



Version 3 of this document is current as at 11 May 2020. The most significant changes made since version 2 was published on 28 April 2020 are in the areas of Public Health Orders (see Part 1) and Courts and Corrective Services (see Part 7).

**SUMMARY OF KEY COVID-19 LEGISLATIVE CHANGES AFFECTING PEOPLE IN NEW SOUTH WALES  
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**1. PUBLIC HEALTH ORDERS**

Since 30 March 2020, the NSW Government has introduced a number of Public Health Orders (**PHOs**), significantly restricting the movement of people and the operation of non-essential services. From 15 May 2020, the NSW Government will be gradually easing these restrictions in accordance with a 3-step plan towards a COVID-safe Australia outlined by the National Cabinet. For more information on the PHOs in place in NSW click [here](#). For more information on the National Cabinet’s roadmap to a COVID-safe Australia click [here](#).

<b>Private gatherings</b>	<p>A maximum of 2 adults and their dependant children are permitted to visit another household <b>for the purpose of providing care or support</b>. This is viewed to be a reasonable excuse for leaving a person’s place of primary residence under the “stay at home” order.</p> <p>From Friday 15 May 2020, a maximum of 5 people (including children) can visit another household. The NSW Premier, Gladys Berejiklian, has clarified that the 5 people limit offers more flexibility but will mean that large households (i.e. more than 5 members) will not be able to all visit another household together.</p>
<b>Public gatherings</b>	<p>A person must not participate in a non-essential public gathering of more than 2 persons (except where the gathering is with the person’s immediate household).</p> <p>From Friday 15 May 2020, outdoor gatherings of up to 10 people (including children) are permitted although social distancing measures (i.e. staying 1.5 metres apart) must still be observed. Weddings can take place with a maximum of 10 guests. Funerals can take place with a maximum of 20 guests indoor OR 30 guests outdoor. Religious gatherings/ worship can take place with a maximum of 10 worshippers.</p>
<b>Non-essential services</b>	<p>From 15 May 2020, cafes and restaurants can open for dine-in eating for a maximum of 10 patrons at any one time. Social distancing must be observed with a maximum of 1 patron per 4 square metres. Retail shops are also encouraged to re-open while observing social distancing measures.</p> <p>From 15 May 2020, outdoor playgrounds and outdoor gymnasium equipment can be used with caution and outdoor swimming pools can reopen with restrictions.</p> <p>The following services must remain closed to members of the public: pubs and registered clubs (except for take-away or accommodation services); entertainment facilities (i.e. cinemas) and amusement centres; casinos; indoor recreation facilities; tattoo parlours and massage parlours; auction houses or betting agencies; markets (other than food markets); information and education facilities; caravan parks and camping grounds (other than in specified circumstances); community services; and sex service premises.</p>

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<b>Stay at home order</b>	As at the date of this document, <a href="#">Public Health Order (COVID-19 Restrictions on Gathering and Movement) 2020</a> , that directs a person not to leave their home without reasonable excuse (i.e. shopping for essential goods and services, exercise, for care/medical reasons and for work), remains in place. It is likely, although not guaranteed, that a further PHO will be introduced on 15 May 2020 to reflect the easing of restrictions (specifically the 5 person limit for visiting households, and 10 person limit for public gatherings).
<b>Intentional spitting or coughing</b>	It is an offence to intentionally spit or cough on a public official, while they are at work or are travelling to or from work, in a way that is likely to cause fear of the spread of COVID-19. Public officials include health workers, police officers, and other workers such as retail workers and transport workers. The penalty for doing so is a \$5,000 fine.
<b>2. ENFORCEMENT POWERS</b>	
<b>Arrest</b>	A police officer may arrest a person if the police officer suspects on reasonable grounds that the person is contravening a PHO relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.
<b>Fines</b>	<b>On-the-spot fines:</b> If a person breaches a PHO, NSW Police have the power to issue on-the-spot fines of \$1,000 for individuals and \$5,000 for corporations. <b>Maximum penalties:</b> The maximum penalties that can be imposed are 6 months imprisonment and/or a fine of \$11,000 for individuals or \$55,000 for corporations. Additional fines can be issued for each day that an offence continues: \$5,500 per day for individuals and \$27,500 for corporations.
<b>3. FINANCIAL SUPPORT</b>	
<b>Mutual obligations</b>	Mutual obligation requirements for JobSeeker Payment, Youth Allowance as a job seeker and Parenting Payment have been suspended until <b>22 May 2020</b> .
<b>COVID-19 supplement</b>	Any person receiving an eligible Centrelink payment will have their payment increased by the COVID-19 supplement, being <b>an additional \$550.00 per fortnight</b> , from <b>27 April 2020</b> . The supplement is payable for a 6-month period, with the possibility of an extension, up to 3 months.
<b>Economic support payment</b>	Eligible persons will receive up to two “Economic Support Payments” of \$750.00, with the first payment being made after 31 March 2020, and the second payment being made after 13 July 2020. The first Economic Support Payment was automatically paid to any person living in Australia who, between 12 March 2020 and 13 April 2020, was in receipt of an eligible Centrelink payment OR was an eligible concession card holder. Eligible payments and concessions include the Aged Pension, the Disability Support Pension, the Jobseeker Payment (Newstart Allowance), Carer’s Allowance, Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY, Family Tax Benefit A or B, Pensioner Concession Card, Commonwealth Seniors Health Card, and the Veterans’ Affairs Pension, among others. The second Economic Support Payment will be automatically paid to people who, as at 10 July 2020, are eligible Centrelink payment recipients or eligible concession card holders (as above). However, the second payment <b>will not</b> be made to those in receipt of the COVID-19 supplement.

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<b>Superannuation</b>	Amendments have been made to superannuation legislation allowing eligible persons to access \$10,000 from superannuation in the 2019-2020 financial year, and an additional \$10,000 from their superannuation in the 2020-2021 financial year. Tax is not required to be paid on the amounts released.
<b>Essential services – hardship assistance</b>	<p>On 9 April 2020, the National Cabinet agreed to adopt standard principles for essential services (including energy, water and rates) to assist households and small businesses suffering financial hardship as a result of COVID-19. The principles include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. offering flexible payment options to all households and small businesses in financial stress;</li> <li>2. not disconnecting or restricting supply/services to those in financial stress;</li> <li>3. deferring debt recovery proceedings and credit default listing;</li> <li>4. waiving late fees and interest charges on debt; and</li> <li>5. minimising planned outages for critical works and providing as much notice as possible to assist households and businesses during any outage.</li> </ol> <p>These principles are yet to be specifically legislated in NSW however energy providers have begun to introduce support programs. If you are struggling to pay your energy bills due to COVID-19 related financial hardship you should contact your energy provider directly.</p>
<b>Energy assistance</b>	NSW has expanded its Energy Accounts Payment Assistance ( <b>EAPA</b> ) scheme which provides \$50.00 vouchers to people suffering financial hardship which can be used to credit home electricity or gas accounts.
<b>Home Loan Repayment Pauses</b>	<p>Banks have implemented home loan repayment pauses for up to 6 months for eligible, existing customers who are financially impacted by COVID-19.</p> <p>Interest on the loan will <b>continue</b> to be calculated and added onto the loan during the pause. Therefore, if the term of the loan is not altered, each instalment of the home loan repayment will be <b>HIGHER</b> after the pause.</p>
<b>Bankruptcy</b>	<p>Changes have been made to bankruptcy legislation which took effect on 25 March 2020 and will remain in place for 6 months. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an increase in the bankruptcy notice minimum debt amount from \$5,000 to \$20,000;</li> <li>• an increase in the time period a debtor has to comply with the notice from 21 days to 6 months; and</li> <li>• an increase in the stay period afforded by a declaration of intention to present a debtor's petition from 21 days to 6 months.</li> </ul>

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**4. EMPLOYMENT/ INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**

<b>JobKeeper scheme</b>	A <b>JobKeeper</b> scheme has been introduced to support businesses affected by COVID-19. The government will make payments to businesses, of \$1,500 per fortnight per employee for up to 6 months. The first payments were received by employers in the first week of May. Enrolment for the JobKeeper program with the ATO ends on 31 May 2020.
<b>Migrant workers</b>	<p><b>JobSeeker eligibility:</b> The JobSeeker payment is only available to “Australian residents” (i.e. Australian citizens, permanent residents and protected Special Category Visa (SCV) Holders) and those who are exempt from residency requirements. Non-Australian Residents are only eligible for the JobSeeker payment if they hold a non-protected SCV <b>and</b> have lived in Australia continuously for at least 10 years before making their claim. SCV holders are only eligible for the Jobseeker payment for a single 6-month period. Migrant workers on other visa types are not eligible for the JobSeeker payment.</p> <p><b>Student visa holders:</b> The working hour restrictions have been relaxed for international student visa holders working in specified industries. For student visa holders working in aged care and for NDIS providers the 40-hour work limit has been relaxed indefinitely. Student visa holders enrolled in any health care related course can also undertake work to support the health effort against COVID-19 and enforcement action will not be taken against them.</p> <p><b>Temporary skills shortage visa holders:</b> Temporary skills shortage visa holders who have been stood down (but not laid off) will maintain their visa validity and can have their hours reduced without being in breach of their visa conditions.</p> <p><b>Other:</b> Temporary changes have been introduced to the Seasonal Worker Programme, the Pacific Labour Scheme and the Working Holiday Makers Scheme. Under the changes, Seasonal Worker Programme workers and Pacific Labour Scheme workers with visas due to expire will be able to apply for new visas of specified subclasses. Workers currently in Australia under these programs will also be exempt from the requirement to work for a single employer.</p>
<b>Changes to Modern Awards</b>	<p>The Federal Government has announced two key changes to 99 modern awards:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) employees are entitled to 2 weeks’ unpaid COVID-19 pandemic leave if the employee is, by virtue of government or medical authorities, required to self-isolate or is otherwise prevented from working. Pandemic leave is only available until 30 June 2020; and</li> <li>(2) an employer and employee may agree for the employee to take twice as much annual leave at half rate of pay.</li> </ol> <p>Additional changes have also been made to the <i>Hospitality Industry (General) Award 2010</i>, the <i>Clerks – Private Sector Award 2010</i>, the <i>Restaurant Industry Award 2010</i>, and the <i>Educational Services (Schools) General Staff Award 2010</i>. The Fair Work Commission is in the process of considering changes to health sector awards, the <i>Legal Services Award 2010</i>, the <i>Real Estate Industry Award 2020</i>, the <i>Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010</i>, the <i>Fast Food Industry Award 2010</i> and the <i>Vehicle Manufacturing, Repair, Services and Retail Award 2010</i>.</p>
<b>Enterprise agreements</b>	The minimum notice period that employers must give employees of proposed changes to enterprise agreements has been reduced from 7 days to 1 day.

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<b>Long service leave</b>	Where agreed between the employee and employer, long service leave can be taken with less than one month’s notice and in blocks of less than a month. This amendment is valid for 6 months.
<b>5. HOUSING</b>	
<b>Residential tenancies NSW</b>	<p>NSW has introduced a 6-month moratorium period for residential tenancies, commencing on 15 April 2020 and ending on 14 October 2020. During the moratorium period, a residential landlord is prohibited from giving a tenant who has been financially affected by COVID-19, a termination notice for non-payment of rent or charges; <b>AND</b> is further prohibited from applying to the Tribunal for an order to terminate a residential tenancy agreement for non-payment of rent or charges by a tenant who has been financially impacted by COVID-19. However, the prohibition on giving a termination notice <b>DOES NOT</b> apply where the landlord has:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. issued a termination notice after 13 June 2020 (being 60 days after the changes came into effect); <b>AND</b></li> <li>2. participated, in good faith, in a formal rent negotiation process with the tenant; <b>AND</b></li> <li>3. it is fair and reasonable in the circumstances of the case for the landlord to give a termination notice.</li> </ol> <p>During the moratorium period, a landlord terminating a fixed-term tenancy, a periodic tenancy, a tenancy which has been breached for a reason other than non-payment of rent or charges OR a tenancy of 20 years or more, must give the tenant a minimum of 90 days’ notice of termination (regardless of whether the tenant has been financially impacted by COVID-19 or not). The requirement for 90 days’ notice of termination does not apply to social housing tenancy agreements.</p>
<b>Public housing</b>	Increased social security payments (i.e. the Economic Support Payment and the COVID-19 Supplement (referred to above)), do not constitute assessable income for the purpose of determining eligibility for public/ community housing. This means that people living in public or community housing should not have their rent increased even if their income has increased because of COVID-19 payments.
<b>Homelessness</b>	The NSW government has announced additional funding for homelessness services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The additional funding means that the initial period of Temporary Accommodation provided for new homeless clients has been increased from 2 nights to 5 nights and the limit of 28 days of temporary accommodation per year will not apply in 2020.
<b>Inspections/ auctions</b>	Real estate agents and property vendors may now hold open house property inspections and on-site auctions provided that social distancing measures are implemented. Real estate agents must also keep records of all people attending open homes and auctions.
<b>Moving house</b>	Moving house is a reasonable excuse for a person to leave their place of residence.

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**6. FAMILIES (INCLUDING FAMILY AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE)**

<b>Shared care arrangements</b>	<p>During the COVID-19 pandemic, the paramount consideration in parenting/care matters remains the best interests of the child/ren. Courts still expect parents and carers to comply with orders in relation to parenting arrangements including facilitating time being spent by the children with each parent or carer pursuant to parenting orders. As the continuation of shared care arrangements is listed in the PHO as a reasonable excuse for leaving a person’s place of residence, health concerns in relation to COVID-19 cannot be used as an excuse not to comply with parenting orders.</p> <p>Where strict compliance with parenting orders is no longer possible (for example, because Orders state that changeover is to occur at a school which the child is no longer attending or a public place which is no longer open), parents should communicate <b>sensibly</b> and <b>reasonably</b> to find a practical solution responding to the current COVID-19 climate. It is recommended that parents keep written records of new arrangements reached. Where parents would like to formalise an agreement reached, they can file an online application to the Court requesting consent orders to be made. Where parents are in the process of reaching a new agreement, they should ensure that the other parent has contact with their child/ren such during the negotiation process.</p>
<b>Interstate movement of children</b>	<p>Some state/territory borders have been closed which may have an impact on contact/ care arrangements between parents and children. Courts are working with state and territory authorities to introduce exemptions in relation to movement across borders where parenting orders are in place. A specific exemption is yet to be introduced, but parents may be required to show court orders and photo ID to border control personnel as evidence of essential movement. Parents should seek advice from state authorities as to how the border restrictions may impact their situation.</p>
<b>Carers</b>	<p>Authorised carers and home day-care service providers are not required to provide proof of their identity when applying for a Working with Children Check clearance at a motor registry or Government Access Centre. Instead, they may provide it in the way the child's guardian approves.</p>
<b>Family Dispute Resolution services</b>	<p>The <b>Family Relationships Advice Line</b> can provide information, advice and telephone-based Family Dispute Resolution services to assist parents and carers to discuss any issues that arise and help them come to an agreement. The Family Relationships Advice Line can be contacted on <b>1800 050 321</b>.</p>
<b>Domestic violence services</b>	<p>The Federal Government has committed additional funding to domestic violence services. The following telephone hotlines remain fully operational:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>1800 RESPECT (1800 737 732)</b>: confidential information, counselling and support service.</li> <li>• <b>NSW Domestic Violence Line (1800 65 64 63)</b>: telephone crisis counselling and referral service for women.</li> <li>• <b>Link2Home (1800 152 152)</b>: refer women experiencing domestic violence to crisis accommodation.</li> </ul>

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	<p>In addition to the above state/national services, <b>Western Women's Legal Support</b> provides <b>FREE</b> legal and non-legal support to women and children across central western New South Wales. Call <b>6885 4531</b> for assistance.</p> <p>Under the Public Health Orders in place, a person is permitted to leave their home to escape the risk of harm (including from domestic violence) and to access domestic violence services.</p>
<b>Apprehended Violence Orders (AVOs)</b>	<p>The time that a provisional Apprehended Violence Order (<b>AVO</b>) can be in place has been extended from 28 days to up to 6 months.</p>
<b>7. COURTS AND CORRECTIVE SERVICES</b>	
<b>Domestic and personal violence court proceedings</b>	<p>Until otherwise advised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) no new AVO hearings will be listed;</li> <li>(b) AVO hearings listed prior to 1 May 2020 will not proceed;</li> <li>(c) AVO cases listed for hearing with related criminal charge(s) will be adjourned to the same date as the criminal charge;</li> <li>(d) AVO cases listed for hearing with no related criminal charges(s) will be adjourned for mention for at least 3 months; and</li> <li>(e) parties are permitted to appear in writing or by email, including when seeking orders by consent. Consent orders may be made in the absence of the parties involved. If the order is contested, the matter will be adjourned in accordance with the timeframes in (c) and (d).</li> </ul> <p>New provisional AVOs will be listed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) where there is no related criminal charge, on a domestic violence list day 3 months from the date the provisional AVO is made;</li> <li>(b) where there are related criminal charges, on the same date the criminal charge is listed. At the first return date the criminal charge will be adjourned for 8 weeks. The provisional AVO must be adjourned to that same date so that the matters continue together; and</li> <li>(c) where the application is known to be contested, Magistrates should set a timetable for filing evidence. Where possible, evidence is to be served by email.</li> </ul> <p>The Court will <b>continue to accept urgent applications</b> for variation or interim orders. Parties making urgent applications should contact the Court as soon as possible via email and specify the nature of the application and why it is urgent.</p> <p>The Court will <b>NOT REQUIRE</b> the attendance of the person in need of protection in respect of any application brought by police for an apprehended domestic violence order unless the proceedings are fixed for hearing.</p>

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<b>Local Court – Criminal</b>	<p>Significant amendments have been made to criminal procedure legislation to allow for judge-alone trials, witness statements to be given via pre-recorded evidence, and witness evidence recorded in the original trial to be used in a subsequent trial. Amendments have also been made around evidence laws to facilitate greater use of audio and audio-visual links in trials.</p> <p>All hearings where the defendant is not in custody and which have been listed for hearing between 4 May and 31 July 2020 will be vacated and listed for mention in September 2020. All hearings where the defendant is in custody and which have been listed for hearing between 30 March and 31 July 2020 will be vacated, however those matters remain listed for mention. Wherever possible, defendants should provide an email address, residential address or mobile telephone number to facilitate communication with the court.</p>
<b>Local Court – Small Claims Division</b>	<p>The hearing of matters before an assessor in the Small Claims Division of the Local Court is to take place by teleconference. The physical appearance of a party will not be required.</p>
<b>District Court</b>	<p>Jury trials at selected District Court locations will resume from Monday 15 June 2020 with strict social distancing, health and hygiene measures to be implemented to ensure juror safety.</p>
<b>Family Court</b>	<p>The Family Court remains open, however court operations have changed. Registry services will only be available via telephone and online, with face-to-face interactions only permitted in urgent circumstances, at the discretion of the Court. Urgent and priority trials and contested hearings will remain listed. Current listings will proceed electronically where possible. Non urgent face-to-face hearings will likely be delayed.</p> <p>The Family Court has established a <b>COVID-19 List</b> to deal with urgent matters arising as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 List will operate for approximately three months and matters will be dealt with electronically. The following types of matters may be suitable for filing in the COVID-19 List:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>family violence:</b> where there has been an increase in risk resulting from the restrictions imposed on families during the COVID-19 pandemic;</li> <li>• <b>supervised contact:</b> current parenting arrangements involve supervised contact and the contact centre is closed or the supervisor is unable to perform their role, and the parties cannot agree on alternative arrangements;</li> <li>• <b>border restrictions:</b> the parties live in different States or Territories and the child cannot travel due to border restrictions; and</li> <li>• <b>medical:</b> the parties and/or the child have tested positive for COVID-19 and cannot fulfil parenting obligations due to sickness or risk of infection.</li> </ul> <p>To contact the Family Court of Australia, National Enquiry Centre call <b>1300 352 000</b>, between 8.30 am and 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday.</p>
<b>Children’s Court</b>	<p>The Children's Court remains open, however court operations have changed. All hearings in the care or criminal jurisdictions listed between 24 March 2020 and 1 May 2020 have been vacated and will be re-listed for call-over after 1 May 2020. Part heard matters may continue at the discretion of the relevant judicial</p>

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	<p>officer. Bail or court orders variation, release application, applications on the papers or further directions seeking to progress the matter <b>may</b> be considered for relisting.</p> <p>Matters are to be listed for <b>Readiness Hearing</b> (at least 14 days prior to the final hearing) to ascertain whether appropriate arrangements can be made for the hearing to proceed virtually. In both the criminal and care jurisdictions, a Readiness Hearing Checklist must be completed by the parties prior to the hearing.</p> <p><b>Crime Jurisdiction:</b> Criminal lists will continue to operate. Notwithstanding the Court's decision to vacate all hearings listed, a judicial officer may hear a case where the defendant is in custody, provided they are legally represented, and their lawyer is able to appear by audio visual link. Where appropriate, brief orders or other case management directions should be made on the first appearance. First appearance bail proceedings in the Children's Court have been decentralised from Parramatta Children's Court to hub locations. The Court has uploaded a table containing the new listing arrangements for these proceedings. Further, all bail proceedings will be dealt with by AVL from a Youth Detention Centre or police station.</p> <p><b>Care Jurisdiction:</b> Urgent care applications and directions list will continue to be heard at Parramatta Children's Court. Applications listed on and from Monday 4 May 2020 have been decentralised from the Parramatta Children's Court to hub locations. Parties and their legal representatives should avoid attending Court wherever possible.</p> <p><b>Circuit:</b> From 25 March 2020 and until further notice, Children's Court circuits are suspended. Cases listed in a Children's Court circuit will continue to be dealt with by a Children's Magistrate or President at another location by video conference.</p> <p>To contact the Children's Court service centre, call <b>1300 679 272</b>.</p>
<b>NCAT</b>	<p>All NCAT hearings are currently being held online, over the phone or "on the papers" (i.e. without a hearing). A direction has been given for people to avoid attending NCAT registries. Priority will be given to urgent cases. NCAT may extend the time for a party to lodge an application, appeal, or review of a decision where the party is unable to lodge the application in time because of exceptional circumstances arising from COVID-19.</p>
<b>Early release of prisoners</b>	<p>Amendments have been made to <i>Crimes (Administration of Sentences) Act 1999</i> (NSW) allowing the Commissioner to release an inmate on parole if the inmate belongs to a specific class of prisoners (prescribed by regulations) and the Commissioner is satisfied that releasing the inmate on parole is reasonably necessary because of the risk to public health or to the good order and security of correctional premises arising from the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The Commissioner cannot make an early release order in relation to an inmate serving a life sentence; an inmate serving a sentence of imprisonment for murder, a serious sex offence or an offence of a sexual nature, a terrorism offence; a serious offender; or an inmate kept in custody in relation to an offence against a law of the Commonwealth, among others. The Commissioner must consider: the risks to community safety of releasing the inmate, the impact of the release of the inmate on any victim whose name is recorded in the Victims register, the availability of suitable accommodation for the inmate and, in the case of an inmate who</p>

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	has previously been convicted of a domestic violence offence, the protection of the victim of the domestic violence offence and any person with whom the inmate is likely to reside with if released.
<b>Visiting corrective services and child detention facilities</b>	<p>All family and social visits to adult and youth corrective centres in New South Wales have been suspended. Inmates across NSW are being provided with three (3) free phone calls per week. The use of Audio-visual-links (AVL) for social contact is being trialled across New South Wales corrective centres.</p> <p>At this stage, visits at adult corrective centres are not suspended for professional visitors (including legal advisors) and existing visiting arrangements for the Inspector of Custodial Services and the Ombudsmen will continue to go ahead. However, professional visitors and essential contractors are subject to screening questions and a body temperature check before entering correctional centres and, where possible, Corrective Services NSW recommends the use of AVL contact for professional visits to reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19.</p> <p>Professional and legal visitors are restricted from entering youth justice centres. Young people in custody can speak to their lawyers via AVL and telephone.</p>
<b>8. HEALTH</b>	
<b>Quarantine/ self-isolation</b>	<p>Any person arriving in NSW who has been in a country other than Australia within 14 days of arrival must self-isolate for a period of 14 days. During this period, the affected individual must not allow anyone to enter the premises, excluding those residing at the premises, and may not leave except in an emergency or for the purposes of obtaining medical care, or in circumstances where the person is able to avoid close contact with other persons (leaving their premises for the purpose of exercise or purchasing goods or services is not allowed).</p> <p>All persons diagnosed with COVID-19 must travel directly to a residence suitable for quarantine and self-isolate until they are medically cleared. They may not leave the premises except for the purposes of obtaining medical care or in an emergency (leaving their premises for the purpose of exercise or purchasing goods or services is not allowed). They may not permit any other person to enter the residence except for the purposes of obtaining medical care, in an emergency, or where that person resides there. Entry onto the premises for the delivery of food or essential items is allowed, provided no person enters the residence itself.</p>
<b>Telehealth</b>	<p>To protect healthcare workers and patients from unnecessary exposure to COVID-19 and other infections, telephone health consultations have been made available to all Australians who hold a Medicare card. Health services eligible for telehealth consultations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GP services, including GP management plans, GP mental health treatment plans, GP pregnancy support; urgent after-hours services in unsociable hours;</li> <li>• eligible clinical psychologist services; and</li> <li>• speech pathology, occupational therapy, audiology, optometry, orthopaedic or physiotherapy health, services which can be rendered by an eligible speech pathologist, occupational therapist, audiologist, or physiotherapist.</li> </ul>

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	Concession card holders and eligible "vulnerable" patients will qualify to have their telehealth appointments bulk-billed. Usual billing practices will apply for all other patients. Patients should discuss their eligibility for bulk-billing direct with their healthcare provider. This service will be available until 30 September 2020.
<b>Home Medicine Services</b>	<p>In NSW, if you are on a Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) or a Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (RPBS) and are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a person isolating themselves at home on the advice of a medical practitioner, for a confirmed COVID-19 case;</li> <li>• a person who meets the current national triage protocol criteria for suspected COVID-19 infection;</li> <li>• a person aged over 70;</li> <li>• an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person aged over 50;</li> <li>• a person with chronic health conditions or who is immunocompromised; or</li> <li>• a parent with a new baby or live with someone who is pregnant,</li> </ul> <p>once a month, you are eligible to have your medication delivered to your home from any pharmacy approved to dispense and supply such medication free of charge as long as one item in the order is either a PBS medicine or RPBS medicine.</p>
<b>Hospital Screening</b>	All NSW public hospital and health services will require staff and visitors to be screened when entering the facility for symptoms of COVID-19. The screening will be in the form of temperature checks and questions regarding an individual's potential for contact with a COVID-19 positive case. Many public hospitals are also reducing the number of visitors allowed to visit patients.
<b>9. TRAVEL</b>	
<b>Border closures</b>	Australia's international borders have been closed to all non-citizens and non-residents. The only people allowed to enter Australia are Australian citizens, permanent residents and their immediate family, including spouses, de facto partners, legal guardians and dependants. New Zealand citizens residing in Australia, as well as New Zealand and Pacific Island residents transiting to New Zealand or a Pacific Island through Australia, are also exempt from the ban.
<b>Overseas travel ban</b>	<p>Australian citizens and permanent residents are prohibited from leaving Australian territory as passengers on outgoing aircrafts or vessels.</p> <p>Exemptions apply to persons ordinarily resident outside Australia, flight or vessel crew, freight personnel, New Zealand citizens with a subclass 444 visa, persons whose travel is associated with essential work at an offshore facility, persons travelling on official government business, and persons granted written exemptions by the Australian Border Force. Written exemptions may be granted to persons travelling to provide aid, persons whose travel is essential for the export and import industries, persons travelling to receive urgent medical treatment that is unavailable in Australia, persons travelling on urgent and unavoidable personal business, persons travelling on compassionate or humanitarian grounds or persons whose travel is in the national interest. Travellers who believe they meet a</p>

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	<p>travel restriction exemption can apply online to the Commissioner of the Australian Border Force. Any application should be made as early as possible (at least 48 hours before intended departure time). If granted an exemption, evidence of the exemption MUST be produced at the airport.</p> <p>As soon as it is safe to do so, the Australian and New Zealand governments will introduce a trans-Tasman COVID-safe travel zone.</p>
<b>International arrivals</b>	All international travellers arriving in Australia are required to undertake a mandatory 14-day self-isolation at designated facilities such as a hotel, in their city of arrival. Following appropriate immigration checks, travellers will be transported by police directly to their designated facility.
<b>Interstate travel</b>	Queensland, Tasmania, the Northern Territory and Western Australia have closed their borders, significantly restricting people who are allowed to enter. Any person intending to travel from New South Wales to these states/territories should confirm whether they fall within an exception before travelling or risk being turned around at the border.
<b>Travelling to remote and regional areas</b>	The prohibition on travel to regional areas in NSW remains in place.
<b>10. EDUCATION</b>	
<b>Schools</b>	From 11 May 2020 (week 3, term 2), a staged return-to-school approach will commence in NSW with every student to attend school at least one day per week and learning from home to take place on days that children are not at school. It will be up to schools to implement an approach which best meets the needs of its school community. Parents should contact their school directly for more information.
<b>Subsidised tertiary education</b>	The Federal Government is subsidising the cost of university short-course degree and diplomas in national priority areas for 6-months from May 2020 to assist those who are out of work because of COVID-19. TAFE NSW is also offering 21 fee-free short courses across a range of industries to assist job seekers and workers looking to diversify their skills.
<b>11. OTHER</b>	
<b>Execution of documents</b>	<p>Amendments have been made to witnessing requirements to the effect that if the signature of a document is required to be witnessed, the signature may be witnessed by audio visual link. Regulations prescribe the procedure that must be followed when witnessing documents via AVL.</p> <p>The NSW Trustee &amp; Guardian has launched an AVL service which provides video conference appointments for people to make a Will during the COVID-19 stay at home restrictions.</p>

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<b>Prohibition on exports</b>	A prohibition has been introduced on the exportation of medical personal protective equipment (PPE), alcohol wipes, hand sanitiser, or goods otherwise determined by law.
<b>Driving tests</b>	<p>Roads and Maritime Services NSW have temporarily suspended all practical driving tests for at least 2 months. If a person believes they have an <b>urgent need</b> for a driving test, they can apply for a priority request. Requests will be assessed on a case by case basis. To succeed, a person will need to demonstrate that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. they need, or need to retain, a heavy vehicle licence to support the freight network and supply chain (a letter from the person’s employer confirming this would be required); OR</li> <li>2. they have a learner licence that is due to expire on or before 30 June 2020 and they have passed the Hazard Perception Test; OR</li> <li>3. not having a licence would significantly impact the person’s ability to access essential services such as a doctor where there is a pre-existing condition (to be supported by a letter from the person’s medical practitioner) or existing employment/offer of employment would be affected (to be supported by a letter from the person’s current or prospective employer).</li> </ol>

*This document was produced by Western NSW Community Legal Centre Inc. If you would like to provide feedback on this document or subscribe to email updates please contact Hannah Robinson at [LegalHelp@wnswclc.org.au](mailto:LegalHelp@wnswclc.org.au).*

*If you are in the Western NSW region (including Bourke, Brewarrina, Cobar, Coonabarabran, Coonamble, Dubbo, Gilgandra, Lightning Ridge, Mudgee, Narromine, Nyngan, Warren, Walgett or Wellington) and require **FREE** legal advice, please contact:*

- *Western NSW Community Legal Centre Inc on 6884 9422 for general civil or family law advice; OR*
- *Western Women’s Legal Support on 6885 4531 for holistic domestic violence support.*

*If you are elsewhere in NSW and require **FREE** legal advice please contact Law Access NSW on 1300 888 529 between 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays), or contact your local Community Legal Centre. You can find contact details for your local Community Legal Centre at: <https://www.clcsw.org.au/>.*

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