a departmental social worker.

Do time limits apply?

Yes, claims must be completed and lodged before 11 August 2019.

What documentation do I need?

You will need to provide evidence of damage/medical treatment. If you have trouble gathering evidence, do not delay lodging your claim. You can provide the evidence after you have lodged your claim.

Will I need proof of identity to apply?

Yes, proof of identity is required.

If you have lost the relevant documents because of the floods, ask Centrelink to help you verify your identity in other ways. It may help to talk to a Centrelink social worker.

What is the Disaster Recovery Allowance (DRA)?

The DRA is for:

- employees
- small business people
- farmers.

DRA can be paid for a maximum of 13 weeks. It's payable from the date you lose income as a direct result of the Far North Queensland Floods, February 2019.

The maximum payment rate of DRA is the same as Newstart Allowance or Youth Allowance and also depends on your circumstances including your income before and after the flood.



Am I eligible for the DRA?

You may be eligible for DRA if you:

- are 16 years or older at the time of the floods and are not a dependent child, and
- get an income by working in an area affected by the disaster or live in an area affected by the disaster, and
- lose income as a direct result of the Far North Queensland Floods that happened in February 2019.

Do I need to meet residency criteria?

You must be:

- an Australian permanent resident/citizen, or
- a protected Special Category visa holder from New Zealand, or
- a non-protected Special Category visa holder from New Zealand who has paid tax in Australia for at least one year in the past three financial years or will do so before 3 February 2020.

You cannot get the DRA for the same period as another form of income support like:

- A Centrelink Allowance or Pension including Parenting Payment and Carer Payment
- Parental Leave Pay
- Dad and Partner Pay
- ABSTUDY living allowance, or
- a Service Pension from the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Will I need proof of identity to apply?

Yes, proof of identity is required.

If you have lost the relevant documents because of the floods, ask Centrelink to help you verify your identity in other ways. It may help to talk to a Centrelink social worker.

How do I make a claim for the DRA?

Centrelink say the fastest way to claim is by calling 180 22 66.

Claim forms are also available:

- online
- from your local disaster recovery centre
- from your nearest Centrelink office.

If you are a Non-Protected Special Category visa holder from New Zealand who has paid tax in Australia for at least one year in the past three financial years or will do so before 3 February 2020 you should claim using the *Far North Queensland Floods, February 2019 – Ex-Gratia Disaster Recovery Allowance* claim form.

Otherwise, use the *Far North Queensland Floods, February 2019 – Disaster Recovery Allowance* claim form.

You can lodge your claim:

- online
- at your nearest Centrelink office
- by fax to 1300 727 760
- by post to:

Emergency Processing Centre
Reply Paid 7815
Canberra BC ACT 2610

If you're affected by family and domestic violence you can call Centrelink on 132 850 between 8am and 5pm (local time) Monday to Friday and ask to speak with a departmental social worker.



Do time limits apply?

Yes, claims must be completed and lodged before 11 August 2019.

What documentation do I need?

You need to provide evidence of your loss of income like:

- pay slips from an employer
- bank statements showing previous bank deposits from an employer
- a letter from your employer
- profit and loss statements
- BAS statement
- income tax returns, or
- other account documents identifying cash flow.

If you have trouble gathering evidence, do not delay lodging your claim. You can provide the evidence after you have lodged your claim.

Can I apply for the Beneficiary Tax Offset?

If you get Disaster Recovery Allowance you might be able to access Beneficiary Tax Offset which may reduce the amount of tax you have to pay. Talk to the Australian Taxation Office on 13 28 65 to find out more.



Can New Zealand citizens access these payments?

People from New Zealand who are not protected Special Category visa holders can also get these payments so long as they meet some extra requirements.

After 13 weeks, Australian permanent residents and protected Special Category visa holders who have not yet been able to return to work will be able to claim an alternative Centrelink payment.

People from New Zealand who are not protected Special Category visa holders can receive Newstart, Sickness Allowance or Youth Allowance for a maximum of six months if they have lived in Australia for 10 years or more. These payments can only be claimed once. For more information refer to Basic Rights Queensland's factsheet titled, *New Zealand Citizens In Australia & Social Security*.

Do you need extra help accessing our services?



We can organise for an accredited interpreter to help you. We are committed to making our services accessible to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with disabilities.

If you would like this factsheet explained in your language, please phone the Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50 to speak to an interpreter. Ask them to connect you to Legal Aid Queensland. If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment you can contact us using the National Relay Service. Visit www.relayservice.gov.au and ask for 1300 65 11 88 (our legal information line). These are free services.

Your Local Legal Aid Queensland office:

BRISBANE

44 Herschel St, 4000

BUNDABERG

3rd Floor, WIN Tower,
Cnr Quay & Barolin Sts, 4670

CABOOLTURE

Ground Floor, Kingsgate
42 King St, 4510

CAIRNS

Level 2, Cairns Square Complex,
42-52 Abbott St, 4870

INALA

Level 1, Inala Commonwealth
Offices, 20 Wirraway Pde, 4077

IPSWICH

Level 7, 117 Brisbane St, 4305

MACKAY

Ground Floor,
17 Brisbane St, 4740

MAROOCHYDORE

Ground Floor, M1 Building
1 Duporth Ave, 4558

MOUNT ISA

6 Miles St, 4825

ROCKHAMPTON

Ground Floor, 35 Fitzroy St, 4700

SOUTHPORT

Level 2, 7 Bay St, 4215

TOOWOOMBA

1st Floor, 154 Hume St, 4350

TOWNSVILLE

3rd Floor, Northtown
280 Flinders St, 4810

WOODRIDGE

1st Floor, Woodridge Place,
Cnr Ewing Rd & Carmody St, 4114

For more information
about our services visit
legalaid.qld.gov.au

or phone 1300 65 11 88
or 1300 650 143 (Indigenous Hotline)

