COVID-19 Fact Sheet

State Government support for community services in response to COVID-19

COVID-19 Crisis Relief Fund

The State Government has established a $159 million COVID-19 Crisis Relief Fund to provide support to organisations that are helping people experiencing hardship.

An initial $59 million is immediately available for crisis and emergency relief support for eligible not-for-profit and community organisations to assist with costs related to increased demand for food, clothing, shelter and other critical needs.

Lotterywest will also allocate all profits previously assigned to its grants budget, anticipated to be about $100 million, directly into the newly created Fund to assist the Western Australian community to recover.

This funding will also provide urgent financial relief for not-for-profit sports, arts and community organisations experiencing hardship as a result of cancelled events. It will compensate for cancellation costs, lost revenue, and incurred or committed operational costs associated with the cancelled event. Often these events were crucial to the ongoing operations of important community organisations.

Funding will also support new equipment and resources to update processes that are required to adapt to rapidly changing needs.

Eligible not-for-profit organisations and community groups can apply immediately for grant support by visiting www.lotterywest.wa.gov.au/grants or by calling 133 777.

Electricity bill assistance

Electricity bills for around 2,800 charities will be reduced, with a one-off $2,500 offset provided for groups on community service and charitable accommodation electricity tariffs with Synergy and Horizon Power.

The offset will be allocated from 1 May 2020 to reduce current and future bills, and is expected to provide around $7 million in assistance.

The $2,500 offset represents about half of the annual average bill for customers on the eligible charitable tariff.

Funding certainty for Government contracts

Funding certainty has been provided to community service providers, with State Government agencies to continue to pay contracts with the sector until at least 30 June 2020, even if providers are unable to meet their contractual obligations due to impacts caused by COVID-19.

This applies to providers who deliver community services on behalf of the State Government through agreements established under the Delivering Community Services Partnership Policy, until 30 June 2020, where the organisation remains in operation but may not be able to deliver services due to staff shortages as a direct result of COVID-19.
Rent relief on Government-owned buildings

From 30 March 2020, a waiver on rent for not-for-profit organisations in State Government-owned buildings will apply until 30 September 2020.

The Government has allocated $25 million to fund the estimated cost of the six-month waiver and help these leaseholders respond to the impacts of COVID-19.

Under this measure, not-for-profit groups include all charities and associations defined by the Associations Incorporation Act 2015.

The waiver will cover a period of six months from 30 March 2020. Rent outstanding prior to 30 March 2020 will not be waived.

Where rent has been paid in advance, State Government agencies will negotiate with the lessee to ensure that the lessee does not suffer a financial disadvantage.

The waiver will be provided where the lessee is otherwise in compliance with the terms and conditions of the lease (exemptions may be granted on a case by case basis); and the lessee remains in compliance for the duration of the waiver.