

Support is available for LGBTIQ Victorians facing hardship

VICTORIA

Good afternoon,

As we enter Stage 4 restrictions in metropolitan Melbourne and Stage 3 restrictions in regional Victoria, we are writing to let you know that financial and mental health support is available for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and gender diverse, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) people seeking help during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

We would appreciate you sharing this information with your networks.

Financial support

We understand that many people across Victoria have lost work or have had their hours reduced due to the economic impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

The Victorian Government is providing financial support to individuals and businesses affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19). This includes a worker support payment and hardship payment for people required to self-isolate or quarantine, emergency food relief and an emergency rent relief grant.

For information on the range of financial support available see:

- Victorian Government information: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/financial-support-coronavirus-covid-19#extreme-hardship-support-program>.
- Commonwealth Government information: <https://treasury.gov.au/coronavirus>

For those people ineligible for income support

The Victorian Government is offering relief payments to international students, which can be found at: <https://www.studymelbourne.vic.gov.au/news-updates/international-student-emergency-relief-fund>

The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre (03 9326 6066) and the Australian Red Cross (www.redcross.org.au) may be able to provide basic needs and assistance to asylum seekers, refugees and other temporary visa holders experiencing extreme hardship.

Importantly, the coronavirus (COVID-19) test is free for everyone in Victoria. This includes people without a Medicare card, such as visitors from overseas, migrant workers and asylum seekers.

Anyone who is legally allowed to work in Australia is also eligible to participate in the Working for Victoria initiative, which helps jobseekers find work and access online training,

and helps employers quickly find workers with the skills and experience they need. For more information, please see: <https://www.vic.gov.au/workingforvictoria>

Mental health support

We know that many people, including those who identify as LGBTIQ, are experiencing mental health challenges at this time.

For advice on looking after your mental health during the pandemic and a list of support services, including LGBTIQ-specific support services, see:

- Victorian Government information: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/mental-health-resources-coronavirus-covid-19>
- Commonwealth Government information: <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/ongoing-support-during-coronavirus-covid-19/looking-after-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-covid-19-restrictions>.

The Commonwealth Government is providing an extra 10 Medicare-subsidised psychological therapy sessions for Victorians affected by the second wave of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

For the most up-to-date information on the coronavirus (COVID-19), visit the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) website [[dhhs.vic.gov.au](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au)][dhhs.vic.gov.au](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au) or contact the dedicated coronavirus hotline 24/7 on 1800 675 398.

Together, we can ensure people in LGBTIQ communities are aware of available resources and supports during this difficult time. Stay safe.

Kind regards,
Equality and Youth Branch
Department of Premier and Cabinet