
Pacific Earthquake/Tsunami

THIS FACTSHEET PROVIDES INFORMATION ON THE TYPES OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE THAT MAY BE AVAILABLE TO PEOPLE AFFECTED BY THE EARTHQUAKES AND TSUNAMI.

Who is affected?

People have been affected by the earthquakes and tsunami in different ways, some of these people could be in the following situations:

- people entering New Zealand to stay with families (these people may or may not be New Zealand residents)
- people who are in New Zealand with no income because their partner is stranded in or they are normally supported by their partner who is in an affected Pacific country.
- people on a benefit or New Zealand Superannuation stranded or obliged to stay in an affected Pacific country longer than current benefit rules allow
- people stranded in New Zealand after their work visa has expired
- people in New Zealand in hardship as a result of helping family in an affected Pacific country
- orphaned or unsupported children brought to New Zealand to live with New Zealand family.

If you feel you have been affected, you should make contact with Work and Income to see if we can help. You can contact our general line on **0800 559 009**.

What assistance may be available?

If you qualify for assistance, Work and Income can provide a range of standard financial assistance which may include:

- **Main Benefits**, which provide on-going financial assistance to those with little or no income. Where a person does not meet all criteria for a main benefit, entitlement may be considered under hardship for an Emergency Benefit.
- **Special Needs Grants**, which provide non-taxable, one-off recoverable or non-recoverable financial assistance to people to meet immediate and essential needs. A person does not have to be receiving a benefit to qualify for a Special Needs Grant. This assistance is income and asset tested. **Note** assistance with travel to and from an affected Pacific Island can be considered for some family members needing to support relatives.

Factsheet

- **Funeral Grants**, which provide non-taxable assistance towards a person's funeral expenses. The Funeral Grant helps people with actual and reasonable funeral costs only and is not designed to cover the entire funeral expenses.
- **Recoverable Assistance Payments**, which provide non-taxable, interest free, financial assistance to non-beneficiaries to meet essential immediate needs for specific items or services. This assistance will need to be paid back. The person must be able to identify a particular immediate need for an essential item or service. This assistance is income and asset tested.

Contacts

- If you have family living in Samoa that you are concerned about, you should ring the **Samoa High Commission** on (04) 472 0953 for information.
- If you have family travelling on a New Zealand Passport to Samoa that you are concerned about, you should ring the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade** on (04) 439 8000.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade offers advice on travel to the affected areas www.mfat.govt.nz/travel/countries/tsunami.
- If you are concerned about someone who is suffering from trauma or who might need some support contact **Victim Support** on 0800 VICTIM (0800 842846) or online at www.victimsupport.org.nz.

for more information:

If you'd like more information about financial help from Work and Income, call **0800 559 009**. To speak with us in **Samoa**, call **0800 663 003**. To speak with us in **Tongan**, call **0800 669 009**.