



Phone – 02 9517 2577  
Fax – 02 9517 2488  
Post – PO Box 854,  
Newtown NSW 2042  
Street – Suite 203, 1 Erskineville Road,  
Newtown NSW 2042  
Email – info@scarletalliance.org.au  
Web – www.scarletalliance.org.au  
ABN - 86 612 112 065

---

## Applying for JobSeeker Payments

### Summary points

- The Government has made some temporary changes to JobSeeker to make it easier to claim payments.
- You may receive up to \$1,115.70 a fortnight (with higher payments for single parents and carers). This amount includes the JobSeeker Payment plus an additional Coronavirus Supplement Payment of \$550 per fortnight. You may also receive two sets of \$750 economic support payments.
- You may be eligible for JobSeeker Payments if you:
  - have lost your job, do not have sufficient income to meet your financial needs or are sick or injured and unable to work (this includes workers who are sole traders, self-employed, full time, part time or casual)
  - are aged between 22 and 66 years old (there are other government payments for people who are older or younger)
  - are an Australian citizen and a permanent resident (including refugees), a protected Special Category Visa (SCV) holder or a non-protected SCV who has lived in Australia for 10 years (soon some skilled worker visa holders will also be eligible)
- Most visa holders are not eligible, including students, asylum seekers and refugees who are not permanent residents (refugees may be eligible for other payments).
- You can apply for JobSeeker Payments online through the myGov website: <https://my.gov.au/>. Please note that:
  - you can apply online and do not need to visit a service centre
  - you will be asked if your work has been affected by coronavirus – make sure to choose this option if it is true, as this will speed up the application process
  - if you are concerned about discrimination and criminalisation by disclosing that you are a sex worker, you can consider describing another aspect of your work
  - you will need ID documents and proof of your previous income. You can use a payment slip or a bank statement with payments to prove your previous income.

You can reach out to your local sex worker peer support organisation if you need help. Contact details are available here: <https://redbook.scarletalliance.org.au/home/sex-worker-orgs/>.

Please read the remainder of this document for further information. You can also visit: <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/jobseeker-payment>.

## Eligibility Criteria to apply for JobSeeker Payments

The Government has temporarily opened up the JobSeeker eligibility criteria to allow sole traders and self-employed workers to apply for JobSeeker payments and receive up to \$1,115.70 a fortnight (with higher payments for single parents and carers).

Full time, part time, casual or self-employed workers who have lost their jobs, had their hours reduced or do not have sufficient employment or income to meet their financial needs as a result of COVID-19 are also eligible to apply for the JobSeeker allowance and receive the increased payments.

If you are sick or injured and are unable to do your usual work or study, including as a result of being in isolation or hospital, you can apply for the JobSeeker allowance.

Note: Jobseeker Payment is the new name for Newstart.

Previously, the JobSeeker allowance only paid recipients up to \$565.70550 a fortnight. There is now an additional \$550 a fortnight coronavirus supplement payment. People who are already on the JobSeeker allowance will automatically have their payment increased up to \$1,115.70 a fortnight. New JobSeeker recipients will also receive the increased amount. The increased payment will start from the 27 April 2020.

JobSeeker payment amounts are determined by income testing (with reduced payments depending on the amount you earn) but the coronavirus supplement payment (\$550 a fortnight) does not reduce if you receive Centrelink benefits.

To be eligible for JobSeeker payments you must also be:

- aged between 22 and Age Pension Age. If you are younger than 22 years of age and meet additional eligibility criteria, you may be eligible to receive other financial and health support, such as [Youth Allowance](#), [Low Income Health Care Card](#), or [Disability Support Pension](#) to name a few. Use [Centrelink's Payment and Service Finder](#) to find out which payments you may be eligible to apply for.  
The Age Pension age is increasing by six months every two years until it is 67 years old. At the moment, the Age Pension age is considered to be 66 or older. This will increase by 6 months on 1 July 2021.
- an Australian citizen, a permanent residence visa holder or a protected Special Category Visa (SCV) holder. NZ passport holders who are on the non-protected SCV and have lived in Australia continuously for at least 10 years are eligible to apply for this payment. The normal 2-4 year wait period before being able to access Centrelink has been lifted for permanent residence visa holders.
- Refugees on a permanent visa (e.g. subclasses 200, 201, 202, 203, 204 and 866) are eligible for JobSeeker, the Coronavirus Supplement, Economic Support Payments and JobKeeper Subsidy. As the waiting period for permanent residents has been waived, refugees that were recently granted a permanent visa (subclass 200-204 and 866) as well those who have Australian citizenship are able to apply for JobSeeker.
- The Government is in the process of changing eligibility criteria for subclass 491 – Skilled Work Regional (Provisional) and subclass 494 – Skilled Employer Sponsored Regional (Provisional) to provide holders of these visas the same access to welfare and government services as permanent visa holders.

To get JobSeeker Payments you must:

[http://www.scarletalliance.org.au/library/applying\\_for\\_JobSeeker](http://www.scarletalliance.org.au/library/applying_for_JobSeeker)

- meet [Centrelink's definition of unemployed](#). Centrelink has temporarily lifted the requirement of JobSeeker applicants who have been affected by the Coronavirus to search for employment (also referred to as mutual obligation requirements) as a condition of getting payments until 27 April 2020; or
- be sick or injured and are unable to do your usual work or study.

Centrelink has also temporarily suspended the requirement to provide the following when you claim the JobSeeker payment:

- an employment separation certificate
- bank statement
- proof of reduced work hours
- proof of your rental arrangements.

Who is not able to apply for JobSeeker payments:

- Most visa holders in Australia including Student and Bridging Visas are ineligible for Centrelink with the exception of visas that are listed on this page: <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/jobseeker-payment/who-can-get-it/residence-rules/residence-descriptions>
- People seeking asylum, including those on a Bridging Visa, are not eligible for JobSeeker payments, the Coronavirus Supplement or Economic Stimulus Package
- Refugees on a Temporary Protection Visa (TPV) or a Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) are not eligible to apply for JobSeeker payments. However, if you are on one of these visas, you may be eligible for other payments, such as the Special Benefit, the Coronavirus supplement and the one off Economic Support payment. Accessing Centrelink payments for long periods of time (over 30 months) may affect your eligibility for other visa streams. See [Information about Eligibility For Social Security During COVID19 for more information](#).
- New Zealand passport holders who are on the non-protected Special Category Visa (SCV) and have not lived in Australia continuously for at least 10 years are likely not eligible. Check this Government page for more information about NZ eligibility <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/topics/new-zealand-citizens-claiming-payments-australia/30721>
- People who do not have a fixed address to provide to Centrelink will not be eligible. We advise you to identify a mailing address that your documents can be sent to. This can include a welfare organisation that is supporting you.
- People without ID will not be able to complete the application. Confirmation of ID is required for a MyGov account. If you are without a fixed address you can have your ID sent to a welfare organisation that is supporting you. This will assist in your application.
- If you are not in Australia and an Australian resident on the day you claim JobSeeker payments, you are not eligible.

### **Creating a MyGov account and linking to a government service**

If you have never accessed Centrelink before, you will first need to create a [MyGov](#) account to register your 'intention to claim' JobSeeker payments. MyGov is an online portal that provides users access to a range of government services, such as Centrelink, Medicare, My Health Record, and the Australian Taxation Office, through a single online site. You will need an email address or a phone number to

create an account. You will also be required to provide your personal details, such as your name, date of birth and address.

To create a MyGov account:

1. Go to [my.gov.au](https://my.gov.au) and select 'Create an account'.
2. Read the Terms of Reference and Privacy Notice and select 'I agree' to continue.
3. You will be asked to enter an email address to sign into your MyGov account. The email address you provide cannot be shared with another myGov account. For example, you and your partner cannot use the same email to create two different MyGov accounts or share a MyGov account.
4. Centrelink will then send you a code to your email address that you will need to enter into the next screen.
5. Retrieve the code from your email and enter in the code. If you do not receive an email from MyGov with a code, check that you have typed in your email correctly and the MyGov email has not been redirected into your Spam or Junk folders.
6. Next, you will be asked for a mobile phone number to send you one-time use codes to use each time you sign into your MyGov account. You can opt to not provide a mobile phone number. Instead, you can set up 'secret questions' to answer when signing in.
7. You will be required to make a password. Make sure you keep a copy of your password somewhere safe.
8. Then, you will be asked to create 3 questions and provide answers for those questions to authenticate your identity when signing in. You can choose from a range of questions provided or write your own question. Make sure you keep a copy of your answers somewhere safe or choose answers that are easy to remember.
9. Lastly, you will be provided with your username. You can also use the email you created your MyGov account as your username to sign in. You will also be sent an email with your username.

Once you have created a MyGov account, you will need to link your MyGov account with Centrelink, Medicare or the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) to authenticate your identity. You only need to link to one of these services to allow you to register your 'intention to claim' online. You cannot register your 'intention to claim' without first linking to one of these services.

### ***Linking MyGov with Centrelink***

If your MyGov account is already linked with Centrelink, you can go straight into lodging a claim for JobSeeker payments rather than registering your 'intention to claim'. Registering your 'intention to claim' is only recommended for people who do not already have a MyGov account that is linked to Centrelink or are not ready to lodge a claim for payment with the supporting documentation.

If you want to link your MyGov account with Centrelink, you will need your Customer Access Number (CAN), a 'linking code' from Centrelink, or your Customer Reference Number (CRN) to proceed. If you do not have these, you can link your MyGov account with Medicare or the ATO instead. If you have received Centrelink in the past, you can retrieve your CRN or Customer Access Number (CAN) by calling Centrelink or looking for your CRN in any emails or letters they have sent you. If your parent/s or guardian/s have a centrelink account and have ever received Family Tax Benefit Part A or B or any other family income support payment for you, your CRN can also be found on their account.

If you haven't received Centrelink in the past and you want to link your MyGov account with Centrelink, you can establish your identity and get a CRN through myGov. You do not need to visit a service centre to get a CRN.

You may need to call Centrelink for assistance in accessing a 'linking code and your CRN if you have problems doing this online. Please note that current call wait times with Centrelink are long and unpredictable.

Centrelink will ask you for details from one or more of these documents to confirm your identity before giving you a 'linking code':

- Australian birth certificate
- Australian citizenship by descent certificate
- Australian citizenship certificate
- Australian driver licence
- Australian marriage certificate
- Valid Australian passport
- Australian visas
- Certificate of identity
- Change of name certificate
- Department of Immigration issued ImmiCard
- Australian Shooters Licence
- Australian Security Licence
- Overseas Passport government issued Proof of Age (POA) cards
- Secondary student photo identification cards.

You do not necessarily need to link your MyGov account with Centrelink or have any of your Centrelink details to register your 'intention to claim'. Instead, you can link your account with Medicare or the ATO.

### ***Linking MyGov with Medicare***

If you want to link your MyGov account with Medicare, you will need to provide your Medicare Card number and online password or a 'linking code'. If you do not have these, you can select 'I do not have an online account with Medicare'. You will then be required to provide your Medicare details to link your MyGov account to Medicare. You will also need to provide your legal name, date of birth and address to proceed. They may ask you additional questions to authenticate your identity, such as details about the doctor, General practice, and date of your last medical appointment that you had using your Medicare card.

### ***Linking MyGov with the ATO***

Alternatively, you can link your MyGov account with the ATO office. However, if you are linking your MyGov account to the ATO, you will need to provide MyGov your phone number and change your sign in settings to allow MyGov to send you one off security codes to sign into your MyGov account.

To link your MyGov account with the ATO, you will need to provide your Tax File Number (TFN) and details from two of the following documents:

- a notice of assessment received in the last five years
- a PAYG payment summary received in the last two years
- a super account statement from the last five years

[http://www.scarletalliance.org.au/library/applying\\_for\\_JobSeeker](http://www.scarletalliance.org.au/library/applying_for_JobSeeker)

- a dividend statement from the last two years
- a Centrelink payment summary from the last two years
- your bank account details. The bank account you use must be an account that you had your individual income tax refund paid into last year, or one that has earned interest in the last two years.

If you are still unable to verify your details, you can call the ATO to obtain a 'linking code' to link your MyGov with the ATO. The ATO will verify your details by asking you questions from one of the following identification documents:

- Australian birth certificate
- Australian passport
- Australian citizen certificate
- ImmiCard
- Australian driver's licence or learner's permit
- Medicare card
- Australian marriage certificate
- Change of name certificate
- Australian visa with an overseas passport.

Once you have linked your MyGov account to one of these services, you are now ready to register your 'intention to claim'.

### **Registering an 'Intention to Claim'**

Registering your 'intention to claim' means you are notifying Centrelink about your need to get JobSeeker payments and you are starting the process of making a claim. It is important to note that by registering your 'intention to claim', you have not yet fully applied for JobSeeker payments. The Government introduced the option to register your 'intention to claim' to ensure people who have never accessed Centrelink before or are not ready to make a full claim can quickly start the process of starting to make a claim for payments without the need to verify their identity, have a CRN or go to a Centrelink office.

To register your 'intention to claim', you need to first log into your MyGov account. Your MyGov account should already be linked with Centrelink, the ATO or Medicare. If your account is not linked with one of these services, then you need to follow the steps indicated above to link your MyGov account with either Centrelink, the ATO or Medicare. You cannot register your 'intention to claim' without linking your account with one of these government services first.

After you have signed into your MyGov account, you will be asked to continue into the 'Government Support for Coronavirus' page. You will then be asked if you would like to register your 'intention to claim'. Once you have agreed to this, MyGov will confirm your legal name and contact details with you and ask if you:

- agree to share your contact details with Centrelink
- that your circumstances are affected by Coronavirus
- are registering your intention to claim a payment.

After you have agreed to these details, you have registered your 'intention to claim' and Centrelink will get in touch with you to let you know of the next steps. They may get in touch via email, SMS or phone call. Note that the phone call will be from a Private Number. During this communication, they will

confirm your identity, give you a CRN, and a 'linking code' to connect your MyGov account with Centrelink. Also note that you can confirm your identity and get a CRN online using myGov.

If they do not contact you as described above, it is worth calling them to follow up your 'intention to claim.' It is important to make sure your 'intention to claim' is being processed. You may have to wait on hold. Wait times on the phone are unpredictable.

If you registered your 'intention to claim' between 23 and 29 March 2020, your payment will be back paid to the 23 March 2020 *if* you submit your full claim and requested documentation before 19 April 2020 *and the application was* successful. Sex workers who registered their 'intention to claim' between 23 and 29 March are encouraged to lodge their full claim and requested documentation *as soon as possible* to make sure that you are back paid **from the day you registered**. If you registered your 'intention to claim' after the 30 March, submit your full claim and all the requested documentation, and your application is successful, you will be back paid from the day you registered your 'intention to claim'.

If you have not registered your 'intention to claim' yet, please do so immediately. You can only be back paid to the date you registered your intention to claim. The sooner you register, the more support you will receive once the application is successful.

## **Lodging a claim for JobSeeker Payments**

### ***Registering 'intention to claim' VS lodging a claim***

Lodging a claim for JobSeeker payment is different to registering your 'intention to claim'. As highlighted above, registering your 'intention to claim' is only recommended for people who do not have a MyGov account that is linked to Centrelink or are not ready to lodge a claim in full to begin their process of starting to make a claim for payments.

When you are registering your 'intention to claim', you are only notifying the government that you are interested in making a claim for payments. On the other hand, lodging a claim refers to you filling out an application and providing requested documentation for Centrelink to consider your eligibility for Centrelink payments.

### ***Lodging a claim for JobSeeker payments***

To lodge a claim for JobSeeker payment, you must verify your identity with Centrelink, be provided with a 'linking code' to link your MyGov account with Centrelink, and be provided with your CRN. You can establish your identity and get a CRN online using myGov (as mentioned you don't need to visit a service centre to do this). The type of documentation they may request to verify your details with Centrelink are listed under the section "Linking MyGov with Centrelink".

After you have linked your MyGov account with Centrelink using your 'linking code', you can lodge a claim for JobSeeker payments using the Centrelink service link listed in the MyGov site.

When you are lodging a claim for JobSeeker payments, you will be asked if your employment was affected by Coronavirus. If your work was affected by Coronavirus, make sure you specify this on your application as it will streamline the application process.

Normally during the JobSeeker application process, you would have been asked to provide details about your previous place of employment such as your previous employer's name, job title, date you

stopped working, reason you stopped working, and if you received any leave or redundancy. The supporting documentation and information Centrelink will request of you during your application process will depend on what information you have already provided about your employment status in the past, whether you are applying as a sole trader or employee, and your previous employment history. For example, if you have notified Centrelink in the past that you are a sole trader, Centrelink may request an asset and liability statement and proof that your business has closed. This could be provided in the form of a declaration letter stating that your business has closed due to the Coronavirus. If you would like extra documentation to prove this, your local sex worker organisation may be able to provide a letter for you to include as documentation.

While the Service Australia site states that they have temporarily suspended the requirement to provide particular documents (such as an employment separation certificate, bank statement, proof of reduced work hours, and proof of your rental arrangements), the JobSeeker application process may still request some of these documents. It is also possible that they may request these documents later down the track. It is best to go ahead and apply with what documentation you have. If they ask you for documents later down the track, you can provide as requested.

### ***Income Test and Reporting Income***

To get JobSeeker payments you will need to report you and your partner's income fortnightly. While the requirement to report your assets has been lifted, Centrelink is still income testing JobSeeker recipients and their partners. Centrelink will work out each fortnightly payment depending on how much you and your partner earn in the previous fortnight. How much your payment will be impacted by you and your partner's income depends on a range of factors. Check out the [Income test for JobSeeker Payment, Partner Allowance, and Widow Allowance](#) page for more information. Centrelink has recently increased the amount a JobSeeker recipient's partner can earn before it affects their eligibility and payment amount. Also, the \$550/fortnight Coronavirus supplement is not reduced based on an income test. Even if you are earning close to the cutoff (or maximum income permitted) you may still be eligible for the full \$550/fortnight Coronavirus supplement.

### ***Centrelink Definition of a Partner or Couple***

Your partner's income affects your eligibility to claim a payment. Centrelink will consider you a member of a couple if you are either married, in a registered relationship or in a de facto relationship. A 'registered relationship' is one that is registered under state and territory laws. For example, in NSW, you can register your relationship with the Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages.

### **Successful applicants for JobSeeker Payments**

Usually, Centrelink will let you know whether your claim was successful in 21 days. As there is a large volume of people claiming payments at the moment, it is possible that Centrelink will take longer to process your claim. If your claim is successful, Centrelink will start depositing money into your bank account fortnightly and backpay you what you are owed.

Also, Centrelink ordinarily applies a 1 week waiting period before JobSeeker payments begin. This waiting period has been removed for new successful JobSeeker recipients that submitted their claim



between 12 March and 12 June 2020 in response to Coronavirus. However, other waiting periods may still apply. Centrelink will determine how long you need to wait depending on:

- the payment you are claiming
- how much money you have
- the reasons you don't have a job.

## **Privacy concerns and Disclosure of Sex Work**

Documents requested by Centrelink may include material that would identify you as a sex worker. Once collected and added to your application, these documents become part of your myGov account. It is also possible that Centrelink will keep a record of what you disclose during any communication you have with them, such as when communicating with them via email or on the phone.

If you are concerned about discrimination and criminalisation by disclosing that you are a sex worker, you can consider describing another aspect of your work such as- 'Personal Consultant', 'Lifestyle Coach', 'Artist', 'Performer', 'Personal Services' or 'Online Content Editor/Producer'. For each of these professions you will be expected to have some documentation as proof of previous income from this work. This can be in the form of payments into your bank account.

Centrelink are focussed on collecting information and documentation that prove that your income has reduced. A bank statement that shows an income being received but has now reduced or stopped is likely to be an important document. If you have lodged a tax return in the past, this is a way of showing your previous income in comparison with your income in the recent months.

If you have large gaps in your income or work, Centrelink may probe you about how you supported yourself during this time. If you say you are being supported by family, friends or a partner, they may request documents about their income and this may impact your fortnightly JobSeeker payment. However, this does not necessarily mean that you will be refused payment by Centrelink.

## **\$750 lump sum economic support for JobSeeker recipients**

The Australian Government has announced two sets of \$750 economic support payments that will be paid automatically to certain recipients of social security and veterans payments and concession card holders. This means eligible recipients do not have to apply to get these payments. The payments will be automatically deposited into your account if you are eligible.

The first \$750 payment was paid from 31 March 2020, and was automatically paid to JobSeeker recipients bank accounts. Even if you are on more than one Centrelink payment, you can only receive the first \$750 lump sum once and you must be residing in Australia to be eligible for the payment. New JobSeeker recipients and concession card holders who had their claim approved by 13 April 2020 automatically received this payment through Centrelink.

The second \$750 lump sum will be paid from 13 July 2020. JobSeeker recipients who are receiving the Coronavirus Supplement on 10 July 2020 will be excluded from the second \$750 lump sum payment. This includes previous Sickness Allowance, Wife Pension and Bereavement Allowance recipients who transitioned to JobSeeker allowance on 20 March 2020. Check this Government fact sheet for eligibility:

[https://treasury.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-03/Fact\\_sheet-Payments\\_to\\_support\\_households\\_0.pdf](https://treasury.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-03/Fact_sheet-Payments_to_support_households_0.pdf)

[http://www.scarletalliance.org.au/library/applying\\_for\\_JobSeeker](http://www.scarletalliance.org.au/library/applying_for_JobSeeker)

## Support from Sex Worker Organisations

Applying for Centrelink payments can be a stressful, convoluted, and confusing experience. Please don't hesitate to reach out to the sex worker peer support organisation in your state or territory. Peer workers can help to guide you through the 'intention to claim' or application process, or try to answer any further questions you may have about any of the information contained in this document. Visit <https://redbook.scarletalliance.org.au/home/sex-worker-orgs/> for the contact details of sex worker peer support organisations in your state or territory.

