



National Week of Prayer and Action
20-31 August 2018

CAPSA
CATHOLIC ALLIANCE FOR PEOPLE
SEEKING ASYLUM

Pope Francis' address for the 104th World Day of Migrants and Refugees (26th August 2018) asks us to welcome, protect, promote and integrate migrants and refugees.

We are focusing our 2018 National Week of Prayer and Action activities on the cuts to basic material and case management support for people seeking asylum to practically enact this call.

Between the 9th and 16th of August approximately 1500 individuals and families who are seeking asylum will lose their income support. An estimated 5000 more will lose this same basic support before the end of the year.

Key Information about the Status Resolution Support Services payment (SRSS) Information

1. A regular payment to help with basic living costs while someone who is seeking asylum waits to hear about the results of their Refugee status determination process.
Read more on eligibility and payments from the [Department of Human Affairs](#).
Read more about the Refugee status determination process from the [Australian Human Rights Commission](#).
2. Access to some case management and counselling for pre-existing trauma. The intensity of case management depends on which 'band' the government places you. There are 'band one' through to 'band six', with band 1 requiring the most intensive levels of support and band six being deemed in the least need of support. More information on SRSS [bands](#).
3. The Government does not directly deliver SRSS services but rather sub-contracts a variety of Non-Government agencies across the country to deliver services.
4. SRSS is the name given to the current form of support for many people seeking asylum who are living in our community. The Australian Government has had support in place for many years: two prior versions of SRSS were the [Asylum Seekers Assistance Scheme \(ASAS\)](#) which was established in 1992 and the [Community Assistance Support \(CAS Program\)](#) from 2005.
5. The Department of Home Affairs has recently changed its SRSS policy to restrict access. Some changes have already been applied while others are yet to be rolled out. People studying full-time and those who have sent money home to family and friends have already started losing their SRSS support. Exclusions have also applied to new applications and people seeking asylum who are on tourist, student, or work visas before applying for refugee protection, and whose initial visa has not yet expired.

To qualify for the support people seeking asylum will need to demonstrate they meet a high threshold of vulnerability, including:

- Physical health barriers that are ongoing, permanent disability, or cognitive impairment
- Mental health barriers, with a current diagnosis and treatment plan in place;
- Single parents with pre-school aged children *(children under six), pregnant women with complications, a primary carer for someone with a significant vulnerability, people aged 70 and over
- A major crisis for the client (family violence, house fire, flood, etc.)



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Under the revised rules the Government has stated it intends to reduce the number of people receiving assistance to fewer than 5000. This means around 8000 currently on the program could lose access to basic income assistance, and thousands more will be unable to access any support if they need it at some point in the future.

The new rules are being rolled out progressively, initially targeting single adult men and women with work rights. From late-May 2018, families and other groups will be notified if they have failed to meet the restrictive criteria.

Information taken from the St Vincent de Paul Society briefing: "How have the rules for receiving the SRSS payment changed".

https://www.vinnies.org.au/page/Publications/National/Factsheets_and_policy_briefings/Status_Resolution_Support_Service_Payments/How_have_the_rules_for_receiving_the_SRSS_Payment_changed/

Further Information:

[Facts and figures on SRSS](#)

[SRSS facts by state, age & band](#)

[SRSS Operational Manual](#)

[A report](#) 'Starving them out: How the Australian Government is forcing people seeking asylum into destitution' (full text)

[A report](#) on how Australia is punishing the most vulnerable people 'With empty hands'

[Roof over my head campaign fact sheets and resources](#)

[A video](#) explaining SRSS cuts

[A letter](#) from Kamran, a person who is seeking asylum in Australia.