

NSW GOVERNMENT DECLARED A NEW \$20 MILLION PACKAGE TO SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS THROUGH COVID-19

The NSW Government has announced a new student welfare package of \$20 million to support international students through COVID-19. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade NSW has shared the following details/updates of the package which the students from Bangladesh in NSW may find useful.

Short Term Emergency Accommodation

The NSW Government will fund temporary crisis accommodation for stranded international students as part of a \$20 million package. The package includes a temporary housing scheme, targeted at students in genuine need and delivered through approved student accommodation or homestay providers.

The crisis accommodation will be limited to international student visa holders who meet all the following criteria:

- have been evicted or are facing imminent eviction
- have evidence of being laid off employment
- have less than \$1500 in savings and no other avenues of support.

Applications for accommodation are expected to **open in the coming weeks**.

Please **subscribe** to the [Study NSW mailing list](#) to receive updates on this support measure.

International students in need can also call the NSW Government hotline (13 77 88) to find out more.

Legal Support

To ensure international students have access to accurate legal advice during COVID-19, the **NSW Government has purchased 50,000 subscriptions to the multilingual My Legal Mate app for international students in NSW**.

The app addresses four legal areas identified by students and service providers as having the most need – **employment, housing, disputes with education providers and sexual assault**. The information is provided in multiple languages, delivered in a face-to-face format that is friendly and accessible. **Applications to download the app will open shortly**.

International students in NSW can also access the prevailing free legal advice through the [International Student Legal Service NSW](#) at Redfern Legal Centre. The NSW Government has allocated additional funding to this service to help meet increased demand during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional support is provided by the Fair Work Ombudsman and the City of Sydney.

The NSW Government, in partnership with [Legal Aid NSW](#) and [LawAccess NSW](#), has launched a free legal help service for people facing legal issues under the COVID-19 public health laws. International students are also eligible to use these services.

Please subscribe to the [Study NSW mailing list](#) to receive updates on this support measure. Further information is also available [here](#).

Emergency Relief Packages

NSW Government has teamed up with both Foodbank and the Rapid Relief Team to deliver emergency relief packages and food boxes to people in need who have been directed to self-isolate, or who have to self-quarantine due to vulnerability. More information is available [here](#).

Mental wellness support during COVID-19

International students can access mental wellness support from the NSW Government through NSW mental health services. In April, the NSW Government announced a [\\$73 million package](#) to boost mental health services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Mental Health Hotline is available to everyone in NSW and operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Students can call 1800 011 511 to speak with a mental health professional.

Access to Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA) Scheme

International students may be eligible for the NSW Government Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA) Scheme.

The EAPA scheme is available to people having difficulty paying their household energy bills because of a short-term financial crisis or emergency, such as reduced income due to COVID-19.

EAPA vouchers are sent electronically to the energy retailer and used to credit the relevant home electricity or gas account. EAPA vouchers can't be used to put an energy account into credit.

Applying for EAPA vouchers involves an eligibility assessment. EAPA voucher limits apply and are based on the eligibility assessment. Students can apply online for EAPA vouchers. More information is available [here](#).

COVID-19 related costs waived

COVID-19 related costs at NSW Health facilities will be waived where international students do not have adequate insurance coverage.

NSW Health provides advice for people that are [not eligible for Medicare](#).

Anyone with respiratory symptoms, such as cough, sore/scratchy throat or shortness of breath, or unexplained fever should be tested for COVID-19. Further information is available [here](#).

NSW Government Hotline and Services Hub

A new 24/7 international student support service, through the NSW Government COVID-19 hotline (13 77 88), offers free advice and information about other measures, including [the moratorium on rental evictions and medical, mental health, legal and emergency support](#). The hotline is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

For free help in your language, students can call Translating and Interpreting Services on 13 14 50 and ask them to contact Service NSW on 13 77 88.

Study NSW has also developed an [International Student Welfare Services Hub](#) to connect international students with support services available to them during the COVID-19 pandemic, available [here](#).

Virtual Engagement Programs for International Students

In addition, Study NSW is delivering virtual engagement programs for international students in NSW during the COVID-19 pandemic. These include [regular webinars with Outcome.Life](#) and the [FFWD Hub](#) entrepreneurial program with Haymarket HQ. Visit the [events page](#) to see upcoming webinars and follow the [Study NSW Facebook page](#) to receive updates.

Additional information on the NSW support package can be found here: [Supporting International Students](#).