



# Emails to the early childhood education and care sector

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## From the department

### Parents can win \$200 for having their say on child care

**We're inviting parents and carers to have a say on child care in a national survey.**

Parents and carers will be randomly selected to take part in the survey. They will receive a letter over the next week with a QR link to the online survey. They will also receive a link via SMS and/or email.

Participants can choose to enter a draw to win a \$200 gift voucher. We will draw 30 gift vouchers across Australia.

The online survey opens 2 June and closes at **10 am AEST Monday 30 June 2025**.

The survey should take around 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

Please encourage parents and carers at your service to complete the survey. The survey will help us to evaluate child care policies and how they impact child care quality, availability and affordability.

If you have any questions about this survey, email the department at [sps@education.gov.au](mailto:sps@education.gov.au).

Parents can find out more about the survey on [Orima's website](#).

### Help improve our website

**Want to help improve our website? We need your input!**

Over the coming weeks we're going to test our website, and we'd like to know what you think. Simply reply to this email to express your interest in taking part.

### Get help with the worker retention payment

**Help is available to understand, apply for and meet the conditions of the worker retention payment.**

[Search our directory](#) to find support that meets your needs.

Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks. Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Ai Group briefing sessions](#)
- [Community Early Learning Australia webinars](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#).

### Reconciliation Day Helpdesk closed

**The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Provider Helpdesk will be closed for a public holiday in the ACT on Monday 2 June.**

The helpdesk will re-open at 9 am AEST on Tuesday 3 June 2025.



You can contact the helpdesk anytime at [CCShelpdesk@education.gov.au](mailto:CCShelpdesk@education.gov.au) and we will respond during business hours.

CCS payments may be affected by the public holiday.

## Sector Spotlight

### It's National Reconciliation Week



National Reconciliation Week (NRW) is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures and achievements. It's a time to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving reconciliation in Australia.

The NRW 2025 theme of *Bridging Now to Next* reflects the ongoing connection between past, present and future.

Read more about what you can do for NRW 2025 on the [National Reconciliation Week website](https://reconciliation.org.au).

#### Closing the Gap in early childhood

Closing the Gap targets 3 and 4 focus on the early years. They aim to ensure children:

- are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education and care (ECEC)
- thrive in their early years.

We're investing in measures to support these targets and improve the lives of First Nations children. These include:

- a **formal partnership agreement** with SNAICC – National Voice for our Children to support Closing the Gap priority reforms and shared decision-making
- the Early Childhood Care and Development **Policy Partnership** between governments and First Nations representatives to drive community-led outcomes
- the **Connected Beginnings** program helping First Nations children get the best start to life and support transition to school
- a **Community Child Care Fund Restricted program** funding new ECEC services in remote areas
- an **intensive ECEC model trial** at a dedicated First Nations site to help bridge the gap to school readiness
- changes to **CCS** from January 2026 to guarantee 100 hours of subsidised ECEC per fortnight for First Nations children.

Read more about how we're working to [Close the Gap in early childhood](#).



# Facts from FAL

## How make an anonymous tip-off

**If you have information related to child care services or providers who are not following the rules, you can submit an anonymous tip-off.**

We treat all tip-offs seriously. We ask that you try to provide us with as much detail as you can, so we are able to fully assess the information provided in the form.

The tip-off form is anonymous and only takes a few minutes to complete.

For more information about [reporting CCS fraud](#) or to access the tip-off form, visit our website.

## Allowable absences will reset on 1 July

**If you are noticing that absences are not paying when submitting session reports, check the family's absence count. Many families have used their 42 allowable absences by this time of year.**

You can view the year-to-date absence count for a child via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or through your third-party software.

Families may be able to get additional absences once they have used their allowable absence days, in certain circumstances. Find out more about the circumstances for [allowable absences](#) on our website.

Families can find out more about absences on [Service's Australia website](#) and check their year-to-date absence count:

- in their Centrelink online account via [myGov](#)
- on the [Express Plus Centrelink mobile app](#).

## Submitting session reports

**Remember to submit accurate session reports on time – it's the law. Services Australia uses session reports to calculate and process CCS payments.**

As a CCS-approved provider, you must:

- submit session reports within 14 days after the end of the week in which the session of care was provided
- submit a session report for each child at your service, for each week a session of care is provided
- include at least one session of care a week, recorded as either an attendance or absence
- only include sessions of care for which you charge a family a fee for providing care to their child.

Submit session reports through the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.

Learn how to submit [session reports](#) on time.





# Workforce support

## Offering discounted care to educators

### Did you know you can offer discounted care to some staff without reducing their CCS?

The workforce discount is an optional incentive to help you attract and retain qualified staff.

You can offer the workforce discount to:

- early childhood teachers and educators
- centre directors and coordinators who hold an ECEC qualification
- cooks.

The employee must:

- work at a Centre Based Day Care or Outside School Hours Care service
- have a child enrolled at a service where they work or that you own.

Unlike a standard discount, the workforce discount:

- is applied after CCS calculation
- allows you to report the full fee
- requires the employee to pay at least 5% of the gap fee.

You can:

- choose whether to offer the discount to employees
- determine the discount amount, provided employees pay at least 5% of the gap fee.

Learn more about [discounted care for the early childhood workforce](#).

## News for families

### It's time to estimate your 2025-6 family income

You need to estimate your family income so you can get the right amount of Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

Read more on the [Services Australia website](#).



## From the department

### Want to help improve our website? We need your input!

Over the coming weeks we're going to test our website, and we'd like to know what you think. Simply reply to this email to express your interest in taking part.

### Worker retention payment update

#### Check out our application guide

Our application guide can help you apply for the worker retention payment.

The guide outlines:

- what to do before you start your application
- the information you'll need to provide in the application
- what happens after you've applied.

You can:

- [read the guide on our website](#)
- [download a print-ready version of the guide](#)
- [access the guide in Geccko](#).

We recently streamlined the application to make it easier for you to apply.

### CCS Period of emergency in NSW

**A Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency is in place in NSW due to the impact of flooding.**

Visit our website to see:

- [regions and timeframes where the period of emergency applies](#)
- [details of support available during and after a period of emergency](#).

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

## Sector spotlight

### Report detailed fees and vacancies

[StartingBlocks.gov.au](https://StartingBlocks.gov.au) is the one place where families can find and compare all early childhood education and care (ECEC) services.



Report your **detailed** fees and vacancies to ensure your information displays correctly.

## How to report fees

Report detailed fee information to ensure your fees display correctly. Fees will not be displayed if a URL is submitted.

To update fees in the Provider Entry Point (PEP):

1. Select **Fee and Inclusion Details**
2. Choose the **session type**
3. Select any relevant **inclusions** for each age group
4. Enter the **usual fee** for each age group
5. Submit

## How to report vacancies

Reporting detailed vacancy information allows StartingBlocks.gov.au to display vacancies by type, age group, session, and include fee information. If you only submit a yes/no response, vacancies will be shown as general availability without specific details and families will be prompted to contact you for more information.

To update vacancies in the PEP, services need to enter vacancies by age group:

1. Select the **date** using the calendar icon
2. Indicate vacancy status by selecting **yes or no** for each day of the week
3. Click **Advanced** to provide detailed information by age group and session type
4. Submit

This information helps parents choose the best ECEC for their family.

Check and update these details on the [PEP](#) or your third-party software. If your third-party software doesn't allow for adding detailed fees or vacancies, they can be submitted through the PEP.

## Services continue to meet the National Quality Standard

**For the third quarter in a row, 91% of education and care services are rated Meeting NQS or above.**

The National Quality Framework (NQF) Snapshot is a national report on children's education and care services operating under the NQF. It provides information on the sector and the quality ratings of services against the NQS.

As of 1 April 2025, 18,013 NQF-approved children's education and care services were operating across Australia.

Since the first quarter of 2024:

- the number of approved services increased by 2%
- the proportion of services rated Meeting NQS or above increased by 1%.

Read the [latest NQF snapshot](#) on ACECQA's website



# Facts from FAL

## How are you notified about CCS payments?

Once a payment has been processed, you'll receive a payment advice in the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS). You can access the payment advice via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.

The payment advice outlines:

- how much CCS was paid
- how much CCS was withheld
- if any amount was taken as payment towards a debt owed
- the total amount paid to the provider.

Read more about [payments](#) on our website.

## Becoming an approved provider



**Providers must be approved to operate a child care service and administer CCS in Australia. You must be approved by the Australian Government and your state or territory government.**

We have step-by-step guidance on our website about the approval process, including:

- the two types of approval required
- eligibility rules
- evidence required
- how to submit your application
- what happens after you apply
- how to add, remove or relocate a service
- why we suspend approvals.

Applicants must read this information carefully before applying and ensure they submit a complete application. If your application is incomplete, we'll ask for more information before we begin our assessment.

You'll also need to provide a [statement of tax record](#) as part of the fit and proper person requirements.



If you don't provide this information your application will be rejected and you'll need to reapply.

Learn more about [becoming an approved provider](#) on our website.

## Avoiding an infringement notice

**Law (FAL). Providers must make sure that they, their employees and educators follow the rules.**

Many providers comply with the law and do the right thing. However, where certain rules are not being followed, we can use infringements to address non-compliance and help change provider behaviour.

An infringement notice is a fine and can be expensive. For example, the fine for not updating the status of a current working with children check can be up to \$16,500.

Infringement notices help providers avoid more severe penalties. They allow a provider to pay a small fine rather than go to court, where they may get a much larger penalty.

Read more about [infringement notices](#) on our website.

## Workforce support

### Creating standout practicum opportunities

**Want to attract quality student educators at your service? See our tips for getting the most out of the practicum exchange network.**

Services with detailed, welcoming profiles typically receive more enquiries.

We recommend you:

- be specific about location, dates, hours and age groups
- highlight unique aspects about your service
- mention learning opportunities on offer
- be clear about your expectations and support offered
- respond promptly to any enquiries.

Create your profile on the [practicum exchange network](#) today.

### Be You events for early learning

**Join Be You for two online events to make positive changes in your learning community.**

23 May 3.30 pm AEST: How acts of reconciliation contribute to community mental health and wellbeing.

28 May 2025 10 am AEST: Demystifying mental health strategies in education, presented by Dr. Robyn Mildon, CEO of the Centre for Evidence and Implementation.

Find out more and register for [Be You early learning events](#).

Be You is the national mental health and wellbeing initiative for ECEC services and schools.



## Acquit professional development funding

**Providers must acquit all funds received under the professional development and paid practicum subsidies by 31 July 2025.**

If you got a subsidy in the 2023–24 financial year and **have not** completed your final acquittal, we have contacted you with more information.

If you got a subsidy in the 2024–25 financial year, you can acquit funding through the [grants portal](#).

Learn more about the [acquittal process](#) on our website.

## Share with families

### Is your family prepared for winter? Flu vaccines now available.

It not only protects you but also helps protect those around you. It is free under the [National Immunisation Program](#) for people most at risk, including:

- children 6 months to less than 5 years
- pregnant women
- people aged 65 and over
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- people with certain medical conditions.

The best protection against influenza is to receive the vaccine each year. Talk to your health professional about booking in your family's flu vaccinations today.

Find more information and resources about influenza and the flu vaccine at [health.gov.au/flu](https://health.gov.au/flu).

## News for families

### The latest updates from Services Australia

#### Confirm your family income for Child Care Subsidy by 30 June

If you got Child Care Subsidy (CCS) in the 2023-24 financial year, you need to confirm your family income.

Read more on the [Services Australia website](#).



## From the department

### Reporting prescribed discounts via session reports

**From 7 July, you must include information on prescribed discounts when submitting and updating session reports. The reporting of non-prescribed discounts will be voluntary.**

This applies to prescribed:

- state and territory third-party payments (TPPs) for preschool children
- state and territory TPPs for children in vulnerable or disadvantaged circumstances.
- provider discounts for a child of an educator or a cook that is employed by the provider
- provider discounts for a period of emergency, also known as a gap fee waiver.

You will need to include the type and value of the prescribed discounts when submitting and updating session reports.

These changes:

- help us to better understand out of pocket costs experienced by families
- ensure that all prescribed discounts are reported within session reports to support compliance.

For more details on [prescribed third-party payments](#), visit our website.

### Worker retention payment update

#### Get free support

Help is available to understand, apply for and meet the conditions of the worker retention payment.

[Search our directory](#) to find support that meets your needs.

Attend an upcoming session

Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks.

Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Ai Group briefing sessions](#)
- [Community Early Learning Australia webinars](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#).

### Reminder: the ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred support payment closes soon

**In April, we emailed providers of services that were affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred with an offer to receive a \$10,000 support payment. The payment is one-off for eligible services only.**

The deadline to accept the offer is 31 May 2025. Providers can accept the offer by completing a secure online form for any of their eligible services. You can find the link to access the online form in the email we sent providers.



Find out more about:

- [the ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred Support Payment](#)
- [payment and eligibility criteria](#).

## Sector Spotlight

### Resources to help you support children with disability

**Did you know you can access a suite of resources to help understand your obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)?**

The DDA supports children with disability to fully access and participate in early education.

All early childhood education and care (ECEC) services must comply with the DDA.

Tip sheets, information posters, and lots more are available on [ACECQA's website](#).

Find more on the [DDA and the Disability Standards for Education 2005](#) on our website.

### Influenza vaccination resources

**Influenza can be very serious for children under 5 years and can lead to hospitalisation.**

The best protection against influenza is to receive the vaccine each year. The vaccine is:

- safe
- effective
- free for children aged 6 months to under 5 years under the [National Immunisation Program](#).

You can help remind parents to book in their children's annual influenza vaccinations.

The Department of Health and Aged Care has mailed promotional material to early childhood services that encourages parents to protect their children against influenza by vaccinating.

Here are some ways you can help promote this important health message in your community:

- Display the poster throughout your service and promote the fact sheets available online. You can order or print hard copy [posters](#) and find the [fact sheets](#) at [health.gov.au/flu](http://health.gov.au/flu).
- Share information via email to encourage parents to book their child in for a free influenza vaccination.
- Share messaging on your social media channels to highlight the importance of vaccinating children against influenza. [Videos](#) about influenza in children are available for you to share via your channels.

Find more information and resources about influenza and the free vaccination for children under 5 years at [health.gov.au/flu](http://health.gov.au/flu).

### StartingBlocks.gov.au now displays vacancies by day

**We publish your fees, vacancies, quality ratings and inclusions on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#).**

The site has new functionality to display vacancy information by day. Previously, the site only displayed vacancies by age group and session type.





We remind you to keep your details up to date to ensure they display correctly on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](https://StartingBlocks.gov.au).

You must report:

- your current hourly or session fees before any subsidies, discounts or reductions
- any changes to your fees within 14 days of the change
- your current vacancies by 8 pm AEST/AEDT each Friday.

Including your detailed information helps parents choose the best early childhood education and care for their family.

## Facts from FAL

### Electronic payment of gap fees

**You must take all reasonable steps to collect gap fees from families electronically. This is a requirement under Family Assistance Law.**

We conduct regular audits to check providers are taking all reasonable steps to collect gap fees electronically. If we contact you about an audit, you must respond promptly.

We may take compliance action if you fail to meet your obligations.

See our [guidance on collecting gap fees](#) and find out more about [our audit process](#) on our website.

### Understanding debt notices

**We issue debt notices in certain circumstances.**

You may receive a debt notice if you:

- change a session of care to fewer hours or days
- withdraw a session report
- act in a non-compliant way
- close or transfer ownership of a service retrospectively
- cease operating your service while offsetting is occurring.

We may also issue you with an infringement notice if the debt is due to non-compliance.

Read about [how to avoid debt](#) on our website.



## Caring for close family members in Family Day Care



**You cannot claim Child Care Subsidy (CCS) when an educator is caring for close family members.**

This includes the educator's or their partner's:

- child, foster child, adopted child, kinship child or any child for which you have legal responsibility
- brother, sister, half-brother, half-sister, step-brother or step-sister.

Watch this video to learn about the rules for Family Day Care (FDC) educators who care for their own children or siblings and read more about [providing care for relatives](#) on our website.



## From the department

### Worker retention payment update

#### Apply now for backdated payments

Thinking about applying for the worker retention payment? Apply now to get backdated payments.

We'll backdate payments if you:

- apply by 30 June 2025
- meet the eligibility criteria from 2 December 2024.

We'll backdate payments to:

- 2 December 2024, for workplace instruments that cover the full grant period even if adopted later
- the date your workplace instrument starts, if this is after 2 December 2024.

Visit our website to:

- [find out more about the payment](#)
- [read our application guide.](#)

#### Get free support

Help is available to understand, apply for and meet the conditions of the worker retention payment.

[Search our directory](#) to find support that meets your needs.

#### Attend an information session

Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks.

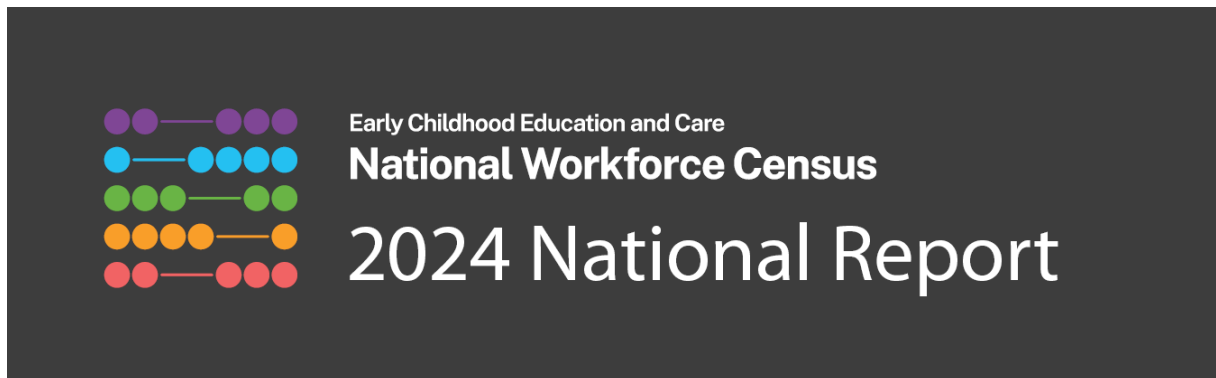
Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Ai Group briefing sessions](#)
- [Community Early Learning Australia webinars](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions.](#)



# Sector spotlight

## Spotlight on the sector – workforce



The 2024 Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) National Workforce Census found that:

- the total ECEC workforce size was 268,050 across all states and territories
- out of all paid contact staff in the ECEC workforce, 81.3% held a completed qualification in an ECEC field
- the ECEC workforce was 91.2% female in 2024.

Explore the results and find out more [on our website](#).

## Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month

**May is Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month. If one of your families is experiencing domestic violence, there are a few ways you can help.**

- Children at risk of serious abuse or neglect may get Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) child wellbeing. For more information, read our guide on [Talking with the family](#).
- If paying the gap fee using EFT might put a person or family at risk of domestic violence, they may be eligible for an [exception](#).

If the child, a carer or an immediate member of the family is a victim of domestic violence, they may be eligible for [allowable and additional absences](#) at the start and end of an enrolment.

## Intentional teaching and purposeful play boosts early education success

A new discussion paper from the Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO) highlights the importance of intentional teaching in ECEC. The new research shows that intentional teaching can significantly enhance learning outcomes. This is especially true for children experiencing disadvantage.

AERO CEO Dr Jenny Donovan said that intentional teaching and play-based learning have often been positioned in opposition to one another.

'Our research challenges that notion, showing that significant associations exist between educators and teachers intentionally supporting learning through play to achieve positive outcomes for the child.'

Access the discussion paper on [AERO's website](#).



# Facts from FAL

## How we support compliance

**We undertake compliance activities to help to make sure Child Care Subsidy (CCS) goes to its intended beneficiaries – families.**

Before we take compliance action, we give you:

- a notice of our intended action
- opportunity to provide written submissions.

In some instances, Family Assistance Law (FAL) allows us to take compliance action without giving notice. For example:

- where a provider's approval under National Law is suspended or cancelled
- when imposing additional conditions of approval.

Compliance action could include:

- issuing infringement notices
- imposing conditions on provider or service CCS approval
- issuing a debt
- suspending or cancelling your CCS approval
- seeking civil penalty orders
- criminal prosecutions.

Find out more about [how we support compliance](#) on our website.

## Avoid common enrolment mistakes

**You must enrol children correctly so families can get CCS.**

Here is how to avoid common mistakes when enrolling children.

### **Families should make a CCS claim first**

Families should [lodge a CCS claim](#) before their child starts at your service.

If a child starts at your service before the family has lodged a claim, or while their claim is being assessed, you must charge full fees. If the family is assessed as eligible, CCS can be backdated up to 28 days from when the claim was made. Backdated CCS will be paid directly to the family.

### **Use the correct enrolment type**

Except in very limited circumstances, children must be enrolled under a Complying Written Arrangement to get CCS payments.

### **Identify the person who made the CCS claim**

Enrolment notices must identify the person who made the CCS claim. If you don't identify this person, we cannot make CCS payments.



## Families must confirm the enrolment

Once you've submitted an enrolment, the family must confirm the details via their [Centrelink online account](#). CCS payments will not be made until the enrolment is confirmed.

Read more about [enrolling children](#).

# Workforce support

## Professional development subsidy payments

**We are issuing payments for the professional development and paid practicum subsidies this month.**

If you were successful in the recent round, you can expect your payment soon.

We'll send payments to each eligible service's bank account. Your grant agreement has more details, including how you may use the subsidy.

Once you have used the subsidy, you need to acquit your funding. You must do this by 31 July 2025.

Learn more about the [acquittal process](#) on our website.

## Join the practicum exchange network

**Early childhood educators in training are searching the practicum exchange network for their next practicum opportunity.**

Register your service to:

- list practicum opportunities
- search for educators in your area
- connect and arrange practicums.

Go to the [practicum exchange network](#).



The Australian Government is now operating in accordance with the [Guidance on Caretaker Conventions](#), pending the outcome of the 2025 federal election. During this time we will limit the amount and type of content we publish in this newsletter.

## From the department

### Worker retention payment update

#### We've made it easier to apply

We've heard your feedback and are making it easier to apply for the worker retention payment.

We are now asking you for less information. This will:

- make it easier for you to apply
- help us process applications quicker
- enable faster delivery of grant agreements.

If you've already applied:

- you will benefit from the streamlined process
- your application will move to the new system
- you don't need to do anything.

If you would like to apply, see our application guide to find out what's required.

Thank you to those who provided feedback. We appreciate your patience as we process applications.

If you would like to apply, see our [application guide](#) to find out what's required.

Thank you to those who provided feedback. We appreciate your patience as we process applications.

#### Get free support

Help is available to understand, apply for and meet the conditions of the worker retention payment.

[Search our directory](#) to find support that meets your needs.

#### Attend an upcoming session

Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks.

Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Ai Group briefing sessions](#)
- [Community Early Learning Australia webinars](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#).



# Sector spotlight

## National child safety review – have your say

**Have your say on the possible changes to make education and care services even safer for children.**

Approved providers and services, educators, staff, volunteers and families are invited to [provide feedback](#) on proposed policy options under the National Quality Framework.

Deloitte Access Economics is managing the consultation process on behalf of all governments.

Public consultation on regulatory and non-regulatory policy options is open until 11 June 2025. Surveys and submissions will be open from 5 May 2025.

The government is currently in a caretaker period and any decisions will be subject to consideration by an incoming government.

State and territory information webinars are being held virtually and these sessions will be open to anyone. You can register for a session at [Child Safety Review Public Consultation](#).

Read more in our [announcement](#).

## Facts from FAL

### Calendar year reporting deadline for some large providers is tomorrow

Large providers must report financial information to the department each year, including information about revenue, profits, and leasing arrangements.

A large provider is one that currently or plans to operate, or share operation of, 25 or more services.

If you do your financial reporting on the calendar year, the deadline is tomorrow.

Complete the [2024 Large Provider Financial Input Report](#) and email it to [ECECFinancialViability@education.gov.au](mailto:ECECFinancialViability@education.gov.au) by 1 May 2025.

The information you must report depends on your circumstances. Please make sure that you include financial statements and the information that is required in the important information tab.

Learn more about [financial reporting obligations for large providers](#).

### Know your obligations: working with children checks

All providers have obligations regarding working with children checks (WWCCs) under both state and territory law and Family Assistance Law.

You must:

- ensure any person required by state or territory law to hold a WWCC has a current check
- notify some checks in the Child Care Subsidy System within specific timeframes
- notify changes to checks in the Child Care Subsidy System within specific timeframes





- keep records of all checks and provide these to us on request
- notify new checks within 7 days
- notify changes to existing checks within 24 hours.

Each state and territory has different requirements about who must have a WWCC. Find out who needs a WWCC and apply for one via the [WWCC regulator in your state or territory](#).

Learn more [how to manage your WWCC obligations](#) on our website.

## Balance of allowable absences

Some families have used their 42 allowable absences by this time of year. If you are noticing that absences are not paying when submitting session reports, check the family's absence count.

Allowable absences will reset on 1 July 2025.

You can view the year-to-date absence count for a child via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

Families can find out more about absences on [Services Australia](#) website and check their year-to-date absence count:

- in their Centrelink online account via [myGov](#)
- on the [Express Plus Centrelink mobile app](#).

Learn more about [absences from child care](#) on our website.

## Workforce support

### How to acquit professional development subsidies

#### If you got a subsidy in 2023–24

Most providers who got a subsidy in the 2023–24 financial year have already completed their final acquittal.

If you haven't, you must do so by 31 July 2025. We are contacting these providers with detailed instructions.

#### If you got a subsidy in 2024–25

All providers who got a subsidy in the 2024–25 financial year must acquit funding through the [grants portal](#) by 31 July 2025.


Learn more about the [acquittal process](#) on our website.

## Be You Fundamentals event

Join Be You for a webinar on transforming educator wellbeing to create a thriving workplace.

This Be You Fundamentals event will focus on how workplace culture and leadership contribute to educator wellbeing. The event will also explore examples of practice that create and sustain a thriving workplace.

The session will take place online at 12 pm AEST on 8 May 2025.



[Register for the webinar.](#)

## Learn with Geccko



The Australian Government is now operating in accordance with the [Guidance on Caretaker Conventions](#), pending the outcome of the 2025 federal election. During this time we will limit the amount and type of content we publish in this newsletter.

## From the department

### Worker retention payment update

#### Get free support

Help is available to understand, apply for and meet the conditions of the worker retention payment.

[Search our directory](#) to find support that meets your needs.

#### Attend an upcoming session

Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks.

Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Ai Group briefing sessions](#)
- [Community Early Learning Australia webinars](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#).

### CCS Provider Helpdesk closed on Anzac Day

**The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Helpdesk will be closed on Friday for the Anzac Day public holiday.**

The helpdesk will re-open at 9 am AEST on Monday 28 April.

You can email the helpdesk anytime at [CCShelpdesk@education.gov.au](mailto:CCShelpdesk@education.gov.au) and we will respond during business hours.

CCS payments may be affected by the public holiday.

### Reporting prescribed discounts via session reports

**From 7 July, you must include information on prescribed discounts when submitting and updating session reports. Reporting non-prescribed discounts will be voluntary.**

This applies to prescribed:

- state and territory third-party payments (TPPs) for preschool children
- state and territory TPPs for children in vulnerable or disadvantaged circumstances
- provider discounts for a child of an educator or a cook who is employed by the provider
- provider discounts for a period of emergency, also known as a gap fee waiver.

You will need to include the type and value of the prescribed discounts when submitting and updating session reports.



These changes:

- help us to better understand out of pocket costs experienced by families
- ensure that all prescribed discounts are reported within session reports to support compliance.

For more details on [prescribed third-party payments](#) and to view a [factsheet](#), visit our website.

## Sector spotlight

### National Workforce Census results: Key findings for preschools

**The 2024 ECEC National Workforce Census found that:**

- 62.1% of children attending preschool programs at dedicated preschools were aged between 4 and 5 years old
- 95.2% of dedicated preschools based their program on Australia's national Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), either solely or in combination with another framework
- in 93.7% of dedicated preschools the preschool program was mainly delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher in person.

Explore the [National Workforce Census results](#) on our website.

## Facts from FAL

### How to manage session reports

**You must submit accurate session reports on time. Services Australia uses session reports to calculate and process CCS payments.**

Read the guide on our website to learn about:

- how to submit session reports in the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS), via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software
- what to include in session reports, and
- updating session reports if you've made a mistake or the session report is incorrect.

You can learn more about submitting accurate session reports by:

- reading how to [manage session reports](#) on our website
- completing the Reporting session of care course in [Geccko](#).

### Keep your fee information up to date

**It is important that information about fees is available to families. We publish this information to [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#).**

You must tell us:

- your current hourly or session fees before CCS, discounts, or reductions are applied
- any changes to fees, within 14 days of the fee change



- twice a year – after the end of the financial year and calendar year, including reporting no change in fees.

You can notify us of your current fees in the CCSS via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.

Learn more about keeping fee information updated by:

- reading about how to [notify us of fees](#) on our website
- completing the Accurate fee reporting course in [Geccko](#).

## Workforce support

### How you can benefit from the practicum exchange network

**Host student educators and bring fresh perspectives to your service. The practicum exchange network makes finding students simple.**

Register your service on the network to:

- access enthusiastic educators in training
- simplify your placement process
- help shape the next generation of educators.

Registering is easy and only takes a few minutes.

Go to the [practicum exchange network](#) and register today.



The Australian Government is now operating in accordance with the [Guidance on Caretaker Conventions](#), pending the outcome of the 2025 federal election. During this time we will limit the amount and type of content we publish.

## Queensland floods: CCS period of emergency expanded to 10 additional LGAs

**We've added 10 new local government areas (LGAs) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.**

The CCS period of emergency applies from 24 March 2025 to 17 April 2025 in the following LGAs:

- **Balonne Shire Council**
- **Burke Shire Council**
- **Carpentaria Shire Council**
- **Charters Towers Regional Council**
- **Cloncurry Shire Council**
- **Croydon Shire Council**
- **Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council**
- **Etheridge Shire Council**
- **Mount Isa City Council**
- **Barcaldine Regional Council**
- Blackall-Tambo Regional Council
- Maranoa Regional Council
- Richmond Shire Council
- Burdekin Shire Council
- Central Highlands Regional Council
- Flinders Shire Council
- Paroo Shire Council
- Murweh Shire Council
- Barcoo Shire Council
- Boulia Shire Council
- Bulloo Shire Council
- Diamantina Shire Council
- Longreach Regional Council
- Quilpie Shire Council
- Winton Shire Council.



We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

## Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).

## Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

## Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#).

## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency Qld](#) for current emergency information in your region.



The Australian Government is now operating in accordance with the [Guidance on Caretaker Conventions](#), pending the outcome of the 2025 federal election. During this time we will limit the amount and type of content we publish in this newsletter.

## From the department

### Worker retention payment update

#### Get free support

We're funding organisations to help you understand, apply for and meet the conditions of the [worker retention payment](#).

The organisations were selected based on their:

- knowledge of the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector, and
- understanding of the worker retention payment.

[Search our directory](#) to find support that meets your needs.

#### Attend an upcoming session

Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks.

Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Ai Group briefing sessions](#)
- [Community Early Learning Australia webinars](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#).

### CCS Provider Helpdesk closed for Easter

**The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Provider Helpdesk will be closed on Friday 18 April and Monday 21 April for the holiday period.**

The helpdesk will reopen at 9 am AEST next Tuesday 22 April.

You can email the helpdesk anytime at [CCShelpdesk@education.gov.au](mailto:CCShelpdesk@education.gov.au) and we will respond during business hours.

CCS payments may be affected by the public holiday.

## Facts from FAL

### Public holiday absences

**On public holidays, you can report an absence if your service would have been open otherwise.**

For example:





- a service that is open on Mondays can report absences for a public holiday on a Monday
- a service that only operates from Wednesday to Friday cannot report absences for a public holiday on a Monday.

You can only report absences and charge families for children who would have normally attended care on that day. This will be considered an allowable absence and will be deducted from a family's 42 allowable absences.

If you do report an absence for a public holiday, you must still collect the gap fee from families.

Once a family has used their 42 allowable absence days, they cannot claim a public holiday as an additional absence reason.

Read more about [absences from child care](#) on our website.

## Calendar reporting deadline for some large providers is 1 May

**Large providers must report financial information to the department each year, including information about revenue, profits and leasing arrangements.**

A large provider is one that currently or plans to operate, or share operation of, 25 or more services.

If you do your financial reporting on the calendar year, the deadline is on 1 May 2025.

Complete the [2024 Large Provider Financial Input Report](#) and email it to [ECECFinancialViability@education.gov.au](mailto:ECECFinancialViability@education.gov.au) by the deadline.

The information you must report depends on your circumstances. Please make sure that you include financial statements and the information that is required in the important information tab.

Learn more about [financial reporting obligations for large providers](#).

## Workforce support

### Professional development subsidy offers

**Did you apply for a professional development or paid practicum subsidy? We have notified applicants of the outcome of their application.**

Successful applicants will receive a grant agreement and outcome letter. Please respond accordingly. Payments are expected to be made in May.

Those who were unsuccessful in this round have also been informed.

We appreciate the time and effort invested by all who applied. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to strengthening the skills and experience of your staff.

Keep an eye on our website for [information about future rounds](#).





## ECEC videos

Watch short videos about key topics on our YouTube channel



The Australian Government is now operating in accordance with the [Guidance on Caretaker Conventions](#), pending the outcome of the 2025 federal election. During this time we will limit the amount and type of content we publish.

## Queensland floods: CCS period of emergency extended

**We've extended the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.**

The CCS period of emergency now applies from 24 March 2025 to 17 April 2025 in the following local government areas:

- Blackall-Tambo Regional Council
- Maranoa Regional Council
- Richmond Shire Council
- Burdekin Shire Council
- Central Highlands Regional Council
- Flinders Shire Council
- Paroo Shire Council
- Murweh Shire Council
- Barcoo Shire Council
- Boulia Shire Council
- Bulloo Shire Council
- Diamantina Shire Council
- Longreach Regional Council
- Quilpie Shire Council
- Winton Shire Council.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

### Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).

### Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:



- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

## Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#).

## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency Qld](#) for current emergency information in your region.



The Australian Government is now operating in accordance with the [Guidance on Caretaker Conventions](#), pending the outcome of the 2025 federal election. During this time we will limit the amount and type of content we publish in this newsletter.

## From the department

### Invitations to apply for ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred support payment

**We have emailed providers affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred with an offer to receive the one-off \$10,000 support payment for their eligible services.**

If you have a service in an affected local government area (LGA), check your email for your payment offer. Providers can accept the offer by completing a secure online form for any services that meet the eligibility criteria.

Services are eligible if they:

- are CCS-approved
- are in an LGA covered by a [CCS period of emergency](#) in relation to ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred
- closed, or partially closed, for 8 days or more during the period of emergency
- agree to waive gap fees for families while closed during the period of emergency.

Learn more about the [payment and eligibility criteria](#) on our website.

Not all providers that receive the offer will have services that meet the eligibility criteria. If you receive an offer for a service that does not meet the eligibility criteria, you do not need to complete the online form for that service.

### How and when will payments be made?

The payment will be made after providers complete and submit online forms for any services that meet all the eligibility criteria.

The payment will be paid directly to each service found eligible through the offer and acceptance process. It will be paid into the bank account currently nominated for a service in the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS). This is the same account used to pay CCS. Services should ensure their bank account details are up to date in the CCSS.

### What if I haven't received an email offering the support payment?

Emails have been sent to the email address registered for your provider in the CCSS.

If you have services in the affected LGAs and haven't received an email offering the payment, you should:

- check the email address for your provider registered in CCSS via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software
- update your provider email address if you don't have one registered or it is out of date
- check your junk mail
- contact the helpdesk at [CCShelpdesk@education.gov.au](mailto:CCShelpdesk@education.gov.au).

Find out more about the [ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred Support Payment](#).



## Worker retention payment update

### Get free support

Help is available at every stage of the worker retention payment.

Get help:

- understanding the payment
- developing a compliant workplace instrument
- preparing your application
- implementing the payment at your service
- complying with the payment conditions, and more.

[Search our directory](#) to find support that meets your needs.

### Attend an upcoming session

Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks.

Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Ai Group briefing sessions](#)
- [Community Early Learning Australia webinars](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#).

## CCS period of emergency

**A CCS period of emergency is in place in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.**

Visit our website to see:

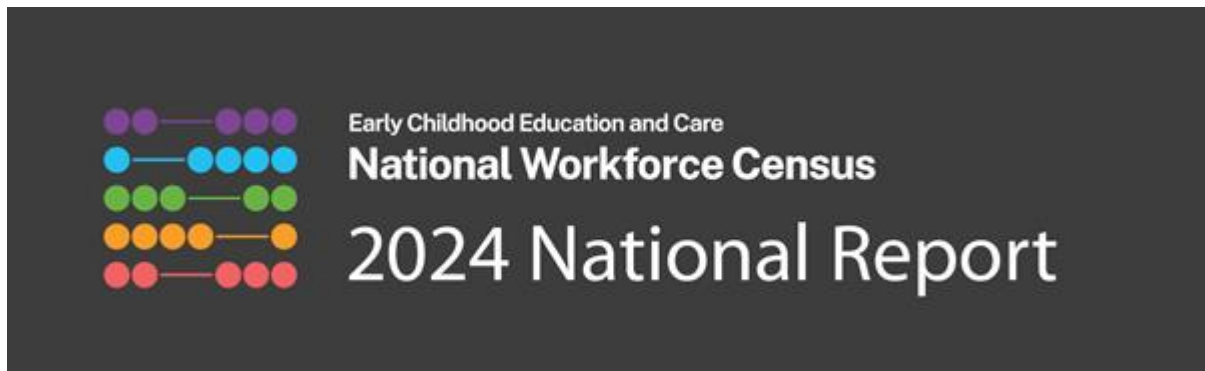
- [regions and timeframes where the period of emergency applies](#)
- [details of support available during and after a period of emergency](#).

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.



## Sector spotlight

### National Workforce Census results – children



**The 2024 Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) National Workforce Census (NWC) results have been released.**

From the 1.4 million children who attended CCS services in the reference week, the NWC found that:

- 19.3% spoke a language other than English at home, or had parents who spoke another language
- more than 65,000 were Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children – 4.4% of all children attending CCS services nationally, an increase from 3.8% in 2021 and 3.0% in 2016
- 6.3% of children aged 0 to 12 years had an underlying health condition lasting longer than 6 months.

Explore the [2024 National Workforce Census results](#).

## Facts from FAL

### Understanding inducements and advertising at your service

**An inducement is an incentive offered by a provider to secure a child's enrolment.**

ECEC providers may not offer inducements that are financial or not directly associated with the quality or provision of education or care services.

You can:

- offer discounted or free care
- advertise your service and offer free site visits or trial periods
- issue marketing merchandise to the value of \$30 per complying written arrangement
- include extra-curricular activities as part of a session fee
- advertise your social impact through activities like donations to a charity
- transport to or from your service, if this is part of your normal business practice.

We may take compliance action against providers that continue to offer inducements not permitted under the law. This could include:



- putting conditions on your approval
- suspending or cancelling your approval.

Read about [inducements and advertising at your service](#) on our website.

## Updating enrolments in the CCSS

**When your care arrangements for children change, they must be recorded.**

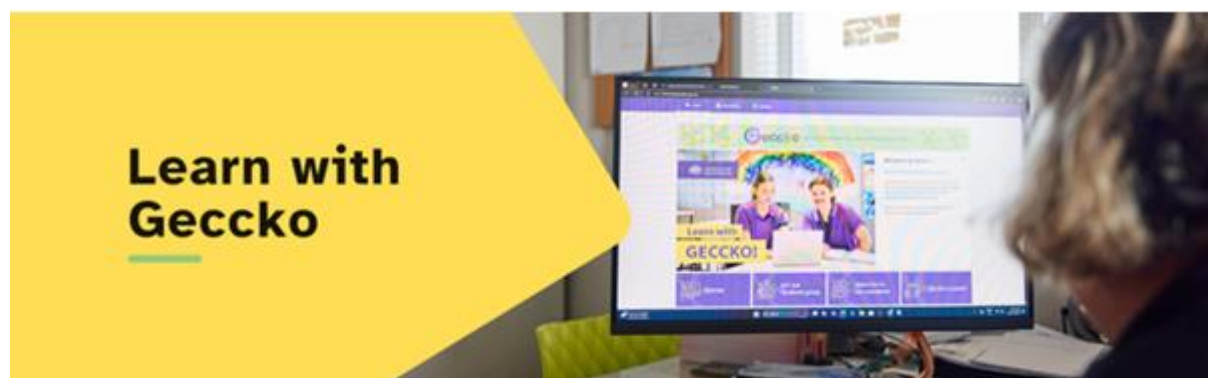
Update an enrolment notice in the CCSS when:

- the family disagrees with details of an enrolment and you agree an update is required
- the care arrangement between you and the family changes
- you realise the information in an enrolment is incorrect
- the care arrangement ends.

When any of these events occur, the enrolment notice must be updated within 7 days.

Find a task card in the [provider tool kit](#) for help with updating enrolments in the [PEP](#).

Read more about [how to enrol children](#) on our website.





The Australian Government is now operating in accordance with the [Guidance on Caretaker Conventions](#), pending the outcome of the 2025 federal election. During this time we will limit the amount and type of content we publish.

## Queensland floods: 3 new LGAs added to CCS period of emergency

**We've added 3 new local government areas (LGAs) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.**

The CCS period of emergency applies from 24 March 2025 to 11 April 2025 in the following local government areas:

- **Blackall-Tambo Regional Council**
- **Maranoa Regional Council**
- **Richmond Shire Council**
- Burdekin Shire Council
- Central Highlands Regional Council
- Flinders Shire Council
- Paroo Shire Council
- Murweh Shire Council
- Barcoo Shire Council
- Boulia Shire Council
- Bulloo Shire Council
- Diamantina Shire Council
- Longreach Regional Council
- Quilpie Shire Council
- Winton Shire Council.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

### Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).



## Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

## Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#).

## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency Qld](#) for current emergency information in your region.



The Australian Government is now operating in accordance with the [Guidance on Caretaker Conventions](#), pending the outcome of the 2025 federal election. During this time we will limit the amount and type of content we publish.

## Invitations to apply for ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred support payment

**We have emailed providers affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred with an offer to receive the one-off \$10,000 support payment for their eligible services.**

If you have a service in an affected local government area (LGA), check your email for your payment offer. Providers can accept the offer by completing a secure online form for any services that meet the eligibility criteria.

Services are eligible if they:

- are CCS-approved
- are in an LGA covered by a [CCS period of emergency](#) in relation to ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred (these LGAs are listed at the end of this email)
- closed, or partially closed, for 8 days or more during the period of emergency
- agreed to waive gap fees for families while closed during the period of emergency.

Learn more about the [payment and eligibility criteria](#).

Not all providers that receive the offer will have services that meet the eligibility criteria. If you receive an offer for a service that does not meet the eligibility criteria, you do not need to complete the online form for that service.

### How and when will payments be made?

The payment will be made after providers complete and submit online forms for any services that meet all the eligibility criteria.

The payment will be paid directly to each service found eligible through the offer and acceptance process. It will be paid into the bank account currently nominated for a service in the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS). This is the same account used to pay CCS. Services should ensure their bank account details are up to date in the CCSS.

### What if I haven't received an email offering the support payment?

Emails have been sent to the email address registered for your provider in the CCSS.

If you have services in the affected LGAs and haven't received an email offering the payment, you should:

- check the email address for your provider registered in CCSS via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software
- update your provider email address if you don't have one registered or it is out of date
- check your junk mail
- contact the helpdesk at [CCShelpdesk@education.gov.au](mailto:CCShelpdesk@education.gov.au).



## Which LGAs are covered by the period of emergency?

The CCS period of emergency applied from 5 to 18 March 2025 in the following LGAs:

### Queensland

- Livingstone Shire Council
- Bundaberg Regional Council
- Southern Downs Regional Council
- Fraser Coast Regional Council
- Somerset Regional Council
- Toowoomba Regional Council
- Scenic Rim Regional Council
- Lockyer Valley Regional Council
- Gympie Regional Council
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Noosa Shire Council
- Redland City Council
- Brisbane City Council
- Ipswich City Council
- City of Gold Coast
- City of Moreton Bay
- Logan City Council.

### New South Wales

- Armidale Regional Council
- Glen Innes Severn Council
- Tenterfield Shire Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Kempsey Shire Council
- MidCoast Council
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
- City of Coffs Harbour
- Bellingen Shire Council
- Kyogle Council
- Nambucca Valley Council
- Tweed Shire Council
- Byron Shire
- Ballina Shire



- City of Lismore
- Richmond Valley Council
- Clarence Valley Council.

Find out more about the [ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred Support Payment](#).



The Australian Government is now operating in accordance with the [Guidance on Caretaker Conventions](#), pending the outcome of the 2025 federal election. During this time we will limit the amount and type of content we publish.

## Queensland floods: CCS period of emergency extended

**We've extended the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.**

The CCS period of emergency now applies from 24 March 2025 to 11 April 2025 in the following local government areas:

- Burdekin Shire Council
- Central Highlands Regional Council
- Flinders Shire Council
- Paroo Shire Council
- Murweh Shire Council
- Barcoo Shire Council
- Boulia Shire Council
- Bulloo Shire Council
- Diamantina Shire Council
- Longreach Regional Council
- Quilpie Shire Council
- Winton Shire Council.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

### Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).

### Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences



- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

## Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#).

## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency Qld](#) for current emergency information in your region.



The Australian Government is now operating in accordance with the [Guidance on Caretaker Conventions](#), pending the outcome of the 2025 federal election. During this time we will limit the amount and type of content we publish.

## NSW floods: CCS period of emergency declared

**We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in Narrabri Shire Council local government area in New South Wales due to the impact of flooding.**

The CCS period of emergency applies from 31 March 2025 to 8 April 2025.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

### Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).

### Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

### Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency NSW](#).

### For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.





- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](https://StartingBlocks.gov.au) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency NSW](#) for current emergency information in your region.



The Australian Government is now operating in accordance with the [Guidance on Caretaker Conventions](#), pending the outcome of the 2025 federal election. During this time we will limit the amount and type of content we publish in this newsletter.

## From the department

### Providing a statement of tax record for Child Care Subsidy approval

**From 1 April 2025, new Child Care Subsidy (CCS) provider approval applicants need to give us a statement of tax record (STR).**

The provider must supply the STR. Applicants will need to:

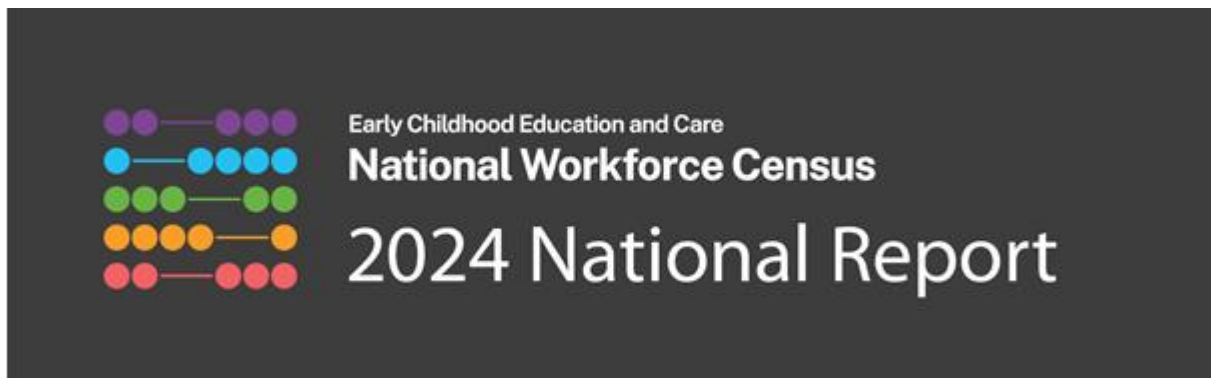
- request and obtain the required STR for their organisation from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO)
- provide the STR as part of their application for CCS approval.

For CCS approval, a provider must be considered fit and proper to handle public money. All new providers go through a fit and proper assessment. The STR will form part of this assessment. It demonstrates a provider's engagement with the tax system.

You can request an STR from the ATO using ATO online services or through your registered tax professional. To request an STR, visit the [ATO website](#).

Find out more about who needs to provide an [STR for your business structure](#) on our website.

2024 National Workforce Census results released this week



**We surveyed more than 18,000 early childhood education and care (ECEC) services across Australia, including more than 2,000 dedicated preschools. This covers 97% of all CCS-approved services in Australia.**

The 2024 National Workforce Census (NWC) National Report gives an overview of the key data on ECEC services and workers.

The NWC is the only national census of its type in Australia. The NWC aims to improve the quality of information used in developing and measuring early childhood policy and programs.

A report with more detailed tables of information will be published later in 2025.

Explore the results and find out more [on our website](#).



# Worker retention payment update

## Get free support

Help is available to understand, apply for, and meet the conditions of the worker retention payment.

[Search the directory](#) on our website to find free support that meets your needs.

## Attend an upcoming session

Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks.

Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Ai Group briefing sessions](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#).

## Transferring or acquiring a service

Find out what you need to do if you transfer or acquire a service while getting the worker retention payment.

### Transferring a service

If you transfer a service to another provider, you will stop getting funding for that service.

You will continue to get funding for your other eligible services. If you don't have any other eligible services, we will terminate your grant agreement.

If you transfer the service to a provider who does not get the worker retention payment, the service will not be eligible unless the provider applies for the funding.

### Acquiring a service

If you acquire a service from another provider, you can get the worker retention payment for that service if it meets the conditions of your grant agreement. This includes the fee growth cap. We check service fees regularly to ensure compliance.

## What you need to do

In both cases, you must tell us about the change. You can do this by emailing [ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au](mailto:ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au).

We will send you a grant variation to reflect the change.

You must also comply with your [CCS approval obligations when buying or selling a service](#).

Learn more about the [worker retention payment](#) on our website.

## Latest Child Care Subsidy data now available

**We've published data about the CCS in the December quarter 2024.**

Each quarter we issue a summary report about CCS-approved care in Australia. The report includes data on child care usage, services, fees and subsidies in Australia.

Key findings from the December quarter 2024 include:

- 1,447,460 children from 1,016,920 families used CCS-approved care



- 15,051 CCS-approved services operated during the quarter
- on average, children attended 27.4 hours of care per week
- the average hourly fee was \$13.15
- the Australian Government paid \$3.89 billion in subsidies.

Go to the [December quarter 2024 report](#).

## CCS period of emergency in Queensland

**A CCS period of emergency is in place in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.**

Visit our website to see:

- [regions and timeframes where the period of emergency applies](#)
- [details of support available during and after a period of emergency](#).

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

## Sector spotlight

### Professional development opportunities survey closing soon

**Share your feedback on the professional development opportunities before the deadline on Monday.**

We have engaged ORIMA Research to conduct a short survey on our [professional development opportunities](#).

If you have accessed this support and would like to provide feedback, [complete the survey](#).

Your responses will be treated as private and confidential.

The survey closes **6 pm AEST 7 April 2025**.

## Facts from FAL

### Passing payments on to families

**You must pass payments on to families as a fee reduction within 14 days of receiving it.**

If you cannot pass on a payment within this timeframe, you must pay it back to Services Australia via the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS). Failure to pass payments on to families may result in compliance action.

You must also provide a statement of entitlement to families who get CCS every fortnight.

A statement of entitlement must include:

- the recipient's name
- the child's or children's names
- enrolment identifiers
- issue date



- period start and end dates
- provider and service details (including names, ABNs and identifiers)
- session details, including session start and end times, and absences used during the statement period and year to date
- fees, including the hourly session fee, the daily and weekly total amount of all fees charged, and any discounts or refunds applied
- fee reduction amounts
- actual attendance times.

Find out more about [managing payments and fees](#) on our website.

## Financial reporting deadline for some large providers is 1 May

**Large providers must report financial information, including information about revenue, profits and leasing arrangements, to the department.**

Following changes to the *Minister's Rules 2017* in July 2024, the deadline for large providers who report on the calendar year now occurs on 1 May.

Complete the [2024 Large Provider Financial Input Report](#) and email it to [ECECFinancialViability@education.gov.au](mailto:ECECFinancialViability@education.gov.au) by 1 May 2025.

Please ensure to include financial statements and information as outlined in the important information tab.

If you report on a financial year, your deadline will fall on 1 November 2025. We'll provide more information about what you need to do closer to the deadline.

This obligation only applies to providers who operate, share operation of, or plan to operate 25 or more services. If you're not sure whether these obligations apply to you, please email [ECECFinancialViability@education.gov.au](mailto:ECECFinancialViability@education.gov.au).

Learn more about the [financial reporting obligations for large providers](#) on our website.

## Workforce support

### How to use the practicum exchange network

**Have you joined the practicum exchange network? Registering is easy and only takes a few minutes.**

On the network you can:

- search for services and educators with availability in your area
- connect with each other
- arrange practicums.

Here's how to make the most out of the network:

1. Register: create a profile to get started
2. Search: find services or educators in your area



3. Enquire: send and receive requests for practicums
4. Confirm: exchange contact details and arrange a practicum.

Go to the [practicum exchange network](#).

## Be You In Practice webinar

**Join Be You for a webinar on fostering collegial relationships to support educator wellbeing.**

This Be You In Practice event will explore how intentional and purposeful workplace planning which support positive collegial relationships are fundamental to educator wellbeing.

The session will take place online at 4:30 pm AEST on 8 April 2025.

[Register for the webinar](#).



The Australian Government is now operating in accordance with the [Guidance on Caretaker Conventions](#), pending the outcome of the 2025 federal election. During this time we will limit the amount and type of content we publish in this newsletter.

## Queensland floods: 5 new LGAs added to CCS period of emergency

**We've added an extra 5 local government areas (LGAs) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.**

The CCS period of emergency applies from 24 March 2025 to 7 April 2025 in the following local government areas:

- **Burdekin Shire Council**
- **Central Highlands Regional Council**
- **Flinders Shire Council**
- **Paroo Shire Council**
- **Murweh Shire Council**
- Barcoo Shire Council
- Boulia Shire Council
- Bulloo Shire Council
- Diamantina Shire Council
- Longreach Regional Council
- Quilpie Shire Council
- Winton Shire Council.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

### Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).

### Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support



- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

## Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#).

## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
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The Australian Government is now operating in accordance with the [Guidance on Caretaker Conventions](#), pending the outcome of the 2025 federal election. During this time we will limit the amount and type of content we publish in this newsletter.

## Queensland floods: CCS period of emergency extended

**We've extended the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.**

The CCS period of emergency now applies from 24 March 2025 to 7 April 2025 in the following local government areas:

- Barcoo Shire Council
- Boulia Shire Council
- Bulloo Shire Council
- Diamantina Shire Council
- Longreach Regional Council
- Quilpie Shire Council
- Winton Shire Council.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

### Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).

### Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).



## Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

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- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#).

## For action

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The Australian Government is now operating in accordance with the Guidance on Caretaker Conventions, pending the outcome of the 2025 federal election. During this time we will limit the amount and type of content we publish.

## Queensland floods: CCS period of emergency declared

**We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.**

The CCS period of emergency applies from 24 March 2025 to 31 March 2025 in the following local government areas:

- Barcoo Shire Council
- Boulia Shire Council
- Bulloo Shire Council
- Diamantina Shire Council
- Longreach Regional Council
- Quilpie Shire Council
- Winton Shire Council.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

### Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).

### Support after an emergency

The following support may help you recover after an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

### Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:



- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#).

## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency Qld](#) for current emergency information in your region.



## From the department

### Budget 2025–26: support for services and families affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred

**The 2025–26 Budget continues to build a better and fairer education system and prioritise support for Australian families and students of all ages.**

The Australian Government has activated \$2.5 million in additional support for families and early childhood education and child care providers affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.

The ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred support payment of \$10,000 will be available for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approved services that:

- are in a local government area (LGA) covered by a [CCS period of emergency](#) in relation to ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred
- closed, or partially closed, for 8 days or more during the period of emergency
- agree to waive gap fees for families while closed during the period of emergency.

This payment will ensure services are not financially disadvantaged because they had to close for an extended period due to the cyclone and associated flooding.

Families who need extra help with the cost of child care may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy \(ACCS\) temporary financial hardship](#) which usually covers the full cost of child care for up to 100 hours of care per fortnight, for up to 13 weeks.

Read more in the [announcement](#).

### Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred support payment coming soon

**We will start contacting providers that have services in the [affected LGAs](#) soon to invite them to apply via a secure online application form.**

Applications will be emailed to the provider-level email addresses registered in the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS). Providers with more than one service in the affected LGAs may need to complete more than one application form.

Please ensure you have updated your contact details in the CCSS via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software.

### How and when will payments be made?

The payment can be made after providers complete and submit application forms for any services they think meet all the eligibility criteria. We will notify providers that submit the form to confirm which of their services are eligible to receive the payment.

The payment will be paid directly to each service found eligible through the application process.

The payment will be paid into the bank account currently nominated for a service in the CCSS, which is the same account used to pay CCS. Services should ensure their bank account details are up to date in the CCSS.



Read more about the [payment and answers to FAQs](#) on our website.

## Worker retention payment update

### Get free support

Help is available to engage with the worker retention payment.

Support includes:

- help to understand, develop and implement a workplace instrument
- help to submit your application
- help to request an alternative fee growth cap or funding review
- administration, record-keeping and payroll support
- workplace relations or legal advice
- online information sessions
- helplines, and more.

[Search the directory](#) on our website to find support that meets your needs.

Workplace instrument templates sold commercially may not meet the worker retention payment requirements. We recommend you get support through the organisations listed on our website.

### Attend an upcoming session

Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks.

Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Ai Group briefing sessions](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#).

## Reminder for CCCF grant recipients

**A reminder that grants under round 4 of the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) disadvantaged and vulnerable communities grant are transitioning to the [Community Grants Hub](#).**

Grants that include capital support have already transitioned. All remaining grants will transition from Monday.

You don't need to do anything. The Community Grants Hub will contact you once your grant has been transferred.

## CCS period of emergency in North Queensland

**A CCS period of emergency was in place in parts of North Queensland due to the impact of flooding.**

Visit our website to see:

- [regions and timeframes where the period of emergency applies](#)
- [details of support available during and after a period of emergency](#).

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.



# Sector spotlight

## Partnership Agreement with SNAICC signed

**Earlier this month, the department signed a Partnership Agreement with SNAICC – National Voice for our Children (SNAICC) to transform the way we work together.**

The [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#) acknowledges the strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the importance of working in partnership to achieve better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children through the early years.

Our new Partnership Agreement builds on commitments in the National Agreement, including to develop a fundamentally new way of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

It affirms SNAICC will share decision making with the department on matters affecting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families in the early years.

Visit our website to [read the Partnership Agreement](#).

## Have your say on professional development opportunities

**Thank you for your feedback on our professional development opportunities.**

We'd love to hear more – our survey will now close at 6 pm AEST 7 April 2025.

If you have accessed our professional development opportunities and would like to provide feedback, [complete the survey](#).

The survey should take around 10 minutes to complete. It is open to representatives from all service types.

Participation is voluntary and all responses will be treated as private and confidential.

# Facts from FAL

## What can an infringement notice be issued for?

**We monitor providers to make sure they follow the rules under Family Assistance Law (FAL). We can issue infringement notices, or fines, when they don't follow the rules.**

There are many FAL obligations that contain a civil penalty offence for which we can issue an infringement notice.

Some examples include:

- not updating the status of a current working with children check (WWCC)
- not correctly recording persons with management or control
- not submitting enrolment notices or session reports on time
- not passing on or remitting a fee reduction amount
- not correctly reporting your fee information
- failure to notify the correct agency of a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect.



Find more information and what to do if you receive an [infringement notice](#) on our website.

## How we manage overpayments

**An overpayment is when you receive more CCS than you're entitled to.**

Overpayments can happen when you withdraw or change a session report, such as recording fewer hours of care.

We use your future CCS payments to pay back the overpayment. This is called offsetting. You can see if offsetting has occurred in your payment advice in the CCSS.

We won't take more than 50% of any single future payment, unless agreed otherwise.

You must pass on the full entitlement to families, even if your CCS payments have been reduced by offsetting.

Read more about [how to manage overpayments and debt](#) on our website.

## New Geccko course: Managing absences

**Our new short course on Managing absences will help improve your understanding of the different types of absences from child care and help you comply with your obligations under FAL.**

You can register for this course on Geccko, our online learning platform for the ECEC sector.

The course will help you:

- identify an allowable absence for CCS
- explain when an additional absence may be granted
- define emergency absences
- explain absences at the start or end of an enrolment.

The course should take 20 minutes to complete and you can:

- login using your tablet, laptop, or mobile phone
- download course certificates upon completion
- access other resources such as videos and tip sheets.

[Find out more and register for Geccko](#) to access the course.

## Workforce support

### Be You wellbeing webinars

**Join Be You for two upcoming webinars on children's wellbeing.**

Attend a panel discussion about taking the first steps to enhance wellbeing at 3.30 pm AEDT on 27 March 2025.

Join the Be You Fundamentals event focused on observing to provide early support for children's wellbeing at 12 pm AEDT on 2 April 2025.

[Register for these events.](#)







## ECEC videos

Watch short videos about key topics on our YouTube channel



# Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred: new LGA added to CCS period of emergency

**We've added one new local government area (LGA) to the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland and New South Wales affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.**

The CCS period of emergency applies from 5 to 18 March 2025 in the following LGAs:

## Queensland

- **Livingstone Shire Council**
- Bundaberg Regional Council
- Southern Downs Regional Council
- Fraser Coast Regional Council
- Somerset Regional Council
- Toowoomba Regional Council
- Scenic Rim Regional Council
- Lockyer Valley Regional Council
- Gympie Regional Council
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Noosa Shire Council
- Redland City Council
- Brisbane City Council
- Ipswich City Council
- City of Gold Coast
- City of Moreton Bay
- Logan City Council.

## New South Wales

- Armidale Regional Council
- Glen Innes Severn Council
- Tenterfield Shire Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Kempsey Shire Council
- MidCoast Council
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
- City of Coffs Harbour



- Bellingen Shire Council
- Kyogle Council
- Nambucca Valley Council
- Tweed Shire Council
- Byron Shire
- Ballina Shire
- City of Lismore
- Richmond Valley Council
- Clarence Valley Council.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

## Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).

## Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

## Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#).

## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.



- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](https://StartingBlocks.gov.au) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#) for current emergency information in your region.



## North Qld floods: CCS period of emergency declared

**We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of North Queensland due to the impact of flooding.**

The CCS period of emergency applies from 17 March 2025 to 24 March 2025 in the following local government areas:

- Townsville City Council
- Cassowary Coast Regional Council.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

### Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).

### Support after an emergency

The following support may help you recover after an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

### Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#).

### For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).



- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](https://StartingBlocks.gov.au) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency Qld](#) for current emergency information in your region.



## From the department

### One-off payment for services affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred

**The Australian Government will provide a one-off \$10,000 payment to early childhood education and care (ECEC) services affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.**

The ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred support payment will be available for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approved services that:

- are in a local government area (LGA) covered by a [CCS period of emergency](#) in relation to ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred
- closed, or partially closed, for 8 days or more during the period of emergency
- agree to waive gap fees for families while closed during the period of emergency.

The payment will be available to all service types, including Centre Based Day Care, Outside School Hours Care, Family Day Care and In Home Care.

We will provide more information to providers of services in the affected LGAs soon.

To make sure we know if your service is in one of the affected LGAs, please ensure you have updated your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

See our website for more information on the:

- [regions and timeframes where the period of emergency applies](#)
- [details of other support available during and after a period of emergency.](#)

### Support for families

Families in affected regions can receive unlimited additional absences. This means they will not exhaust their ordinary allocation of subsidised absences for the year as a result of the emergency.

### Worker retention payment update

#### Get free support

**Help is available to engage with the worker retention payment.**

Support includes:

- help to understand, develop and implement a workplace instrument
- help to submit your application
- help to request an alternative fee growth cap or funding review
- administration, record-keeping and payroll support
- workplace relations or legal advice
- online information sessions



- helplines, and more.

[Search the directory](#) on our website to find support that meets your needs.

Workplace instrument templates sold commercially may not meet the worker retention payment requirements. We recommend you get support through the organisations listed on our website.

## Attend an upcoming session

**Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks.**

Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Ai Group briefing sessions](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#).

## Have your say on professional development opportunities

**We have engaged ORIMA Research to conduct a short survey on our [professional development opportunities](#).**

Participation is voluntary. The survey will close on 31 March 2025.

[Complete the survey](#).

## Sector spotlight

### Prepare for changes to fit and proper person requirements

**From 1 April 2025, new CCS provider approval applicants will need to give us a statement of tax record (STR).**

For CCS approval, a provider must be considered fit and proper to handle public money. All new providers go through a fit and proper assessment. The STR will form part of this assessment. It demonstrates a provider's engagement with the tax system.

Providers will be able to request an STR from the ATO:

- by using [ATO online services](#)
- through their registered tax professional.

Visit our website for more information on how to prepare for [STR for CCS](#).

## Facts from FAL

### Absences during a period of emergency

**During a period of emergency, families won't have to use their annual allocation of allowable absences.**

Children who live or attend a service in an [affected region](#) will get extra allowable absences for the duration of the period of emergency.

These absences will be automatically applied in the Child Care Subsidy System if we declare a period of emergency.





After a period of emergency, families may receive additional absences if they have exhausted their annual allocation of allowable absences.

Read more about [absences from child care](#) on our website.

## Enrolments: you and the family must agree on care arrangements

**Before enrolling a child, you must come to an agreement with the family on care arrangements for the child.**

The most common care arrangement for children who get CCS is a Complying Written Arrangement (CWA).

Families must agree to the care arrangements in writing. They can do this electronically or in hard copy.

Read more about CWAs and [how to enrol children](#) on our website.

## Caring for extended family in Family Day Care



**If you work in Family Day Care (FDC), there are rules you must follow when caring for extended family members.**

Extended family members include a FDC educator's or their partner's:

- niece/nephew
- cousin
- grandchild, or
- great-grandchild.

You may be able to report CCS eligible sessions when FDC educators are caring for extended family members, but you must follow the 'less than 50% rule'.

Watch this video to find out how to calculate the less than 50% rule and read more about [providing care for relatives](#).

## Workforce support

### Be You In Practice webinar

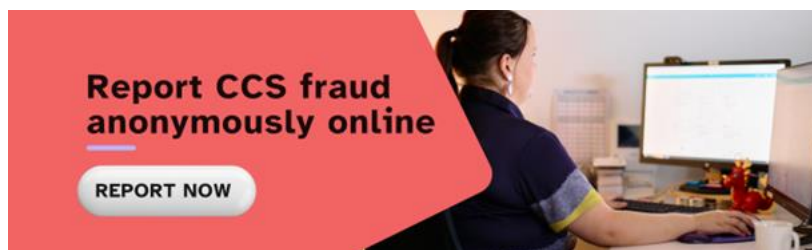
Join Be You for a webinar on nurturing family partnerships through effective communication.



This Be You In Practice event will explore how educators can use communication to develop meaningful partnerships and make a positive impact on children's mental health.

The session will take place online at 12 pm AEDT on 20 March 2025.

[Register for the webinar.](#)



# One-off payment for services affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred

**The Australian Government will provide a one-off \$10,000 payment to early childhood education and care (ECEC) services affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.**

The ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred support payment will be available for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approved services that:

- are in a local government area (LGA) covered by a [CCS period of emergency](#)
- closed, or partially closed, for 8 days or more during the period of emergency
- agree to waive gap fees for families while closed during the period of emergency.

The payment will be available to all service types, including Centre Based Day Care, Outside School Hours Care, Family Day Care and In Home Care.

We will provide more information to providers of services in the affected LGAs soon.

To make sure we know if your service is in one of the affected LGAs, please ensure you have updated your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

See our website for more information on the:

- [regions and timeframes where the period of emergency applies](#)
- [details of other support available during and after a period of emergency](#).

## Support for families

Families in affected regions can receive unlimited additional absences. This means they will not exhaust their ordinary allocation of subsidised absences for the year as a result of the emergency.

# Two new LGAs added to CCS period of emergency

**We've added 2 new local government areas (LGAs) to the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland and New South Wales affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.**

The CCS period of emergency applies from 5 to 18 March 2025 in the following LGAs:

## Queensland

- Bundaberg Regional Council
- Southern Downs Regional Council
- Fraser Coast Regional Council
- Somerset Regional Council
- Toowoomba Regional Council
- Scenic Rim Regional Council



- Lockyer Valley Regional Council
- Gympie Regional Council
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Noosa Shire Council
- Redland City Council
- Brisbane City Council
- Ipswich City Council
- City of Gold Coast
- City of Moreton Bay
- Logan City Council.

## New South Wales

- Armidale Regional Council
- Glen Innes Severn Council
- Tenterfield Shire Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Kempsey Shire Council
- MidCoast Council
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
- City of Coffs Harbour
- Bellingen Shire Council
- Kyogle Council
- Nambucca Valley Council
- Tweed Shire Council
- Byron Shire
- Ballina Shire
- City of Lismore
- Richmond Valley Council
- Clarence Valley Council.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

## Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.



Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).

## Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

## Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#).

## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#) for current emergency information in your region.



# Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred: CCS period of emergency extended

**We've extended the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland and New South Wales affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.**

The CCS period of emergency now applies from 5 to 18 March 2025 in the following LGAs:

## Queensland

- Fraser Coast Regional Council
- Somerset Regional Council
- Toowoomba Regional Council
- Scenic Rim Regional Council
- Lockyer Valley Regional Council
- Gympie Regional Council
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Noosa Shire Council
- Redland City Council
- Brisbane City Council
- Ipswich City Council
- City of Gold Coast
- City of Moreton Bay
- Logan City Council.

## New South Wales

- Armidale Regional Council
- Glen Innes Severn Council
- Tenterfield Shire Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Kempsey Shire Council
- MidCoast Council
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
- City of Coffs Harbour
- Bellingen Shire Council
- Kyogle Council
- Nambucca Valley Council



- Tweed Shire Council
- Byron Shire
- Ballina Shire
- City of Lismore
- Richmond Valley Council
- Clarence Valley Council.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

## Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).

## Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

## Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#).

## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.



- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#) for current emergency information in your region.





## From the department

### CCS period of emergency in NSW and Qld

**A Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency is in place in parts of New South Wales and Queensland due to the impact of ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred.**

Visit our website to see:

- [regions and timeframes where the period of emergency applies](#)
- [details of support available during and after a period of emergency.](#)

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

### Worker retention payment update

#### Understanding funding amounts

**We intend for all participating providers to get sufficient funding through the worker retention payment.**

If you participate, you will get funding to cover:

- a 10% wage increase for all eligible staff in the first year
- an additional 5% wage increase for all eligible staff in the second year
- at least an extra 20% for eligible on-costs, calculated against your base funding.

You can also:

- apply for a payment to cover accrued historical leave liabilities that increased because of the wage increase
- request a funding review if you believe the standard payment calculation method is not appropriate.

For most providers, the standard payment will cover the full cost of the wage increase and associated on-costs. If you apply for a funding review and are found eligible, you will get a top up payment.

See our [application guide](#) and find out [how to request a funding review](#) on our website.

#### Access free support

**Help is available to understand, apply for and meet the conditions of the worker retention payment.**

Support includes:

- help to understand, develop and implement a workplace instrument
- help to submit your application
- help to request an alternative fee growth cap or funding review
- administration, record-keeping and payroll support
- workplace relations or legal advice



- online information sessions
- helplines, and more.

[Search the directory](#) on our website to find support that meets your needs.

Workplace instrument templates sold commercially may not meet the worker retention payment requirements. We recommend you get support through the organisations listed on our website.

## Attend an upcoming session

**Several organisations are holding information sessions in the coming weeks.**

Register to attend an upcoming session:

- [Ai Group briefing sessions](#)
- [NOSHSA information sessions](#)

## Privacy obligations when collecting personal information

**You must tell families if you collect their personal information. You must take reasonable steps to ensure families are aware.**

You collect personal information from families when you enrol children. You then share this information with us so they can get CCS.

When you collect personal information from families, you must make sure that they:

- know that you are collecting their personal information
- understand that you will share this information with us
- consent to you sharing this information with us.

So that families can get CCS, we need to:

- collect their personal information
- share this information with other government departments, like Services Australia.

Make sure that families understand that we cannot provide CCS without their permission for you to share information with us.

You must also take reasonable steps to protect the personal information that you hold about families. This includes keeping families' information safe from loss, unauthorised access, use, modification, disclosure or misuse.

Read more about:

- your [privacy obligations](#)
- how we handle personal information in our [privacy policy](#)
- the [Australian Privacy Principles](#).



# Sector spotlight

## Have your say on professional development opportunities

### Do you have feedback on our professional development opportunities?

We have engaged ORIMA Research to conduct a short survey on our [professional development opportunities](#).

If you have accessed this support and would like to provide feedback, [complete the survey](#).

The survey should take around 10 minutes to complete. It is open to representatives from all service types.

Participation is voluntary and all responses will be treated as private and confidential.

The survey will close on 31 March 2025.

Please contact [SPS@education.gov.au](mailto:SPS@education.gov.au) if you have any questions.

## Facts from FAL

### What to include in session reports

**You must submit a session report for each child at your service, for each week a session of care is provided.**

If a child has more than one enrolment, such as a child whose parents are separated, you must submit a weekly session report for each enrolment.

Session reports must include:

- date
- times
- absences
- fee information
- educator details
- preschool information.

Read the how to guide for [managing session reports](#) on our website.

### Gap fee audits

**We conduct regular audits to check providers are taking all reasonable steps to collect gap fees electronically.**

We conduct audits by either:

- requesting information through a section 158 notice, or
- visiting your service and conducting a face-to-face audit.

If we contact you about an audit, you must respond promptly. We may request additional documents and statements regarding the collection of gap fees during an audit.

Collecting gap fees from families using electronic funds transfer is a requirement under Family Assistance Law.



Read more about:

- [what to do if you get a section 158 notice](#)
- [guidance on collecting gap fees.](#)

## Workforce support

### Professional development subsidies close Friday



**Professional  
development  
opportunities  
closing soon**

**Applications for our professional development subsidies close on Friday.**

The professional development subsidy helps qualified staff complete training. The paid practicum subsidy helps early childhood teachers and educators in training complete their practicums.

We pay these subsidies to providers. Providers pass funding on to staff through training opportunities and paid leave.

Providers must apply on behalf of staff. Applications close on 14 March 2025.

Learn more about the [professional development opportunities](#).

### Practicum exchange living allowance applications closing

**Applications for the practicum exchange living allowance close on Friday.**

The practicum exchange network is a dedicated website connecting early childhood education and care services and educators in training.

Educators who work in the sector and use the network may be eligible for a living allowance to complete a practicum in a rural or remote area other than their home location.

Providers must apply on behalf of eligible staff. Applications close on 14 March 2025.

Learn more about the [living allowance](#).



## Learn with Geccko



## Ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred: CCS period of emergency extended, new areas added

**We've extended the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland and New South Wales affected by ex-Tropical Cyclone Alfred. We've also added another 3 local government areas (LGAs).**

The CCS period of emergency now applies from 5 to 14 March 2025 in the following LGAs:

### Queensland

- Fraser Coast Regional Council
- Somerset Regional Council
- Toowoomba Regional Council
- Scenic Rim Regional Council
- Lockyer Valley Regional Council
- Gympie Regional Council
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Noosa Shire Council
- Redland City Council
- Brisbane City Council
- Ipswich City Council
- City of Gold Coast
- City of Moreton Bay
- Logan City Council.

### New South Wales

- **Armidale Regional Council**
- **Glen Innes Severn Council**
- **Tenterfield Shire Council**
- Dungog Shire Council
- Kempsey Shire Council
- MidCoast Council
- Port Macquarie-Hastings Council
- City of Coffs Harbour
- Bellingen Shire Council
- Kyogle Council
- Nambucca Valley Council



- Tweed Shire Council
- Byron Shire
- Ballina Shire
- City of Lismore
- Richmond Valley Council
- Clarence Valley Council.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

## Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).

## Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

## Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#).

## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.



- Keep an eye on [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#) for current emergency information in your region





# Tropical Cyclone Alfred: 4 new LGAs added to CCS period of emergency

We've added an extra 4 local government areas (LGAs) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland and New South Wales due to Tropical Cyclone Alfred.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 5 March 2025 to 13 March 2025 in the following local government areas:

## Queensland

- Fraser Coast Regional Council
- Somerset Regional Council
- Toowoomba Regional Council
- Scenic Rim Regional Council
- Lockyer Valley Regional Council
- Gympie Regional Council
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Noosa Shire Council
- Redland City Council
- Brisbane City Council
- Ipswich City Council
- City of Gold Coast
- City of Moreton Bay
- Logan City Council.

## New South Wales

- **Dungog Shire Council**
- **Kempsey Shire Council**
- **MidCoast Council**
- **Port Macquarie-Hastings Council**
- City of Coffs Harbour
- Bellingen Shire Council
- Kyogle Council
- Nambucca Valley Council
- Tweed Shire Council
- Byron Shire



- Ballina Shire
- City of Lismore
- Richmond Valley Council
- Clarence Valley Council.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

## Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).

## Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

## Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#).

## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#) for current emergency information in your region.



# Tropical Cyclone Alfred: 7 new LGAs added to CCS period of emergency

We've added an extra 7 local government areas (LGAs) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland and New South Wales due to Tropical Cyclone Alfred.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 5 March 2025 to 13 March 2025 in the following local government areas:

## Queensland

- **Fraser Coast Regional Council**
- **Somerset Regional Council**
- **Toowoomba Regional Council**
- Scenic Rim Regional Council
- Lockyer Valley Regional Council
- Gympie Regional Council
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Noosa Shire Council
- Redland City Council
- Brisbane City Council
- Ipswich City Council
- City of Gold Coast
- City of Moreton Bay
- Logan City Council.

## New South Wales

- **City of Coffs Harbour**
- **Bellingen Shire Council**
- **Kyogle Council**
- **Nambucca Valley Council**
- Tweed Shire Council
- Byron Shire
- Ballina Shire
- City of Lismore
- Richmond Valley Council
- Clarence Valley Council.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.



## Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).

## Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

## Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#).

## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#) for current emergency information in your region.



# Tropical Cyclone Alfred: new LGAs added to CCS period of emergency

**We've added extra local government areas (LGAs) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland and New South Wales due to Tropical Cyclone Alfred.**

The CCS period of emergency applies from 5 March 2025 to 13 March 2025 in the following local government areas:

## Queensland

- **Scenic Rim Regional Council**
- **Lockyer Valley Regional Council**
- Gympie Regional Council
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Noosa Shire Council
- Redland City Council
- Brisbane City Council
- Ipswich City Council
- City of Gold Coast
- City of Moreton Bay
- Logan City Council.

## New South Wales

- Tweed Shire Council
- Byron Shire
- Ballina Shire
- City of Lismore
- Richmond Valley Council
- Clarence Valley Council.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

## Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).



## Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

## Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#).

## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#) for current emergency information in your region.



## From the department

### Worker retention payment update

#### Need help with the worker retention payment?

**You can get help to engage with the worker retention payment.**

We've updated the [help directory on our website](#) with the latest support on offer.

This includes help to:

- understand the payment and its requirements
- develop a compliant workplace instrument
- submit a complete application
- get workplace relations or legal advice, and more.

Support is free.

We recommend you get support through the organisations listed on our website. Workplace instrument templates sold commercially may not meet the worker retention payment requirements.

#### Backdating payments

**We appreciate your patience as we process worker retention payment applications.**

We will backdate your payments if you:

- submit a complete application by 30 June 2025
- meet the eligibility criteria from 2 December 2024.

We will backdate payments to:

- 2 December 2024, for workplace instruments that cover the full grant period even if adopted later
- the date your workplace instrument starts, if this is after 2 December 2024.

Some providers may attempt to form or join a workplace instrument before 30 June 2025, but may not be approved until after the deadline. In this scenario, we may backdate payments provided you submit a complete application by 30 June 2025 that indicates you are awaiting approval.

Visit our website to see [examples of how we will backdate payments](#).

Please be assured we are working to assess applications as quickly as possible.

### CCS Provider Helpdesk closed on Monday

**The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Helpdesk will be closed for a public holiday on Monday 10 March.**

The helpdesk will re-open at 9 am AEDT on Tuesday 11 March.



You can email the helpdesk anytime at [CCShelpdesk@education.gov.au](mailto:CCShelpdesk@education.gov.au) and we will respond during business hours.

CCS payments may be affected by the public holiday.

## CCS period of emergency in Qld and NSW

**A Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency is in place in parts of Queensland and New South Wales due to Tropical Cyclone Alfred.**

Visit our website to see:

- [regions and timeframes where the period of emergency applies](#)
- [details of support available during and after a period of emergency.](#)

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

## Facts from FAL

### Submit a tip-off if you suspect CCS fraud

**If you suspect a child care provider or service is not following the rules, you can tell us.**

Some examples of CCS fraud are:

- claiming false absences
- offering banned incentives to secure enrolments
- accepting cash payments
- [claiming CCS for types of care where CCS is not payable.](#)

Our online [CCS fraud tip-off form](#) is anonymous and only takes a few minutes to complete.

## Salary sacrificing early childhood education and care fees

**Do you have families who pay their early childhood education and care fees through salary sacrifice? Make sure you're reporting their fees correctly.**

Salary sacrificing is considered a third-party payment. There are rules you must follow when a third party contributes to a family's fees.

Generally, when a third party helps a family pay its early childhood education and care fees, you must deduct the contribution from the total session fee.

The family's CCS rate will then be applied to the reduced session fee. This is because families are only entitled to CCS in relation to the amount they have to pay after any third-party payments.

The family must still pay a gap fee.

We have [examples on our website](#) to help you understand how to report different types of third-party payments. We have published a new example about salary sacrificing.

Read more about third-party payments [on our website](#).





# Workforce support

## Have your say on professional development opportunities

**Has your service accessed any of our professional development opportunities? Tell us about your experience.**

We have engaged ORIMA Research to conduct a short survey on our [professional development opportunities](#).

This includes the:

- professional development subsidy
- paid practicum subsidy
- practicum exchange network
- practicum exchange living allowance.

If you have used any of these supports and would like to provide feedback, [complete the survey](#).

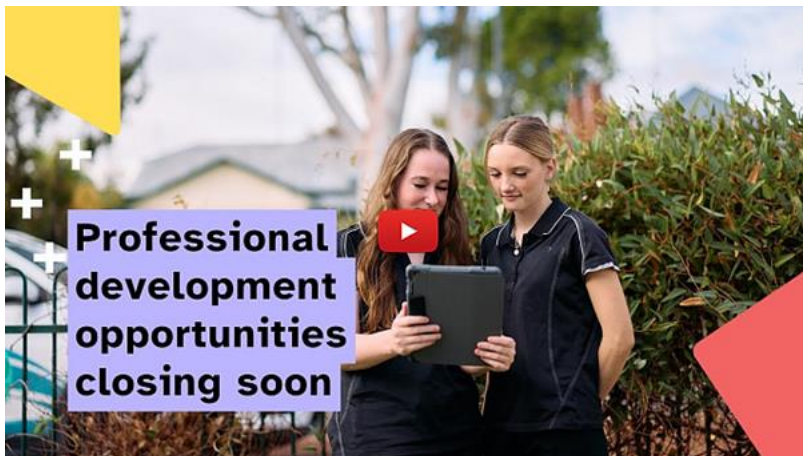
The survey should take around 10 minutes to complete. It is open to representatives from all service types.

Participation is voluntary and all responses will be treated as private and confidential.

The survey will close on 31 March 2025.

Please contact [SPS@education.gov.au](mailto:SPS@education.gov.au) if you have any questions.

## Professional development subsidies closing soon



**Applications for our professional development subsidies are closing soon.**

The professional development subsidy helps qualified staff complete training.

The paid practicum subsidy helps early childhood teachers and educators in training complete their practicums.

We pay these subsidies to providers. Providers pass funding on to staff through training opportunities and paid leave.

Providers must apply on behalf of staff. If you work in the sector and think you'd benefit from these subsidies, please talk to your provider about applying.

Applications close on 14 March 2025.



Learn more about the [professional development opportunities](#).



## Tropical Cyclone Alfred: CCS period of emergency declared

We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland and New South Wales due to Tropical Cyclone Alfred.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 5 March 2025 to 13 March 2025 in the following local government areas:

### Queensland

- Gympie Regional Council
- Sunshine Coast Council
- Noosa Shire Council
- Redland City Council
- Brisbane City Council
- Ipswich City Council
- City of Gold Coast
- City of Moreton Bay
- Logan City Council.

### New South Wales

- Tweed Shire Council
- Byron Shire
- Ballina Shire
- City of Lismore
- Richmond Valley Council
- Clarence Valley Council.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

### Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).

### Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:



- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

## Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#).

## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency Qld](#) and [Emergency NSW](#) for current emergency information in your region.



## From the department

### ECEC supported bargaining agreement update

**The Fair Work Commission (FWC) is processing applications to join the early childhood education and care (ECEC) multi-employer enterprise agreement.**

The ECEC multi-employer enterprise agreement is a type of workplace instrument. It meets the worker retention payment requirements.

Providers can apply to join the agreement. This is known as a variation.

FWC must approve the variation and is now processing applications on a monthly schedule.

Each month, FWC will publish one decision that covers all applications received before the cut-off date for that month.

Applications received after the cut-off date will be considered in the next month's decision.

FWC approved the first applications on 28 January 2025. This adds new employers and their employees to the agreement.

Visit the [Fair Work Commission](#) website to:

- read the agreement
- apply to join the agreement
- see the application cut-off and decision dates
- see variations in progress
- see approved variations.

### Need help with your workplace instrument?

Support is available now. This includes help to join the ECEC multi-employer enterprise agreement or develop your own compliant workplace instrument.

[Search the directory](#) on our website to find support that meets your needs.

### CCS period of emergency extended

**We've extended the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.**

Visit our website to see:

- [regions and timeframes where the period of emergency applies](#)
- [details of support available during and after a period of emergency.](#)

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.



# Sector spotlight

## Changes to fit and proper person requirements coming soon

**From 1 April 2025, new CCS provider approval applicants will need to provide a statement of tax record (STR).**

For CCS approval, a provider must be considered fit and proper to handle public money. All new providers go through a fit and proper assessment. The STR will form part of this assessment. It demonstrates a provider's engagement with the tax system.

The provider must supply the STR. Applicants will need to:

- request and obtain the required STR for their organisation from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO)
- provide the STR as part of their application for CCS approval.

Providers will be able to request an STR from the ATO:

- by using [ATO online services](#)
- through their registered tax professional.

Visit our website for more information on [STR for CCS](#).

## Facts from FAL

### Can families travelling overseas get CCS?

**Generally, Australian Government payments are not payable while the recipient is overseas. Government payments are for families who live and work in Australia.**

To remain eligible for CCS, a family must meet residency requirements. This means:

- payments will stop when a family leaves Australia to live in another country
- payments will stop if a family travels overseas for 6 weeks or more, restarting when they return to Australia.

A family can use their 42 allowable absences for short term travel overseas.

Read more about [payments to families](#) on our website.

### Tell us within 24 hours if a working with children check status changes

**You must notify us when the status of a working with children check (WWCC) changes for any of the following people:**

- Family Day Care educators
- In Home Care educators
- persons with management or control (PMCs) and
- persons responsible at the service who are required to have a WWCC.

A change in status includes if a check is:

- renewed



- extended
- suspended
- revoked
- lapsed or expired.

You must report the change via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software within 24 hours of becoming aware.

Learn more about [how to manage your WWCC](#) on our website.

## New Geccko course: First Nations Cultural Awareness

**Our new First Nations Cultural Awareness course is designed for all staff working in ECEC, including administrators, educators and support staff.**

This course will help the ECEC sector better understand issues impacting First Nations families. Understanding these issues will help create a safe, welcoming and respectful environment.

This course will provide insights into:

- the impact of colonisation on First Nations people
- the experiences of First Nations people in ECEC settings
- practical steps you can take to support First Nations children, families, staff and communities.

Improve your cultural competency and share with your colleagues today.

Find out more and access this free course on [Geccko](#).

## Workforce support

### Professional development survey coming soon

**We want to hear about your experience with our professional development opportunities.**

We've engaged ORIMA Research to conduct a survey about our [professional development opportunities](#). This includes the:

- professional development subsidy
- paid practicum subsidy
- practicum exchange network
- practicum exchange living allowance.

The survey will open on Monday. If your service has accessed any of these opportunities, we encourage you to take part.

**Please keep an eye out for an email from ORIMA with the survey link next week.** We will also share a link in next week's newsletter.

The survey is voluntary. It is an opportunity to let us know how we can better support you in the future.



## Apply for the practicum exchange living allowance

**Don't forget – applications for the practicum exchange living allowance are open.**

The practicum exchange network is a dedicated website connecting ECEC services and educators in training.

Educators who work in the sector and use the network may be eligible for a living allowance to complete a practicum in a rural or remote area other than their home location.

Providers must apply on behalf of eligible staff. Applications close on 14 March 2025.

Learn more about the [living allowance](#).

## Apply for the professional development subsidy

**The professional development subsidy helps qualified staff complete training. It covers 1 day of training per staff member.**

We pay the subsidy to providers. Providers pass funding on to staff through training opportunities.

Providers must apply on behalf of staff. If you work in the sector and think you'd benefit from this subsidy, please talk to your provider about applying.

Applications close on 14 March 2025.

Learn more about the [professional development subsidy](#).

## News for families

### Your Child Care Subsidy (CCS) may change if you have a child turning 6 this year

When your eldest child turns 6, the CCS rate you get may be different, depending on how many children you have and their ages.

Read more on the [Services Australia website](#).





## Queensland floods: 14 new LGAs added and CCS period of emergency extended

We've added 14 new local government areas (LGAs) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding. We have also extended the period of emergency.

The CCS period of emergency applies from Wednesday 29 January 2025 to Tuesday 4 March 2025 in the following local government areas:

- **Barcaldine Regional Council**
- **Shire of Boulia**
- **Cloncurry Shire Council**
- **Hope Vale Aboriginal Shire Council**
- **Longreach Regional Council**
- **Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council**
- **Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Shire Council**
- **Richmond Shire Council**
- **Winton Shire Council**
- **Blackall-Tambo Regional Council**
- **Kowanyama Aboriginal Shire Council**
- **McKinlay Shire Council**
- **Diamantina Shire Council**
- **Wujal Wujal Aboriginal Shire Council**
- **Carpentaria Shire Council**
- **Croydon Shire Council**
- **Flinders Shire Council**
- **Charters Towers Regional Council**
- **Cook Shire Council**
- **Douglas Shire Council**
- **Etheridge Shire Council**
- **Tablelands Regional Council**
- **Whitsunday Regional Council**
- **Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council**
- **Burdekin Shire Council**
- **Cairns Regional Council**
- **Aboriginal Shire of Palm Island**



- Townsville City Council
- Hinchinbrook Council
- Cassowary Coast Regional Council.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

## Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).

## Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

## Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at <https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency>.

## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](https://StartingBlocks.gov.au) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [qld.gov.au/emergency](https://qld.gov.au/emergency) for current emergency information in your region.



# Western Australia cyclone: new LGA added to CCS period of emergency

**We've added an extra local government area (LGA) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in Western Australia due to the impact of Tropical Cyclone Zelia.**

The CCS period of emergency applies from 13 February 2025 to 20 February 2025 in the following local government areas:

- **Shire of East Pilbara**
- City of Karratha
- Town of Port Hedland.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

## Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).

## Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

## Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency WA](#).



## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency WA](#) for current emergency information in your region.



## From the department

### 3-day guarantee – legislation passed

**On 11 December 2024, the Australian Government announced changes to how subsidised hours are calculated for the Child Care Subsidy (CCS).**

This change is part of the government's pathway toward a [universal early education and care system](#).

Legislation to enact this measure passed Parliament on 13 February 2025.

From 5 January 2026, families can get at least 72 subsidised hours of care each fortnight for each child. This is regardless of how much work, training, study or volunteering they do.

The department will now work with Services Australia to ensure child care providers and families are ready for the change in January next year.

Read more about the [changes](#) on our website.

### Need help with your workplace instrument?

**You can now get help to develop a workplace instrument that meets the requirements of the worker retention payment.**

The following organisations can provide workplace instrument support:

- Ai Group
- Australian Childcare Alliance
- Community Early Learning Australia
- National Outside School Hours Services Alliance
- United Workers Union.

These organisations can help you with:

- single enterprise agreements
- variation to existing enterprise agreements
- individual flexibility arrangements
- ECEC Multi-Employer Agreement.

Workplace instrument templates sold commercially may not meet the worker retention payment requirements.

We recommend you get support through the organisations listed on our website.

[Search the directory](#) to find support that meets your needs.



## CCS periods of emergency declared

CCS periods of emergency are in place in parts of Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia due to the impact of fires, flooding, storms and cyclones.

Visit our website to see:

- [regions and timeframes where the period of emergency applies](#)
- [details of support available during and after a period of emergency](#).

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

## Sector spotlight

### What Closing the Gap report means for early childhood

**On 10 February 2025, the Australian Government released the Commonwealth Closing the Gap 2024 Annual Report and 2025 Implementation Plan.**

The report:

- assesses the Commonwealth's progress against Closing the Gap targets and priority reforms over the last year
- outlines the Commonwealth's priorities to support Closing the Gap targets and priority reforms over the next year
- spotlights outstanding programs, services and initiatives.

Closing the Gap outcomes 3 and 4 focus on the early years. They aim to ensure:

- children are engaged in high quality, culturally appropriate early childhood education and care (ECEC)
- children thrive in their early years.

The report highlights key achievements and investments to improve progress in these areas, including:

- continuation of the [Early Childhood Care and Development Policy Partnership](#)
- expansion of [Connected Beginnings](#) to 50 sites across the country
- finalising the [Early Years Strategy](#) and developing a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
- establishment of new First Nations-led ECEC services through the [Community Child Care Fund restricted expansion grant](#)
- changes to the CCS [activity test for families with First Nations children](#)
- announcement of a [building early education fund](#)
- core funding to support First Nations peaks, NATSIEC and SNAICC, to partner with government on matters affecting First Nations children in the early years.

Read the [Commonwealth Closing the Gap 2024 Annual Report and 2025 Implementation Plan](#).



## Spotlight on Connected Beginnings

This year's report puts a spotlight on the [Connected Beginnings program in Ceduna](#).

Connected Beginnings is an Australian Government grants program that helps Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children get the best start to life.

Connected Beginnings started in 2017 in Ceduna, South Australia. Since then, the program has laid the foundations for community-led systems change in Ceduna, Scotdesco and surrounding homelands. It also works with families of the Yalata and Oak Valley (Maralinga) communities who have connections with Ceduna and Koonibba.

*"Our focus and our purpose of Connected Beginnings is engaging with our families. It's making sure that our families are safe, that their voices are listened to, and that when we're making decisions on programs centred around those families, that they are at the heart and soul of what we do. I want our kids to be treated fairly and to grow up safe and strong, connected to culture"* – Connected Beginnings Project Officer, Ceduna.

There are now [50 Connected Beginnings](#) sites across Australia supporting about 24,800 children.

## Facts from FAL

### Have you made any changes to your business this year?

**Under Family Assistance Law, you must notify us about changes to your business, including changes to fees, vacancies, closures and contact details.**

You must notify us of these changes to maintain your CCS approval.

Find out more about [how to notify us about changes](#), including:

- when you must notify us
- who can how to notify us, and
- how to notify us, including links to helpful task cards.

### Understanding shared care enrolments

**Families must tell both you and Services Australia when their relationship changes.**

If a child's parents are separated and both parents share responsibility for child care fees:

- both parents must make their own CCS claim
- you must establish separate care arrangements and enrolment notices for each parent.

Separate care arrangements are required even if you previously had a care arrangement in place before the separation.

Read more about [how to enrol children](#) on our website.



# Workforce support

## Discounted care for staff

**Did you know you can offer a discounted fee to some staff whose children attend your service?**

You can offer discounts to employees who:

- are employed, contracted or engaged as an educator, early childhood teacher or cook
- work at a Centre Based Day Care or Outside School Hours Care service, and
- have a child enrolled at a service where they work or that you own.

It's up to you how much you want to discount. The employee must still pay at least 5% of the gap fee.

The discount won't affect the employee's CCS entitlement.

Learn more about the [discounted care for early childhood workforce](#).

## Apply for the paid practicum subsidy

**The paid practicum subsidy helps early childhood teachers and educators in training complete their practicums.**

We pay this subsidy to providers, so you can give your staff paid leave while they complete practicums.

Practicums help teachers and educators in training gain practical, work-place experience in an early childhood educational setting. They are mandatory for most ECEC qualifications.

Providers must apply for the subsidy on behalf of staff. If you have staff who need to complete a practicum, we encourage you to apply.

If you work in the sector and think you'd benefit from these subsidies, please talk to your provider about applying.

Applications will close on 14 March 2025.

Learn more about the [paid practicum subsidy](#).

# News for families

## You'll need your child's Customer Reference Number (CRN) to enrol them in child care.

If you're using child care, before or after school care or holiday care, you'll need to give the service your child's CRN.

Read more on the [Services Australia website](#).

## Confirming your child's enrolment details for child care

To get Child Care Subsidy (CCS), you need to confirm your child's enrolment details.

Read more on the Services Australia website.





## NSW storms: CCS period of emergency declared

We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in Hilltops Council local government area (LGA) in New South Wales following storm activity.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 10 February 2025 to 12 February 2025.

To access the emergency provisions below your **person with management or control** must contact the department as follows:

- email [CCSHelpdesk@education.gov.au](mailto:CCSHelpdesk@education.gov.au)
- use the subject line "Claim for NSW storms CCS period of emergency"
- include in the body of the email for each affected service:
  - service name
  - service ID
  - service address
  - estimated number of impacted families
  - expected period of closure
  - reason for closure
  - note whether the service was directed to close
- attach any of the following as evidence for each affected service:
  - photos of damaged caused by the storm
  - communications from state emergency services agencies
  - other information you consider helpful.

We will review your request for emergency support. We will respond via email to advise if your request has been approved.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

### Support during an emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.



Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).

## Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

## Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency NSW](#).

## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency NSW](#) for current emergency information in your region.



# Western Australia cyclone: CCS period of emergency declared

**We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Western Australia due to the impact of Tropical Cyclone Zelia.**

The CCS period of emergency applies from 13 February 2025 to 20 February 2025 in the following local government areas:

- City of Karratha
- Town of Port Hedland

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

## Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).

## Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

## Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency WA](#).

## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).



- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](https://StartingBlocks.gov.au) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency WA](#) for current emergency information in your region.



## Queensland floods: 3 new LGAs added to CCS period of emergency

**We've added 3 new local government areas (LGAs) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.**

The CCS period of emergency applies from Wednesday 29 January 2025 to Tuesday 25 February 2025 in the following local government areas:

- **Carpentaria Shire Council**
- **Croydon Shire Council**
- **Flinders Shire Council**
- Charters Towers Regional Council
- Cook Shire Council
- Douglas Shire Council
- Etheridge Shire Council
- Tablelands Regional Council
- Whitsunday Regional Council
- Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council
- Burdekin Shire Council
- Cairns Regional Council
- Aboriginal Shire of Palm Island
- Townsville City Council
- Hinchinbrook Council
- Cassowary Coast Regional Council.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

### Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).



## Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
  - families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

## Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at <https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency>.

## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [qld.gov.au/emergency](#) for current emergency information in your region.



## From the department

### Worker retention payment update

#### More support for worker retention payment applicants

**We are funding organisations to help providers engage with the worker retention payment.**

You will soon be able to access free support to engage with, apply for and meet the conditions of the worker retention payment.

The organisations we're funding to provide this support are:

- Community Early Learning Australia
- Australian Childcare Alliance
- National Outside School Hours Services Alliance
- AI Group
- SNAICC – National Voice for Our Children
- Independent Education Union
- United Workers Union
- Australian Services Union.

The organisations were selected based on their:

- knowledge of the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector, and
- understanding of the worker retention payment.

We will provide a summary of services provided by each organisation and contact details soon.

Find out more about the [worker retention payment](#).

#### Passing funding on to labour hire workers

**The government intends for all workers covered by the awards, or undertaking duties covered by the awards, get a wage increase. This includes workers engaged through a labour hire agency.**

The worker retention payment is paid to eligible Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approved services. Services should work with their labour hire agency to:

- determine how funding will be passed on to workers hired through these agencies
- update their contractual arrangements.

Any funding provided by a service to a labour hire agency must be passed on to workers as higher wages. Funding cannot be used to pay for the agency's fees.

Services should request evidence showing that funding has been passed on to workers. This evidence could be part of the contract terms or a formal declaration from the agency.



Providers must show that funding was used in line with these conditions in their annual reporting.

Read more about [who the payment covers](#).

## Contacting our helpdesk

**The CCS Provider Helpdesk is here to help you.**

When you contact the helpdesk, you can expect our staff to provide a respectful service. We ask that you treat our staff respectfully in return. The helpdesk will not tolerate abusive, threatening or violent behaviour.

We understand many providers are awaiting the outcome of their worker retention payment application.

While helpdesk staff can provide advice about the worker retention payment, they do not have access to individual applications.

After submitting your application and receiving a confirmation email, no further action is required from you. If we need more information, we will contact you.

We are working to assess applications as quickly as possible and appreciate your patience.

## CCS periods of emergency declared

**CCS periods of emergency are in place in parts of Victoria, Queensland and New South Wales due to the impact of fires, flooding and storms.**

Visit our website to see:

- [regions and timeframes where the period of emergency applies](#)
- [details of support available during and after a period of emergency](#).

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

## Sector spotlight

### Services continue to meet National Quality Standard

**For the second quarter in a row, 91% of education and care services are rated Meeting NQS or above.**

The NQF Snapshot is a national report on children's education and care services operating under the NQF. It provides information on the sector and the quality ratings of services against the NQS.

As at 1 January 2025, 17,842 NQF approved children's education and care services were operating across Australia.

The number of:

- services with a quality rating increased by 3% from Q4 2023
- approved services increased 2% from Q4 2023.

Read the [latest NQF snapshot](#) on ACECQA's website.

## Be You events for early learning

**Join Be You for new early learning events to make positive change in your learning community in 2025.**





**Be You in Practice** is a 30-minute online event that will showcase a new topic every month. Each session will explore a theme and immerse you in practical examples through engaging case studies and scenarios.

The first Be You In Practice event will focus on **routines and rituals to support transitions**. It will take place at 3.30 pm AEDT on 19 February 2025.

**Be You Fundamentals** are 3 rotating events that cover topics fundamental to children's and educators' wellbeing. These events are an opportunity to discover how other learning communities are making meaningful changes in their mental health and wellbeing practices for children, educators, and the whole community.

The first Be You Fundamentals event will focus on **applying a wellbeing lens to your quality improvement plan**. It will take place at 12 pm AEDT on 3 March 2025.

Find out more and register for [Be You early learning events](#).

Be You is the national mental health and wellbeing initiative for ECEC services and schools.

## Facts from FAL

### Changing session reports from previous financial years

**After a financial year ends, the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS) closes for that year.**

In limited circumstances, you may need to:

- submit a late session report
- vary or withdraw session reports.

If you need to submit, update or withdraw a session report from a previous financial year, you must apply to the department's CCS Provider Helpdesk.

You need to provide a separate application per family.

If you are applying to amend session reports for multiple children or weeks, you must provide the information in a spreadsheet. We cannot accept your application until you provide all information required.

Find more information about [changing session reports from previous financial years](#) on our website.

### Our compliance approach

**Our compliance approach recognises that many providers and services willingly comply with their obligations.**

To support compliance, we:

- provide information, education and resources to help you understand and comply with your obligations
- engage with stakeholders and the sector to support those who want to do the right thing
- regularly check you are complying with your obligations and take compliance action when you're not
- investigate tip-offs and reports of non-compliance.

We also work with other agencies to keep the system fair. This includes sharing intelligence and information, exchanging data, and engaging in joint taskforces and programs.



Read more about our [compliance approach](#) on our website.

## Workforce support

### Join the practicum exchange network

#### Has your service joined the practicum exchange network?

The practicum exchange network is a dedicated website connecting ECEC services and educators in training.

On the network you can:

- search for services and educators with availability in your area
- connect with each other and arrange practicums.

Registration is easy. Simply enter your details to create a user profile and start connecting.

Go to [prac.education.gov.au](http://prac.education.gov.au).

Educators who work in the sector and use the network may be eligible for a living allowance to complete a practicum in a rural or remote area.

Providers must apply on behalf of eligible staff. Applications close on 14 March 2025.

Learn more about the [living allowance](#).

## News for families

### It's time to update your family and child care details

Make sure your details are up to date so you get the right amount of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Family Tax Benefit (FTB).

Read more on the [Services Australia website](#).

### Check the progress of your families claim online

You can check the progress of your Family Tax Benefit (FTB) or Child Care Subsidy (CCS) claim online.

Read more on the [Services Australia website](#).



## NSW storms: 6 new LGAs added to CCS period of emergency

We've added 6 extra local government areas (LGAs) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of NSW due to the impact of storm activity.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 15 January 2025 to 17 January 2025 in the following local government areas:

- **Central Coast Council**
- **Hornsby Shire Council**
- **Ku-ring-gai Council**
- **City of Newcastle**
- **Wagga Wagga City Council**
- **Wingecarribee Shire Council**
- City of Maitland
- Port Stephens Council
- Singleton Council
- Northern Beaches Council
- Mid-Coast Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Cessnock Shire Council
- Blacktown City Council
- Hawkesbury City Council
- Snowy Valleys Council
- Upper Hunter Shire Council.

To access the emergency provisions below your **person with management or control** must contact the department as follows:

- email [CCSHelpdesk@education.gov.au](mailto:CCSHelpdesk@education.gov.au)
- use the subject line "Claim for NSW storms CCS period of emergency"
- include in the body of the email for each affected service:
  - service name
  - service ID
  - service address
  - estimated number of impacted families



- expected period of closure
- reason for closure
- note whether the service was directed to close
- attach any of the following as evidence for each affected service:
  - photos of damaged caused by the storm
  - communications from state emergency services agencies
  - other information you consider helpful.

We will review your request for emergency support. We will respond via email to advise if your request has been approved.

## Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).

## Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

## Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency NSW](#).

## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.



- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](https://StartingBlocks.gov.au) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency NSW](#) for current emergency information in your region.



## Victorian fires: CCS period of emergency declared

**We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Victoria where some services have been directed to close due to the impact of fires.**

The CCS period of emergency applies from 27 January 2025 to 10 February 2025 in the following local government areas:

- Hindmarsh Shire Council
- Rural City of Horsham
- West Wimmera Shire
- Ararat Rural City
- Macedon Ranges Shire
- Northern Grampians Shire
- Southern Grampians Shire.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

### Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).

### Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

### Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).



- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [VicEmergency](#).

## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [VicEmergency](#) for current emergency information in your region.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.



## Queensland floods: 7 new LGAs added to CCS period of emergency

We've added 7 extra local government areas (LGA) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.

The CCS period of emergency applies from Wednesday 29 January 2025 to Tuesday 25 February 2025 in the following local government areas:

- Charters Towers Regional Council
- Cook Shire Council
- Douglas Shire Council
- Etheridge Shire Council
- Tablelands Regional Council
- Whitsunday Regional Council
- Yarrabah Aboriginal Shire Council.
- Burdekin Shire Council
- Cairns Regional Council
- Aboriginal Shire of Palm Island
- Townsville City Council
- Hinchinbrook Council
- Cassowary Coast Regional Council.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

### Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).

### Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support





- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

## Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at <https://www.qld.gov.au/emergency>.

## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
  - Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
  - Keep an eye on [qld.gov.au/emergency](#) for current emergency information in your region.



# Queensland floods: new LGAs added to CCS period of emergency

**We've added two extra local government areas (LGA) to the declared Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.**

The CCS period of emergency applies from Wednesday 29 January 2025 to Tuesday 11 February 2025 in the following local government areas:

- Burdekin Shire Council
- Cairns Regional Council
- Aboriginal Shire of Palm Island
- Townsville City Council
- **Hinchinbrook Council**
- **Cassowary Coast Regional Council.**

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

## Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).

## Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

## Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).



- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [qld.gov.au/emergency](https://qld.gov.au/emergency).

## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](https://StartingBlocks.gov.au) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [qld.gov.au/emergency](https://qld.gov.au/emergency) for current emergency information in your region.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.



## From the department

### 3-day guarantee legislation introduced

Today, the Australian Government introduced legislation to parliament to give children access to 3 days a week of subsidised early childhood education and care.

**It's called the 3-day guarantee.**

Should legislation pass, families can get at least 72 subsidised hours of care each fortnight for each child. This is regardless of how much work, training, study or volunteering they do.

Families caring for First Nations children will get 100 hours of subsidised care each fortnight for each child.

This proposed change is part of the government's pathway toward a [universal early education and care system](#).

Read more about the [proposed changes](#).

### How to request a worker retention payment funding review

**The funding review process allows us to support unique providers for whom the standard payment calculation method is not appropriate.**

A provider must be approved for the worker retention payment and smooth funding across services **before** requesting a funding review.

The provider must operate services that:

- have a unique staffing profile, or
- have stand-alone jurisdiction-funded preschool rooms, or
- are First Nations, remote/ or very remote, or
- get the Community Child Care Fund and have a unique operating model, or
- cannot be provided consistent and smoothed funding by the provider across a financial year.

If you meet the above criteria, contact [ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au](mailto:ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au) to request a funding review.

Read more about [requesting a funding review](#) on our website.

### Give feedback on disability standards

**We're seeking feedback on proposed changes to include early childhood education and care (ECEC) in the Disability Standards for Education (the Standards).**

The Standards explain what you must do to support students with disability.

In [2020 a review of the Standards](#) recommended including ECEC services. This will make it clearer and easier for you to understand what your service must do to support children with disability under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.



You can give feedback anonymously and you do not have to answer all the questions.

FAQs, documents that explain the changes, and the link to provide feedback are on the [consultation website](#).

## CCS period of emergency declared

**A Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency is in place for parts of New South Wales and Queensland due to the impact of storms and flooding.**

Visit our website to read more about:

- [NSW storms: CCS period of emergency](#)
- [Queensland floods: CCS period of emergency](#).

We continue to monitor each situation and will provide updates as required.

## Sector spotlight

### Changes to fit and proper person requirements

**From 1 April 2025, new CCS provider approval applicants will need to provide a statement of tax record (STR).**

The provider must supply the STR. Applicants will need to:

- request and obtain the required STR for their organisation from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO)
- provide the STR as part of their application for CCS approval.

For CCS approval, a provider must be considered fit and proper to handle public money. All new providers go through a fit and proper assessment. The STR will form part of this assessment. It demonstrates a provider's engagement with the tax system.

Providers will be able to request an STR from the ATO:

- by using [ATO online services](#)
- through their registered tax professional.

Visit our website for more information on [STR for CCS](#).

## Facts from FAL

### Inducements and advertising your service

**An inducement is an incentive offered by a provider or a third party to secure a child's enrolment at a service.**

Inducements that are financial or not directly associated with the quality or provision of education or care services are not allowed. This includes cash, vouchers, electronics devices, gifts or gift cards.

You can:

- offer discounted or free care
- advertise your service and offer free site visits or trial periods



- issue marketing merchandise to the value of \$30 per complying written arrangement
- include extra-curricular activities as part of a session fee
- advertise your social impact through activities like donations to a charity
- provide transport to or from your service, if this is part of your normal business practice.

Fee discounts must be reported correctly if CCS is claimed.

Read about [inducements and advertising at your service](#) on our website.

## How to avoid an overpayment

**You may sometimes receive more CCS than you're entitled to. This is known as an overpayment.**

Overpayments generally occur if you withdraw or change a session report, such as recording fewer hours of care.

If this happens, we'll use your future CCS payments to pay back the difference. This is called offsetting. You can see if offsetting has occurred in your payment advice in the Child Care Subsidy System.

The best way to avoid an overpayment is to submit accurate and timely session reports.

Learn more about [how to manage overpayments](#) on our website.

## Need help administering CCS?

**Our website has everything you need to know about child care subsidy, including [how-to guides](#) for administering CCS.**

If you need specific help to administer CCS, our CCS Provider Helpdesk is the place to go.

The helpdesk provides frontline support for child care providers and services seeking answers. The helpdesk can answer your questions about:

- CCS and ACCS payments
- enrolments
- session reports
- gap fees
- absences.

You can email the helpdesk on [CCShelpdesk@education.gov.au](mailto:CCShelpdesk@education.gov.au) anytime. We will respond during business hours.

If your query relates to CCS, always include your CCS Provider/Service ID in your email.

## Workforce support

### Apply for a professional development subsidy

**Applications for our professional development subsidies are open.**

The subsidies aim to strengthen the skills and professional experience of your workforce.

We pay the subsidies to providers to pass on to staff through training opportunities and paid leave.



The subsidies provide a flat daily or weekly rate depending on the activity. This may not cover all costs. Providers are responsible for any remaining costs, including associated on-costs.

Following high demand for the professional development subsidy in the last round, we will prioritise applications for:

- educators in regional and remote areas
- First Nations educators.

Remaining applications will be funded in the order they are received until funding is exhausted.

Applications close on 14 March.

Learn more about the [professional development opportunities](#).

## News for families

### Getting help with child care fees for before and after school care

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) can help with the cost of child care, before and after school care and holiday care.

Read more on the [Services Australia website](#).



## NSW storms: CCS period of emergency declared

We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of NSW following storm activity.

The CCS period of emergency applies from 15 January 2025 to 17 January 2025 in the following local government areas:

- City of Maitland
- Port Stephens Council
- Singleton Council
- Northern Beaches Council
- Mid-Coast Council
- Lake Macquarie City Council
- Dungog Shire Council
- Cessnock City Council
- Blacktown City Council
- Hawkesbury City Council
- Snowy Valleys Council
- Upper Hunter Shire Council

To access the emergency provisions below your **person with management or control** must contact the department as follows:

- email [CCSHelpdesk@education.gov.au](mailto:CCSHelpdesk@education.gov.au)
- use the subject line "Claim for NSW storms CCS period of emergency"
- include in the body of the email for each affected service:
  - service name
  - service ID
  - service address
  - estimated number of impacted families
  - expected period of closure
  - reason for closure
  - note whether the service was directed to close
- attach any of the following as evidence for each affected service:
  - photos of damaged caused by the storm
  - communications from state emergency services agencies
  - other information you consider helpful.





We will review your request for emergency support. We will respond via email to advise if your request has been approved.

## Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [support during a CCS period of emergency](#).

## Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

## Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).
- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [Emergency NSW](#).

## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](#) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.
- Keep an eye on [Emergency NSW](#) for current emergency information in your region.



## Queensland floods: CCS period of emergency declared

We've declared a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) period of emergency in parts of Queensland due to the impact of flooding.

The CCS period of emergency applies from Wednesday 29 January 2025 to Tuesday 11 February 2025 in the following local government areas:

- Burdekin Shire Council
- Cairns Regional Council
- Aboriginal Shire of Palm Island
- Townsville City Council.

We continue to monitor the situation and will provide updates as required.

### Support during the emergency

The following support is available in affected regions **during** the CCS period of emergency:

- you can continue to get CCS if your service closes as a direct result of the emergency
- you can waive the gap fee if a child doesn't attend, or your service is closed, during the CCS period of emergency
- families will get unlimited allowable absences for the duration of the CCS period of emergency.

Read more about support [during a CCS period of emergency](#).

### Support after the emergency

The following support may help you recover **after** an emergency:

- you may be eligible for a [Community Child Care Fund special circumstances grant](#) if the emergency threatens your service's ability to stay open after the event, and you have already accessed other disaster support
- families may be able to access [additional absences](#) if they've exhausted their allowable absences
- families may be eligible for [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#) if they experience temporary financial hardship due to an emergency that happened in the last 6 months.

Read more about [support after an emergency](#).

### Other disaster support

You may be eligible for other government disaster support:

- The Australian Government provides help for people affected by natural disasters. Find out whether you're eligible on the [Services Australia website](#).



- Your state or territory government may provide additional support in the event of a natural disaster. Find out more at [qld.gov.au/emergency](https://qld.gov.au/emergency).

## For action

- Tell us as soon as possible if you close your service. Do this via the [Provider Entry Point \(PEP\)](#) or your third-party software. You also need to tell your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).
- Update your contact details in the Child Care Subsidy System so you don't miss important information. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Update your vacancy details on [StartingBlocks.gov.au](https://StartingBlocks.gov.au) to help families looking for care. Do this via the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.
- Join our [Facebook group](#) for alerts and updates.

Keep an eye on [qld.gov.au/emergency](https://qld.gov.au/emergency) for current emergency information in your region.



## From the department

### Worker retention payment funding review process

**The funding review process allows us to support unique providers for whom the standard worker retention payment calculation method is not appropriate.**

The government has committed to provide all participating providers with funding to cover:

- a 10% wage increase for all eligible workers in the first year
- an additional 5% wage increase for all eligible workers in the second year
- a minimum of an additional 20% funding for eligible on-costs.

For most providers, a standard payment calculation will cover these costs. However, there may be a small number of services who provide a unique service offering outside the scope of the standard payment calculation.

This includes providers who operate services that:

- have a unique staffing profile, or
- have stand-alone jurisdiction-funded preschool rooms, or
- are First Nations, remote/ or very remote, or
- get the Community Child Care Fund and have a unique operating model, or
- cannot be provided consistent and smoothed funding by the provider across a financial year.

Providers of these services can request a funding review. **Before** requesting a review, you must first be approved for the worker retention payment.

You will need to complete an application to receive a funding review. If found eligible:

- we will vary your grant agreement
- some or all of your services will move to an alternative funding review stream
- payments will be made quarterly based on employee data
- you will have additional reporting requirements.

Read more about the [funding review process](#) on our website.

### Ensuring quality and safety in early childhood education and care

**We're ensuring quality and safety in services that don't operate under the National Quality Framework (NQF).**

For most early childhood education and care (ECEC) services, the NQF provides a national approach to ensuring quality standards are met.

A small number of services are out of scope of the NQF. This includes some Community Child Care Fund restricted (CCCFR) services. Such services operate under the *Child Care Subsidy Minister's Rules 2017*.



This year we're starting a regulatory project to provide additional support to these services. This will enable them to meet the quality and safety requirements in the Minister's Rules.

We will work collaboratively with these services to ensure quality and safety.

Our regulatory approach:

- will align with the key objectives of the NQF
- will acknowledge the unique contexts these services operate in
- aims to ensure all children have access to high quality and safe early learning environments.

The project builds on several existing projects including:

- [ACECQA Quality and Safety Project](#)
- [Northern Territory Regulatory Project](#)
- [South Australia Regulatory Project](#).

We have contacted identified services directly with more information. If you have questions about the project, contact [ECYRegulatoryProject@education.gov.au](mailto:ECYRegulatoryProject@education.gov.au).

Read more about the [regulatory project](#) on our website.

## Facts from FAL

### Reminder that fee reporting obligations were due 14 January

**Changes made in September 2024 mean that you must notify us of fees at least twice a year to ensure they are correctly updated or remain accurate.**

You need to notify us of your fees 14 days after the end of the:

- financial year – due 14 July
- calendar year – due 14 January.

This also includes reporting no change to fees.

To report no change, update the date of event on the fees and inclusions screen via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

This reporting obligation is in addition to the current notification requirements to report the fees within 14 days of:

- receiving CCS approval
- starting the CCS approved service
- changing your fees.

This change was part of the government's commitment to improving the transparency of child care fees. It will help families make informed financial decisions about ECEC.

Read more about [notifications and reporting](#) on our website.



## Claiming CCS when your service is closed

**Did you know that you cannot claim Child Care Subsidy (CCS) when your service is closed, except:**

- on a public holiday by law
- during a CCS period of emergency.

Read more about [service closures](#) on our website.

## What happens if you get an infringement notice?

**We issue infringement notices when providers don't follow the rules under Family Assistance Law (FAL). Providers must make sure that they, their employees and educators follow the rules.**

An infringement is a fine and can be expensive. Some infringement notices are more than \$15,000.

We send infringement notices by email and by post. Emails will come from [CCinfringements@education.gov.au](mailto:CCinfringements@education.gov.au). Please add this address to your safe list and check your mail often.

Our website has a range of resources to help you avoid an infringement notice, including:

- a free online learning module on [Geccko](#), our online learning platform
- information about [how to administer CCS](#)
- a [comprehensive table of reporting obligations, tasks and timeframes](#)
- a [series of short videos](#) covering common compliance issues
- [handbooks, guides and task cards](#) on key programs.

## Reporting absences

**You can report an absence in your session reports if:**

- the child was enrolled in a session of care but did not attend, and
- the family has been charged a gap fee for that session of care.

You cannot report absences when your service is closed, except on a public holiday or during a [period of emergency](#).

During a period of emergency, the closure must be as a direct result of the emergency.

Read more about [how to manage absences](#) on our website.

## Workforce support

### Support for educators to complete practicums

**Are your educators using the practicum exchange network? They may be eligible for a living allowance to complete a practicum exchange.**

The [practicum exchange network](#) is a dedicated website connecting ECEC services and educators in training.

Educators who work in the sector and use the network may be eligible for a living and travel allowance to complete a practicum in a rural or remote area.



Providers must apply on behalf of eligible staff. Applications close on 14 March 2025.

Learn more about the [living allowance](#).

## Share with families

### Families facing tough times may get more child care support

**If you are facing difficult or challenging circumstances, you can sometimes get free child care. This is called Additional Child Care Subsidy, or ACCS. It usually covers all fees.**

There are 4 types of ACCS:

#### Child wellbeing

The child wellbeing subsidy is for families who need practical help to support their child's safety and wellbeing. Your child care service applies for this on behalf of families. Families cannot apply.

#### Grandparent

The grandparent subsidy is for grandparents on income support who are the primary carer of their grandchild.

#### Temporary financial hardship

The temporary financial hardship subsidy is for families experiencing temporary, significant financial stress.

#### Transition to work

The transition to work subsidy is for parents or carers transitioning to work from income support.

Except for ACCS child wellbeing, you apply on the [Services Australia website](#) or through your myGov account.

Families can find more details at [Additional Child Care Subsidy](#).



## From the department

### We've improved our website

#### **We've made changes to our website based on your feedback.**

Last year we asked you what you thought of our website. You provided valuable feedback, including the need for more streamlined navigation.

You can still find all the information you need at [education.gov.au/early-childhood](https://education.gov.au/early-childhood). We've improved the structure and layout of the site to help you find what you're looking for.

We've established a new section for providers which contains:

- how-to guides for administering the Child Care Subsidy
- information about your legal obligations
- our approach to compliance and enforcement
- extra support available during difficult or challenging times
- what we're doing to support your workforce.

As part of the updates, some URLs have changed. We recommend updating your bookmarks to ensure you can easily access our content.

### Get the latest on the worker retention payment

**Visit our website for the latest information about the [worker retention payment](#).**

On our website, you'll find:

- a summary of the grant guidelines
- information about workplace instruments, awards and supported bargaining
- the minimum rates you must pass on to eligible workers
- an application guide, and more.

We are receiving a high volume of incomplete or inaccurate applications. Applications must be complete and accurate before we can start our assessment.

Please consult our [application guide](#) and ensure you have checked off all the required details before submitting.





## Celebrating 50 Connected Beginnings sites



**Last week the Australian Government launched the 50th Connected Beginnings site in Kununurra, Western Australia.**

This is a major milestone for the grants program, which helps Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children get the best start to life.

In 2021, the Australian Government committed \$81.8 million to expand the program to 50 sites nationally by 2025.

Minister for Early Childhood Education the Hon Dr Anne Aly MP announced \$2.4 million for Binarri-binyja yarrowoo Aboriginal Corporation Limited to deliver the 50th site in Kununurra on Thursday.

The new site will support around 600 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children in Kununurra.

Nationally, the program supports about 24,800 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children across all 50 sites. The program has the potential to support up to 20% of all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children aged zero to 5.

Connected Beginnings is a community-owned and led initiative making a tangible difference in Closing the Gap in early childhood education. It provides steady, wrap-around support so children are safe, healthy and ready to thrive at school.

The program is jointly funded by us and the [Department of Health and Aged Care](#). It's delivered in partnership with [SNAICC – National Voice for our Children](#) and the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO).

Learn more about [Connected Beginnings](#) and [explore all 50 sites](#).

## CCS helpdesk closed next Monday

**The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Provider Helpdesk will be closed for the public holiday on Monday 27 January.**

The helpdesk will re-open at 9 am AEDT on Tuesday 28 January.

You can contact the helpdesk anytime at [CCShelpdesk@education.gov.au](mailto:CCShelpdesk@education.gov.au) and we will respond during business hours.

CCS payments may be affected by the public holiday.



## Reminder for CCCF grant recipients

**A reminder that grants under round 4 of the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) disadvantaged and vulnerable communities grant are transitioning to the [Community Grants Hub](#).**

If you have a capital support grant, it will transition from tomorrow.

If you have both a capital support and sustainability support grant, both will transition from tomorrow.

If you only have a sustainability support grant, it will transition from 31 March 2025.

You don't need to do anything. The Community Grants Hub will contact you once your grant has been transferred.

## Change to start date of direct gap fee collection

**Last year, the government announced that Family Day Care (FDC) and In Home Care (IHC) providers must collect the gap fee direct from families.**

The start date for this measure has moved to 1 January 2026. This change is based on feedback from the sector. It gives providers time to make necessary administrative changes.

We have partnered with Family Day Care Australia and the NSW Family Day Care Association to support providers to transition.

Family Day Care Australia will support FDC providers. NSW Family Day Care Association will support IHC providers. They will be reaching out to providers shortly.

An [overview of the proposed changes](#) can be found on our website.

This measure is subject to the passage of legislation.

## Sector spotlight

### Issues with RA number in PRODA

**A small number of providers are experiencing an IT error where their RA number is removed from their records.**

If you're affected:

- your service status will show as 'not approved'
- you will not be able to interact with your services in the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS).

**This does not mean that your CCS approval has been removed.**

To fix the problem, a person with management or control should email [CCShelpdesk@education.gov.au](mailto:CCShelpdesk@education.gov.au). Include screenshots from PRODA showing:

- your PRODA RA number and your ABN
- personnel details for your organisation showing the person listed as 'Director'.

We will work with Services Australia to restore access. This usually takes 1–2 business days.

We are also working with Services Australia to permanently fix the issue.



## Celebrating one year of Geccko



**Geccko is our free online learning platform for the early childhood education and care (ECEC) sector. It has resources to help you understand your Family Assistance Law (FAL) obligations.**

Geccko was launched in December 2023 and has since become a go-to resource for providers. Geccko has:

- more than 6,000 user registrations
- more than 12,500 course completions.

What we're hearing from users:

*"These courses would be very beneficial to new staff."*

*"The learning courses are very user-friendly and easy to complete, and specifically, the knowledge tests are very user friendly and easy too."*

Want to improve your understanding of FAL and check you're administering CCS correctly? Register to use Geccko.

You can:

- login using your tablet, laptop, or mobile phone
- access a range of self-paced courses about FAL
- download course certificates upon completion.

Geccko currently offers 11 free courses. New courses are added regularly. Two key courses coming this year include a First Nations Cultural Awareness course and a comprehensive Family Day Care course.

If there is a specific topic that you want us to explore, please email us at [geccko@education.gov.au](mailto:geccko@education.gov.au).

[Find out more and register for Geccko.](#)

## Get our updates on social media

**Did you know we run a Facebook group for CCS approved providers and services?**

Our group is a place to get authorised and fact-checked information about:

- CCS



- FAL
- other Australian Government-led ECEC policies and programs.

We welcome general conversation about these topics in our group. Where you need specific help or advice, we encourage you to contact the CCS Provider Helpdesk.

If you haven't already, join more than 10,000 members in [our Facebook group](#).

## Facts from FAL

### The enrolment process in 4 steps

**As we enter a new year, it's a good time to refresh your understanding of the enrolment process.**

All children who attend approved care must be enrolled. This is a requirement under FAL.

Enrolling children correctly means families can get CCS payments.

Follow these steps.

#### Step 1

Families lodge a CCS claim using their Centrelink online account. They should do this before their child starts at your service.

#### Step 2

You and the family agree on care arrangements for the child. Families must agree to the care arrangements in writing.

#### Step 3

Submit an enrolment notice in the CCSS for the care arrangement.

#### Step 4

The family will be prompted to confirm the enrolment via their Centrelink online account. CCS payments will not start until the enrolment is confirmed.

Read more details about the [enrolment process](#) on our website.

### Salary sacrificing early childhood education and care fees

**Do you have families who pay through salary sacrifice? Make sure you're reporting their fees correctly to avoid compliance action.**

Salary sacrificing is considered a third-party payment. There are rules you must follow when a third party contributes to a family's fees.

Generally, when a third party helps a family pay its fees, you must deduct the contribution from the total session fee.

The family's CCS rate will then be applied to the reduced session fee. This is because families are only entitled to CCS in relation to the amount they have to pay after any third-party payments.

The family must still pay a gap fee.



Check out the examples on our website to help you understand [how to report different types of third-party payments](#).

## Workforce support

### Apply for professional development subsidies



**Applications are open for our professional development and paid practicum subsidies.**

The professional development subsidy helps qualified staff complete training.

The paid practicum subsidy helps early childhood teachers and educators in training complete their practicums.

We pay these subsidies to providers. Providers pass funding on to staff through training opportunities and paid leave.

Providers must apply on behalf of staff. If you work in the sector and think you'd benefit from these subsidies, please talk to your provider about applying.

Following high demand for the professional development subsidy in the last round, we will prioritise applications for:

- educators in regional and remote areas
- First Nations educators.

Remaining applications will be funded in the order they are received until funding is exhausted.

Applications will close on 14 March 2025.

Learn more about the [professional development opportunities](#).



# Share with families

## Know where to go for help when you have an issue?

**Start by having a conversation with your child care service or provider if you have a complaint or dispute relating to Child Care Subsidy (CCS) including:**

- enrolments, payments, debts or balancing
- safety or quality.

If they cannot resolve the issue, you have a range of options.

### Services Australia

Contact Services Australia on the [Centrelink families line](#) if you have a complaint or concern about:

- enrolments
- payments
- debts
- CCS payment balancing.

If your child care service or Services Australia are unable to resolve the issue, submit our [online contact form](#).

### Child safety concerns

If you have concerns about the quality or safety of a child care service or provider, contact your [state or territory regulatory authority](#).



## From the department

### Worker retention payment update

#### New workplace instrument available

On 10 December 2024, the Fair Work Commission approved the [Early Childhood Education and Care Multi-Employer Enterprise Agreement](#).

The agreement is compliant with the worker retention payment conditions. This means that providers covered by the agreement will meet the workplace instrument requirement.

Providers can apply to join the agreement. Find out how on the [Fair Work Commission website](#).

#### Compliant workplace instruments

You must engage workers through a workplace instrument that meets grant conditions.

The workplace instrument must:

- include an obligation to pay workers at least 10% above current award rates
- provide for an additional 5% above applicable award rates from 1 December 2025
- apply until at least 30 November 2026.

A workplace instrument will not be compliant if it excludes the above amounts from calculations of:

- penalties
- loadings
- termination payments
- payments while on leave
- superannuation.

#### Minimum rates updated

We have updated the [worker retention payment minimum rates](#) to reflect the *Children's Services Award 2010* rate increase for level 1.1 workers from 1 January 2025.

#### Get help with your application

We are receiving a high volume of incomplete or inaccurate applications. Applications must be complete and accurate before we can start our assessment.

Before you submit your application, please consult our [application guide](#) and ensure you have checked off all the required details.

The application guide shows you:

- how to find your CRNs, ABN and ACNs





- how to find your correct provider and service names
- guidance on financial and staffing information.

## Payments start this month

Regular payments will start to eligible providers this month.

We will send payments to the same bank account as your Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payments.

Please ensure your bank account details are up to date via the [Provider Entry Point](#) (PEP) or your third-party software.

## Backdating payments

We understand meeting certain conditions, like having a workplace instrument, may take time. We will backdate payments for providers who:

- submit a complete application by 30 June 2025
- meet the eligibility criteria from 2 December 2024.

We will backdate payments to either:

- 2 December 2024: for providers who have a compliant workplace instrument that covers the full grant period, even if the instrument was adopted or formed after 2 December 2024
- the date from which the workplace instrument applies: for providers who have a compliant workplace instrument that starts after 2 December 2024.

## Get the latest on our website

We have resources to help you navigate the process, including:

- read [details about the payment](#)
- see the [minimum rates you must pass on to eligible workers](#)
- learn about the [types of workplace instruments you may use](#)
- consult our [application guide for help applying](#).

## Connected Beginnings is expanding in the ACT

**The Australian Government is expanding the Connected Beginnings program in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT).**

Connected Beginnings is a grants program that helps Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children get the best start to life.

It's for children from birth to school age and pregnant women. Through it, children can get steady, wrap-around support. This helps them meet the learning and development milestones needed for a smooth start to school.

The new site at Winnunga Nimmitjyah Health and Community Services will support up to 1000 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children across the ACT.

The site joins 48 other locations across the country supporting about 24,200 Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children.





The new site is part of an \$81.8 million investment from the Australian Government to expand the program to 50 sites nationally.

Once all 50 sites are established, the program has the potential to support up to 20% of all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children aged zero to 5.

Learn more about [Connected Beginnings](#).

## Update for CCCF grant recipients

**Grants made under round 4 of the Community Child Care Fund (CCCF) disadvantaged and vulnerable communities grant will soon transition to the [Community Grants Hub](#).**

The transition will occur in 2 phases:

- if you only have a 'capital support' grant, this will transition from 23 January 2025
- if you have both a 'capital support' and 'sustainability support' grant, these will both transition from 23 January 2025
- if you only have a 'sustainability support' grant, this will transition from 31 March 2025.

You don't need to do anything. The Community Grants Hub will contact you once your grant has been transferred.

After this, all communication about your grant will be through the Community Grants Hub. This includes:

- questions about your grant
- grant reporting
- payment information
- acquittals.

We will continue to manage grants until the transfer date.

## Facts from FAL

### Getting ready for a new school year

**Here are some important reminders about the CCS as we approach the start of another school year.**

Families should ensure their child's expected primary school start date is up to date with Services Australia. Services Australia uses this information to calculate a family's CCS rate.

Children who have finished primary school can continue to attend care and get CCS over the school holidays if:

- they are under 13
- they have not yet started attending high school.

You must end a child's enrolment if their family advises they're ending care. You may need to do this for children who will leave your service to start school. You can end enrolments in the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.

We generally don't pay CCS for any absences after a child's last physical attendance at your service. Read more about [absences at the start or end of an enrolment on our website](#).



## How can you help families use EFT?

**Most families get salaries or benefits electronically, making it easy for them to pay the gap fee using electronic funds transfer (EFT).**

Families can pay the gap fee by payroll deduction as long as:

- the payment is made using EFT
- the provider can identify the electronic payment as being the gap fee for the family.

Learn more about how [you can help families use EFT](#).

Complete the **Electronic Payment of Gap Fees** course in [Geccko](#) to learn more.

## Submitting session reports

**Remember to submit accurate session reports on time – it's the law. Services Australia uses session reports to calculate and process CCS payments.**

As a CCS-approved provider, you must:

- submit session reports within 14 days after the end of the week in which the session of care was provided
- submit a session report for each child at your service, for each week a session of care is provided
- include at least one session of care a week, recorded as either an attendance or absence
- only include sessions of care for which you charge a family a fee for providing care to their child.

Submit session reports through the [PEP](#) or your third-party software.

Learn more about [session reports](#) on our website.

## Who must have a working with children check?

**Broadly, anyone who has contact with children at an early childhood education and care service must have a current working with children check (WWCC).**

This usually includes:

- all educators
- persons with management or control (PMCs)
- persons responsible for the day-to-day operation of a service.

Each state and territory has different requirements. In some jurisdictions, PMCs must have a WWCC even if they do not have direct contact with children.

Find out more about your [WWCC obligations](#) and where to apply on our website.



# Workforce support

## Apply for professional development subsidies



**Applications are now open for round 2 of the 2024–25 professional development subsidies.**

The professional development subsidy helps qualified staff complete training.

The paid practicum subsidy helps early childhood teachers and educators in training complete their practicums.

We pay these subsidies to providers. Providers pass funding on to staff through training opportunities and paid leave.

Providers must apply on behalf of staff. If you work in the sector and think you'd benefit from these subsidies, please talk to your provider about applying.

Following high demand for the professional development subsidy in the last round, we will prioritise applications for:

- educators in regional and remote areas
- First Nations educators.

Remaining applications will be funded in the order they are received until funding is exhausted.

Applications will close on 14 March 2025.

Learn more about the [professional development opportunities](#).

## Practicum exchange living allowance applications open

**Providers can now apply for a living allowance for educators who complete practicums in rural and remote areas.**

The practicum exchange living allowance is for educators who:

- use the [practicum exchange network](#)
- arrange a practicum in a rural or remote area other than their home location between 1 July 2024 and 30 June 2025 through the network
- have worked full-time, part-time or casually at a CCS-approved service for more than 40 hours in the last 3 months
- are an Australian citizen, permanent resident or hold a valid work visa.

The allowance will provide up to \$1,543.50 per week, for up to 4 weeks.

Applications are now open. Providers must apply on behalf of eligible staff.

Learn more about the [living allowance](#).

## Share with families

### Will you have more than one child in care this year?

**If you have more than one child aged 5 or under in care, you may get a higher Child Care Subsidy (CCS) for your second child and any younger children.**

You can get a higher subsidy for one or more of your children if all of these apply:

- you get or will be eligible for CCS
- your family's combined income is under \$365,611
- your family has more than one CCS eligible child aged 5 or under.

Services Australia will work out if you're eligible. If you are, they'll automatically apply a higher subsidy to any eligible children in your family.

If your Centrelink online account is linked to myGov, you can check your CCS percentage online.

Find out more about how your number of children in care can affect your CCS on the [Services Australia website](#).

