



## Health and wellbeing support for international students affected by COVID-19

**Support is available if you need help or someone to talk to about how COVID-19 may be affecting you.**

This is a challenging situation for many people, especially international students, who are valued members of Australia's education communities. The implications of the spread of the virus may be causing you distress, anxiety or concern, particularly if you have family in affected areas or have not been able to return home because of travel restrictions. We understand that getting home may be difficult at the moment, due to restricted flight access or borders closing in other countries.

**It is OK to seek help. Many people do – including international students.  
Seeking help will not affect your enrolment or your visa.**

### Assistance with enrolments courses and support services

You should contact your education provider for support, particularly if you are concerned that your enrolment, fees or other issues related to your studies may be affected by these circumstances. Providers are offering flexible arrangements for students affected by this situation. Look on their website and call their student support team. Your institution may offer a range of counselling and advice services to help you.

### Access to health and wellbeing support

Your Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) assists you to access and meet the costs of medical and hospital care while in Australia. Illness due to COVID-19 is not an exclusion to your health insurance and you are entitled to hospital and pathology (testing) services covered in your policy. You can contact your OSHC provider to find out about health services covered by your policy and how to access them, including counselling and other mental health support. Health support you receive is confidential and will not affect your visa conditions or your student enrolment.

In addition, most states are waiving COVID-19 related medical fees for people affected by the virus without health insurance.

State specific information can be accessed below:

- **VIC:** [Study Melbourne](#) website
- **NSW:** [Study NSW](#) website
- **QLD:** [Queensland Government](#) website
- **WA:** [Government of Western Australia Department of Health](#) website
- **ACT:** [ACT Government COVID-19](#) website

| Health insurer                            | Insurers' contact |
|---|-------------------|
| <a href="#">ahm OSHC</a>                  | 134 148           |
| <a href="#">Allianz Global Assistance</a> | 13 67 42          |
| <a href="#">BUPA Australia</a>            | 1300 884 235      |
| <a href="#">CBHS International Health</a> | 1300 174 538      |
| <a href="#">Medibank Private</a>          | 1300 561 012      |
| <a href="#">NIB OSHC</a>                  | 1800 775 204      |

International students that hold a student visa but are not in Australia due to COVID-19 should contact their private health insurer about options on health insurance coverage required for your visa. Your private health insurer may let you suspend your visa required coverage during this time when you cannot come to Australia. You can view the [Department of Health's website](#) for information about flexible health cover arrangements during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Feeling distressed? Online resources that can help

If you are feeling upset, vulnerable, fearful, anxious, confused, isolated, a sense of loss or are not able to sleep you may benefit from talking to a doctor or mental health professional. Contact your OSHC provider for information about available mental health services. Information on anxiety and loss can also be found at:

- [Department of Health](#) website
- [Beyond Blue](#) website
- [Health Victoria](#) website - [Information on stigma, discrimination, and mental health](#)
- [Orygen Youth Health](#) website - [Factsheet on anxiety for young people](#)

### Access to emergency relief

The Australian Government has announced funding for charities and community organisations to deliver emergency relief and casework support to people on temporary visas experiencing significant difficulties. This emergency relief is for individuals and families who are 'at imminent risk of not being able to pay a bill'. There are no citizenship or residency requirements to access emergency relief.

International students can access a range of emergency relief providers by searching for participating organisations on the [DDS Grants Service Directory](#) website.

Further information is available by viewing the [Urgent support for 300 charities and community organisations](#) media release.

## Assistance for financial hardship

Contact your education provider in the first instance if you are experiencing financial hardship. Many education providers are supporting international students facing hardship because of COVID-19 restrictions. Most state and territories have also announced employment assistance schemes for residents and financial hardship support for international students.

State-specific information can be accessed below:

- **VIC:** [Study Melbourne](#) website
- **QLD:** [The Queensland Cabinet and Ministerial Directory](#) website
- **SA:** [Study Adelaide](#) website
- **TAS:** [Tasmanian Government Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#) website
- **WA:** [Study Perth Australia](#) website
- **ACT:** [ACT Government Open Government](#) website
- **NT:** [Northern Territory Government – Department of the Chief Minister](#) website

International students' working [hours have been extended](#) for those working in aged care and nursing or enrolled in healthcare related courses supporting the effort against COVID-19.

Temporary residents are no longer eligible to apply for a COVID-19 early release of superannuation (from the 2020–21 financial year onwards). However, superannuation can be released early in some other limited circumstances.

Please visit the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) website for advice on:

- Gaining [early access to your superannuation](#)
- [temporary residents and superannuation](#), including how to claim superannuation if you are a temporary resident who is departing Australia.

If you think your employer is not paying the correct amount of superannuation, follow the steps at [unpaid superannuation](#). You should [report unpaid superannuation contributions](#) to the ATO.

## Assistance with your accommodation

Contact your education provider or accommodation provider in the first instance if you are struggling to pay your rent or having problems with your accommodation. You can talk to international student support staff if you are living on-campus or your homestay service provider. There is a national six-month moratorium on evictions, so if you are renting, discuss your situation with your real estate agent or landlord and try to come to an agreement. There are also organisations such as tenants' unions and consumer advocates that can provide assistance and advice.

To find out more, visit the relevant Fair Trading government agency in your state or territory.

These are:

- [Fair Trading New South Wales](#)
- [Consumer Affairs Victoria](#)
- [Access Canberra](#) (Australian Capital Territory)
- [Queensland Government](#)
- [Consumer Affairs Northern Territory](#)
- [Tasmanian Government](#)
- [South Australian Government](#)

- [Government of Western Australia](#)

## Visa Information

Information about visas and travel restrictions is available on the [Staying in Australia](#) page on the [Department of Home Affairs](#) COVID-19 website or call the Department of Home Affairs on 131 881.

## Help lines, support groups and services from voluntary organisations

If you want to talk to someone about how you are feeling you may like to contact:

### myCompass

myCompass helps deal with the pressures of study. It has a self-help service that promotes resilience and wellbeing for people with mild to moderate stress, anxiety and/or depression. Visit the [myCompass](#) website.

### Youth Beyond Blue

Information, online and phone counselling for young people 12 to 25 years old, who can contact trained mental health professionals 7 days 24 hours.

- Phone: 1300 22 4636 Open 24/7
- Visit the [Youth Beyond Blue](#) website.
- [Chat online](#): Open 3pm - 12am (AEDST)

### Lifeline Australia

Lifeline is a crisis support service that provides short-term support at any time for people who are having difficulty coping or staying safe.

- Phone: 13 11 14
- Visit the [Lifeline Australia](#) website.

### Kids Helpline

Kids Helpline is a free, private and confidential phone and online counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25 years.

- Phone: 1800 55 1800
- Visit the [Kids Helpline](#) website.

### One Door Mental Health

One Door Mental Health offers bilingual support services for anxiety and emotional support. Services available in Mandarin. Visit the [One Door Mental Health](#) website.

### Headspace

A free service that supports young people aged between 12 and 25 and their families going through a tough time. Phone: 1800 650 890 9am - 1am (AEDST) Visit the [Headspace](#) website

### ReachOut

ReachOut provides practical tools and support to help young people aged 14–25 years get through everything from everyday issues to tough times. Visit the [ReachOut](#) website.

### Study in Australia social media channels for international students

Stay connected with fellow students through:

- [Study in Australia Facebook](#)
- [Study in Australia Weibo](#)
- [Study in Australia WeChat](#)

### Information is also available from Study Hubs:

- **Melbourne:** [Study Melbourne](#) website
- **Perth:** [Study Perth](#) website
- **Adelaide:** [Study Adelaide](#) website
- **ACT:** [Study Canberra](#) website
- **Sydney:** [Study Sydney](#) website
- **NT:** [Study NT](#) website
- **TAS:** [Study Tasmania](#) website
- **QLD:** [Study Queensland](#) website

## Up to date information about support for students affected by the COVID-19

- [Student support](#) – Study in Australia website
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information for international students](#) – Department of Education, Skills and Employment website
- Email: [international.students@dese.gov.au](mailto:international.students@dese.gov.au)

- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) health alert](#): Department of Health National Coronavirus Health Information website
- National Coronavirus Health Information Line: 1800 020 080
- [Smart traveller Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) International travel advice](#) - Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website