

Emergency Support Fund information

What is PALM scheme Community Connections?

Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme Community Connections is an Australian Government (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations) funded community engagement and worker welfare program that promotes better engagement, connections and cross-cultural understanding between PALM scheme workers and their local communities.

The program is delivered under contract by The Salvation Army (TSA) in partnership with Pacific Island representative organisations and Uniting Church Australia and include on-ground delivery of services via a network of Regional Coordinators based in each state and territory.

What is the Emergency Support Fund?

Community Connections administers an Emergency Support Fund (ESF) to assist PALM scheme workers with short term, essential living needs in the event of a crisis or unforeseen emergency and where no alternative supports exist.

Principles:

- **Fund of last resort:** The ESF is a fixed, limited pool of funds and all alternative avenues for support should have been exhausted before using the ESF. This includes the obligations of PALM scheme employers under the PALM scheme Approved Employer [Deed](#) and [Guidelines](#).
- **Time and expenditure limits:** The ESF is for short-term essential living needs such as accommodation and groceries. It is not a means to meet longer-term or ongoing social welfare needs. Complex and compelling situations, where longer-term support is required, will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Eligibility:

- **Worker status:** applicants must be an engaged PALM scheme worker located in Australia on a current and valid PALM scheme visa and compliant with visa conditions.
- **Demonstration of Financial Need:** All alternative supports should have been exhausted. Workers must provide documented evidence of financial hardship, including bank statements as evidence.

Examples where the Emergency Support Fund may be used:

- Short term emergency accommodation and grocery vouchers for workers.
- Workers with complex health conditions: support is limited and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- For complex cases the ESF may be accessed as part of a broad package of support to cover needs not otherwise able to be met - this should be under case coordination by DEWR.
- Complex emergencies (e.g. natural disasters) - in coordination with DEWR and TSA.

Examples where the Emergency Support Fund may not be used:

- Any case where PALM scheme deed and guideline obligations apply. For example, to supplement low or no work hours where deed and guideline obligations apply such as minimum net pay guarantee, offering \$200 cash advance, pause in deductions, stand down provisions, etc.
- Repatriation costs of workers where deed and guideline obligations apply.
- To cover medical/hospitalisation costs and fees.
- Where workers have sufficient funds to support themselves.
- Disengaged workers.

Help and support

For help and support, please contact:

- the PALM scheme support service line on (1800 51 51 31) or email (palm@dewr.gov.au)
- The Salvation Army on (0418 725 631) or email (communityconnections@salvationarmy.org.au)