



CENSW & COVID – 19

Q & A – 30 March 2020

1. Centrelink assistance and stimulus payments.

Contact Centrelink as soon as possible for entitlement eligibility, especially if you have lost your job.

There are a number of stimulus payments that you may be eligible for. CENSW will not include additional payments in rent calculations.

If you already receive Centrelink payments, you don't have to do anything to get the extra financial assistance, this will happen automatically.

Centrelink

- **JobSeeker Payment** (for over 22 years of age) call the Jobseeker line **132 850**
- **Youth Allowance** for job seekers (under 22 years of age) call the Job Seekers (Youth Allowance) line **132 490**

OR online - <https://www.centrelink.gov.au/>

OR through logging into MyGov <https://my.gov.au/help> and click 'Intent to claim'

2. What is the minimum rent I need to pay if I haven't any income at all?

\$5.00 per week until you receive Jobseeker payment (Newstart is now called the Jobseeker payment).

For people **under 65** years the statutory minimum income is the Jobseeker Payment.

For **over 65** it is the Aged Pension if you are not on other payment types.

Rent calculations are based on statutory income eligibility.

For more information call Mirjana on 0432 939 569

3. What happens if I am infected- whom do I need to inform at CENSW and at the Coop?

In the event of a COVID-19 case at a CENSW property we will follow the recommendations from the World Health Organisation and Australian Department of Health. Actions may include, but are not limited to:

- Immediately inform CENSW & your co-op (if applicable)
- Instructing the individual with a confirmed case to follow medical advice and remain isolated until they have fully recovered and obtained medical sign off.
- Identifying and advising any persons, who may have been in close contact with the individual, to follow Department of Health advice to isolate themselves at home for 14 days.
- Immediately notify cleaning contractors to disinfect all areas of the building the individual may have been in contact with.



Australian Government's Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080. It operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

If you require interpreting services call 131 450

4. Is there a waiting period for my rent to be adjusted if my income changes? And which documents do I need to provide?

CENSW is supporting our direct tenants and our coops to minimise any delays in adjusting the rent when incomes changes occur.

If you apply for Centrelink and there is a delay in receiving your payments, we will charge \$5 rent per week until you receive the full payment. Once you start receiving payments your rent will be backdated.

Documentation required by CENSW is proof of Centrelink payments application.

5. My last rent review was based on my income, now I have no income. How will my rent be calculated?

We ask that you apply to Centrelink as soon as possible. You will need to demonstrate that you have lost your job. We will calculate your households new rent based on the eligible statutory income that you and other household members will receive.

We will work swiftly to prevent any delays with rent payments. If there is awaiting period, we will charge minimum rent as above until your income has been fully processed.

The rent will be based on Centrelink payments, NOT including any extra stimulus payments.

5. I'm having trouble paying my household bills, what can I do?

Contact your provider (eg phone, electricity) and ask about their Financial Hardship Program and its eligibility criteria.

Some local councils are looking at reducing or putting council rates on hold – contact your local council.

You may also be able to receive financial or other support from charities in your area such as St Vincent De Paul, Red Cross and the Salvation Army.

6. Can property audits and other scheduled or booked repairs be postponed?

All SMP property audits have been postponed until after the Covid-19 pandemic.

At this stage CENSW is minimising tradespeople to works that are essential only. Other works will be postponed.

We have also informed coops to minimise any maintenance work except in emergencies.



7. Vacancies and tenant selection – how will this be managed now?

CENSW currently has no vacancies.

Due to the current COVID 19 situation we recommend that co-ops do not commence with tenants selection.

8. I can't speak well English and need an interpreter. Can CENSW support me if needed?

You can call the Telephone Interpreting Service (TIS) 131 450 to speak with staff at CENSW and we will support you.

The Telephone Interpreting Service (TIS) can also provide help in contacting and talking to all services.

9. How can we support members that are returning from overseas?

People returning from overseas will have to stay self-isolated in a hotel room for 14 days. The New South Wales government is responsible for organising this. Once this is finished and you return home, please inform CENSW and your co-op (if applicable).

This is very important and people disobeying this regulation can be fined and may put others in danger. If you are returning from overseas and reside at one of CENSW's sites please inform us of your return.

If you are a coop member returning from overseas, please inform your coop. The coop will inform CENSW if members return from overseas and are self-isolating. It is best to inform your relatives and others who can support you.

You can help them by providing information such as the Bulletin, CENSW website, COVID-19 update letters being provided by CENSW.

Offer to buy some food & leave at their front door if able. Check supermarket chains such as Coles and Woolworths for their Online Priority Service (COPS) or Priority Assistance schemes for the elderly and vulnerable.

10. What happens if I need a family member to stay with me for some time and to look after me if I'm unwell even if my unit is very small?

This is fine, but make sure you undertake social distancing measures and inform CENSW and your co-op (if applicable).

If you are feeling anxious and need to talk to someone please contact:

- **NSW Mental Health Line – 1 800 011 511 – Free – 24 hours / 7 days a week**
- **Lifeline -131 114 – Free – 24 hours / 7 days a week**
- **Beyond Blue – 1 300 22 4636 - Free -24 hours / 7 days a week**
<https://beyondblue.org.au/>
- **Relationships Australia 131 114 – Free - 24 hours / 7 days a week**