



# WELFARE RIGHTS & ADVOCACY SERVICE

*2023 Kimberley Floods*

## Asking Centrelink to pause your mutual obligations

When you receive an income support payment, you have mutual obligations like going to appointments, looking for work and other activities like training.

When you live in a declared natural disaster area, you can ask for an exemption from meeting your mutual obligations. This is called a Declared Natural Disaster exemption.

If you live in an area affected by **Ex-Tropical Cyclone Ellie (December 2022 - January 2023)** Centrelink may have already sent you a text message or MyGov message saying your mutual obligations were temporarily suspended. If you have received this notification, you do not need to do anything.

If you haven't received this notification, you can ask for an exemption.

### **WHO CAN DO IT?**

You must be receiving an income support payment which includes Jobseeker Payment, Youth Allowance, Parenting Payment or Special Benefit.

You must be living in and/or affected by Ex-Tropical Cyclone Ellie (December 2022 - January 2023).

**Previously**, people could ask for an exemption if they were living in the Local Government Areas of Derby - West Kimberley, Broome, Halls Creek or Wyndham - East Kimberley.

**From 4 March 2023**, to be eligible for an exemption you must live in the **Fitzroy Valley Community Development Program (CDP) Region**. This means you do your work with Marra Worra Worra Aboriginal Corporation. This exemption will last until **24 March 2023**.

One of the following circumstances must apply to you -

- You have been **personally impacted** by Ex-Tropical Cyclone Ellie.
- If you are a principal carer of a child, **the childcare facilities you access are unavailable due to damage or unsafe conditions caused by Ex-Tropical Cyclone Ellie**. This includes long day care and family care operations.
- You are **providing support to a relative or loved one affected by floods** or severe weather caused by Ex-Tropical Cyclone Ellie.
- You are **volunteering to help with clean up recovery or emergency relief** efforts in an area affected by the disaster and **through an approved agency**, ( e.g. State Emergency Service).
- You are **unable to look for work as viable options for employment have been destroyed by Ex-Tropical Cyclone Ellie** in the area.

If you do not meet the criteria for the exemption but are impacted by Ex-Tropical Cyclone Ellie, you can ask your Workforce Australia provider to reschedule your appointments until you can attend. For example, if there is a risk you will not be able to return home if you travel to your provider for an appointment and the road/bridge is subsequently cut off.

### **HOW CAN I DO IT?**

- Contact your Workforce Australia provider (the place you go to for your job appointments) OR
- Call Centrelink on 180 22 66 to ask for an exemption or the Employment Services National Customer Service Line on 1800 805 260 OR
- Go into your local Centrelink office, agent or access point to use their computers and WIFI. (They can't grant exemptions for you).

### **WHAT IF CENTRELINK DOESN'T AGREE TO PAUSE MY MUTUAL OBLIGATIONS?**

- Ask for an urgent formal review of that decision by an Authorised Review Officer. See our factsheet titled '[Appealing Decisions – Centrelink](#)' for more information - [Welfare Rights & Advocacy Service \(WA\)](#).
- Seek advice from us at Welfare Rights & Advocacy Service at 9328 1751 or [welfare@wraswa.org.au](mailto:welfare@wraswa.org.au)

## **FURTHER INFORMATION**

### ***Declared Local Government Areas***

Derby – West Kimberley

- [Link to map here](#)
- Includes Camballin, Derby, and Fitzroy Crossing

Wyndham – East Kimberley

- [Link to map here](#)
- Includes Kalumburu, Kununurra, Lake Argyle, Lakeside, Packsaddle, and Wyndham

Broome

- [Link to map here](#)
- Includes 12 Mile, Bilingurr, Broome, Cable Beach, Cape Leveque, Coconut Well, Djugun, Lombandina, Minyirr, Morell Park, and Skuthorpe

Halls Creek

- [Link to map here](#)
- Includes Balgo Hills Community, Billiluna, Frog Hollow, Halls Creek, Kundat Djaru, Mulan, and Yiyili

### **Centrelink offices (agents or access points) open as of 16 January 2023**

Fitzroy Crossing NIAA Building, Emanuel Way, Fitzroy Crossing 8:30 am to 12:30 pm, 1:30 pm to 4:00 pm	Yakanarra Agent Yakanarra Community Office Yakanarra Community St George Ranges WA 6728
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Derby Service Centre (Centrelink) 44 Clarendon Street Derby WA 6728	Warmun Agent Warmun Council Office Warmun Community Warmun WA 6743
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Mowanjum Access Point 8.30 -2.30 Mowanjum Community Resource Centre Gibb River Road Derby WA 6728	Bidyadanga Agent Bidyadanga Community Lot 88 Bidyadanga Road Bidyadanga WA 6725
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Looma Agent  
Looma Community Administration Office  
Lot 36 Lungura Drive  
Looma WA 6728

Wirrimanu Agent (Balgo)  
Wirrimanu Aboriginal Corporation  
Off Tanami Road  
Tanami WA 6770

Imintji Access Point  
Imintji Community  
Gibb River Road  
Imintji WA 6728

Kiwirrkurra Agent  
Lot 68B, Kiwirrkurra Community  
Kiwirrkurra NT 0872

## **CONTACT US**

If you need legal advice about Centrelink and you live in Western Australia, please contact Welfare Rights & Advocacy Service on (08) 93281751 or by email at [welfare@wraswa.org.au](mailto:welfare@wraswa.org.au). We specialise in social security law, administration and policy. We are entirely independent of Centrelink. All assistance is free.