



Health supports for flood-affected Australians

20 October 2022

The Australian Government is committed to helping Australians impacted by storms and flooding. This factsheet outlines how the Australian Government is supporting flood-affected communities.

For more information visit our floods supports [webpage](#).

How should flood-impacted people seek support?

To make sure the appropriate support gets to you as quickly as possible, **use the existing state and local disaster coordination centres** to request help.

Emergency contacts: How should people seek assistance?

- **In an emergency or life threatening situation**, call Triple Zero (000)
- **In Queensland (QLD)**, for non-life threatening flood and storm emergency assistance contact the **Queensland Fire and Emergency Services** <https://www.qfes.qld.gov.au/> or call **13 74 68**.
- **In New South Wales (NSW)**, for non-life threatening flood and storm emergency assistance contact the **New South Wales State Emergency Service** www.ses.nsw.gov.au or call **132 500**.
- **In Victoria (Vic)**, for non-life threatening flood and storm emergency assistance contact the **Victorian State Emergency Service** <https://www.ses.vic.gov.au/plan-and-stay-safe/emergencies/flood> or call **132 500**.
- **In Tasmania (Tas)**, for non-life threatening flood and storm emergency assistance contact the **Tasmanian State Emergency Service** <https://www.ses.tas.gov.au/> or call **132 500**.

Access to pharmaceuticals

What should people do if they urgently need medications?

Pharmacists can contact your doctor by phone to make sure you can still get the prescription medicines you need, even if your script has been lost or damaged by the floods.

In some cases, you can get the prescription medicine you need without a script. Under the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) [Continued Dispensing Arrangements](#), a pharmacist can provide one supply of eligible medicine/s without a prescription. This can happen when

there is an immediate need for the medicine, but where it is not practicable to obtain a PBS prescription.

Telehealth consultations can also be used to obtain a prescription which will then be transmitted digitally to the pharmacy.

Access to General Practitioners (GPs)

What should people do if they urgently need to see a GP?

A number of general practices and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services (ACCHSs) may be closed, or have reduced capacity, due to floods. It is recommended that you contact your health provider before attending to ensure they are open.

For patients that need urgent services, health staff have been placed at evacuation centres to help coordinate access to primary care support, including access to prescriptions. A number of practices/ACCHS have remained open and are able to offer urgent walk-in consultations. Telehealth is also available to provide support to patients.

If you cannot contact your regular GP, healthdirect provides a health service directory to show other available GPs in your area (www.healthdirect.gov.au) and a 24/7 health advice line (1800 022 222).

A number of practices and pharmacies are closed and may not be able to operate for the short to medium term. The Australian Government is providing locum support to ensure continuity of access to healthcare for everyone who needs it. Contact your regular GP or pharmacy in the first instance, or for information about GPs or pharmacies in your area, contact Healthdirect.

How have telehealth eligibility requirements changed in flood-affected areas?

If you are in a designated disaster area, you can access telehealth services from any GP. An exemption to normal GP telehealth service requirements means you don't need to have an established relationship with a GP or practice to access telehealth services (video and phone). These services are subsidised under the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS).

Find out more about [telehealth and Medicare benefits](#).

Support for Mental Health

What mental health support is available to the flooded regions?

People impacted by the floods are able to access a range of national, regional and localised mental health supports funded by the Australian Government and State Governments.

If immediate 24/7 mental help is required, people impacted by the floods should contact:

Health support	Contact numbers	Services
Lifeline	Lifeline Call 13 11 14	National Counselling service
Beyond Blue	Beyond Blue Call 1300 22 4636	National Mental Health and well-being support service
MensLine	MensLine Call 1300 22 4636	National 24/7 online counselling support for men
Lifeline Text	Lifeline Text Call 0477 13 11 14	24/7 Crisis Support Text service
Kids Helpline	Kids Helpline Call 1800 551 800	Counselling service for young people aged 5 to 25 years
headspace	Contact details: www.headspace.org.au	A program for youth aged 12-25 experiencing, or at risk of mild to moderate mental illness
Older Persons Advocacy Network	OPAN Call 1800 700 600	Free, confidential and independent support for older people

Primary Health Networks (PHNs) are funded to commission mental health and suicide prevention services at a regional level. Each PHN is required to commission services that respond to a range of mental health needs, from early intervention for mild and moderate conditions, to more severe forms of mental illness.

The contact details for all PHNs can be obtained by referring to the website at www.health.gov.au/phn and clicking on the Map Locator.

The [Head to Health](#) digital platform provides information, advice and links for free and low-cost phone, online and face to face mental health services and supports.

[headspace](#) is the Government's flagship program for provision of services to young people aged 12-25 experiencing, or at risk, of mild to moderate mental illness. headspace services are continuing to operate where safe to do so. Contact details are available online at www.headspace.org.au. For those young people unable to attend a headspace service, eheadspace provides free, telephone and web-based support services to young people aged 12-25 years with, or at risk of developing mental illness. Further information on eheadspace is available online at: www.headspace.org.au or on 1800 650 890.

Under the [Medicare Better Access](#) initiative, eligible people can receive Medicare rebates for up to 10 individual (temporarily increased to 20 until 31 December 2022) and 10 group

mental health services per calendar year. Anyone that thinks they may be in need of extra support can speak to their GP, or another referring practitioner (such as a psychiatrist).

Disaster relief and support for small businesses

If you are directly affected by a natural disaster event such as floods or storms, there is [financial help available](#) to support communities recover and rebuild.

Visit [Services Australia](#) to find out more about financial help available from the Australian Government and other agencies (servicesaustralia.gov.au/additional-help-for-natural-disasters).

Check your eligibility and how to claim by selecting your [natural disaster event](#) (servicesaustralia.gov.au/natural-disaster-events).