

Portable long service schemes in the community services sector

Legal information for community organisations

This fact sheet covers:

- ▶ what portable long service leave is,
- ▶ which states and territories have portable long service leave schemes in the community services sector, and
- ▶ employer eligibility and obligations under these portable long service leave schemes



In this fact sheet, we set out information about the portable long service leave schemes that operate in the community services sector in some states and territories in Australia.



Disclaimer

This fact sheet provides general information about portable long service leave schemes that operate in the community services sector in some states and territories in Australia. This information is a guide only and is not legal advice. If you or your organisation has a specific legal issue, you should seek legal advice before deciding what to do.

Please refer to [the full disclaimer](#) that applies to this fact sheet.

Currently, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and the ACT have portable long service leave schemes in operation for relevant employees in the **community services sector**.

While these schemes differ slightly in terms of the types of work covered and the benefits offered, each scheme requires employers to contribute as a levy payment a percentage of each eligible employee's ordinary wages to the relevant authority in that state or territory. The eligible employees can then apply to the relevant body for payment of their long service leave benefits once the minimum period has been reached. A similar scheme covering the community services sector in South Australia will start later this year.



What is portable long service leave?

Portable long service leave is an entitlement that allows employees in specific industries to accrue long service leave based on their service across the entire industry, rather than just with a single employer.

Long service leave is a period of paid leave that is available to employees who have worked for the same business for a period. The length of time depends on the employee's award or agreement.



For more information about long service leave, see the [Fair Work Ombudsman's webpage 'Long service leave'](#).

Portable long service leave is more common in industries with high worker mobility, such as building and construction, coal mining, contract cleaning, and community services. These schemes ensure that employees in these sectors can still accrue long service leave even if they work for multiple employers within the same industry over a period.

New South Wales

In New South Wales, portable long service schemes are administered by the New South Wales Government's [Long Service Corporation](#) in the building and construction and contract cleaning sectors, and now in the community services sector.

The community services industry portable long service leave scheme in New South Wales (**NSW Scheme**) was established by [The Community Services Sector \(Portable Long Service Leave\) Act 2024 \(NSW\)](#) (**NSW Act**) and started on 1 July 2025.

Under the NSW Scheme, workers are eligible for long service leave after seven years of service to the community services industry with one or more employers.

Employer eligibility

Eligible employers are those who employ one or more full-time, part-time or casual workers in the community services industry in New South Wales (or supply at least one person through a labour hire arrangement to do the same).

Community service work is defined as:

- work to provide a community service, or
- work for an employer, if the predominant purpose of the employer is to provide a community service

Where the predominant purpose of the organisation is to provide a community service, the employer must register all workers, regardless of whether they perform community service work or not (for example, this includes administrative staff). But if the organisation's predominant purpose is not to provide a community service, the employer will only need to register the service of those employees who perform community service work.

The NSW Act lists 31 different types of community service that are covered by the NSW Scheme and includes brief descriptions of what each relevant community service means.

These include, but are not limited to:

- alcohol and other drug services
- child safety and support services
- community legal services
- disability supports and services, and
- social housing services

Exclusions

Commonwealth, state or local government authorities are not considered relevant employers for the purpose of the NSW Scheme.

Employers in the residential aged care and early childhood care and education industries are also not included in the NSW Scheme.

Employer obligations

Employers had one month from the start of the NSW Scheme (until 1 August 2025) to register with the NSW Scheme. If new employers are starting business in the community services industry after 1 July 2025, they will have one month from when they start employing people to register with the NSW Scheme.



From 1 July 2025, employers must do the following quarterly (ie. every 3 months):

- record the service of eligible workers and submit quarterly service returns, and
- make levy payments to the NSW Scheme in relation to their eligible employees, at 1.7% of the employees' gross ordinary wages (which includes the employees' gross salary or wages, plus included allowances from various awards related to the community services industry, however not including amounts for overtime, bonuses, superannuation, some allowances, and the like)

The lodgement of the service returns and levy payments for the first three quarters of the NSW Scheme's operation will not be due until April 2026 (however employers still need to start making eligible employee records from 1 July 2025).



For more information about the NSW Scheme (along with relevant forms and other documents), see the [New South Wales Long Service Corporation website](#).

Victoria

In Victoria, portable long service schemes are administered by the [Portable Long Service Leave Authority](#) in the community services, contract cleaning and security industries.

The portable long service leave scheme in Victoria (**Victorian Scheme**), which operates under the [Long Service Benefits Portability Act 2018 \(Vic\)](#) and the [Long Service Benefits Portability Regulations 2020 \(Vic\)](#) (**Victorian Legislation**), started on 1 July 2019.

Under the Victorian Scheme, employees can apply for their long service leave entitlements after at least seven years of recognised service.

Employer eligibility

The types of employment covered by the Victorian Scheme are broad and include full-time, part-time, casual, seasonal, and fixed-term employment.

Employees covered by the Victorian Scheme are those that are:

- employed by a covered employer, and
- covered by one of the following five modern awards:
 - Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010
 - Children's Services Award 2010
 - Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2010 (now replaced by the 2020 version of this award)
 - Labour Market Assistance Industry Award 2020, or
 - Supported Employment Services Award 2020

The application of the Victorian Scheme is broad, and covers community service workers including those in roles providing support to people living with disability or who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or in crisis, including (but not limited to):

- social work, welfare work and youth work
- family support services
- housing and homelessness services, and
- migrant and refugee support services

From 1 January 2020, the Victorian Scheme was expanded to include activities funded by the NDIS and non-profit licensed children's services and approved providers.

Exclusions

Various employers are excluded from the Victorian Scheme, including:

- Federal and state government departments or agencies
- Local governments or other public statutory bodies

- A public health service or a public hospital and aged care services operated by hospitals
- Bush nursing centres, and
- For profit children's services providers

Employer obligations

Relevant employers must register their eligible employees with the Authority within 3 months of becoming an employer in the community services industry.

Each quarter (in October, January, April and July each year), employers must submit a quarterly return, including information regarding:

- all workers who have worked for the business during that quarter (including any new employees that have started employment since the last quarterly return was lodged)
- the days they have worked during the quarter, and
- the pay they received during the quarter

The levy payable is based on each worker's ordinary pay multiplied by the levy for the relevant industry, being 1.65% for the community services industry.



For more information about the Victorian Scheme (along with relevant forms and other documents), see the [Portable Long Service Leave Authority website](#).

Queensland

In Queensland, portable long service schemes are administered by [Qleave](#) in the building and construction, contract cleaning, and social and community services sectors.

The portable long service leave scheme in Queensland (**Queensland Scheme**), which operates under the [Community Services Industry \(Portable Long Service Leave\) Act 2020 \(Qld\)](#) (**Queensland Act**), started on 1 January 2021.

Employer eligibility

The Queensland Scheme in the social and community services sector covers workers who perform community service work, or support, supervise or manage the provision of community services.

The Queensland Act defines **community services** broadly and includes (but is not limited to):

- counselling services
- employment services
- foster care and out-of-home care services
- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex services, and
- women's services

The Queensland Scheme covers relevant employees who are employed on a full-time, part-time or casual basis, or are engaged under a contract for service, including labour hire employees.

Exclusions

The Queensland Scheme does not apply to:

- Commonwealth, State or local government employees
- workers engaged to perform work unrelated to the purpose of providing community services
- workers in standalone childcare, family day care and early childhood education centres, and
- workers employed in a facility operated by a standalone aged care provider or service

Employer obligations

Employers are required to register with Qleave, and register their eligible employees, including when:

- a new eligible worker starts, and
- an eligible worker is terminated

Employers must submit quarterly employer returns detailing the total of ordinary wages paid to eligible employees during the return period, and make levy payments for their relevant employees, at the rate of 1.35% of ordinary wages. Levy payments are due within 14 days after the end of the relevant return period. Ordinary wages do not include overtime payments, bonuses, superannuation, and various other payments.

Relevant employers must also keep certain records for six years.



For more information about the Queensland Scheme (along with relevant forms and other documents), see the [Qleave website](#).

Australian Capital Territory

Since 1 July 2010, under the [Long Service Leave Act \(Portable Schemes\) Act 2009 \(ACT\)](#) (**ACT Act**), [ACT Leave](#) has administered a portable long service leave scheme for the community sector industry in the ACT (**ACT Scheme**).

Under the ACT Scheme, eligible employees are entitled to:

- 4.33 weeks of portable long service leave after five years of recorded service in the industry, and
- 0.867 weeks of leave for every year after five years

Employer eligibility

The ACT Scheme covers full-time, part-time and casual employees, as well as contractors (however it is optional for contractors), for service recorded in the ACT.

The relevant services covered by the ACT scheme include:

- relevant approved education and care services
- residential and community aged care services
- other residential care services including:
 - care accommodation or homes for disadvantaged people where nursing or medical care is not provided as a major service
 - residential corrective services for young offenders
- non-residential care welfare services (including fundraising services for welfare services) not included in other community sector industries
- employment placement services for people with disability, and
- community service advocacy services.

Employer obligations

Relevant employers must register with the ACT Scheme, record service for their covered employees quarterly, and pay a quarterly levy set at 1.85% of the gross ordinary wages of their relevant employees.

Employers must also:

- add new eligible employees to the employer portal when submitting a quarterly return, and
- keep records for seven years after the day the eligible employee stops being employed



For more information about the ACT Scheme (along with relevant forms and other documents), see the [ACT Leave website](#)

South Australia

South Australia's portable long service leave scheme, which has provided long service leave to construction workers for almost 50 years, is being expanded to include community service sector workers.

From 1 October 2025, under the [Portable Long Service Leave Act 2024 \(SA\)](#) (**South Australian Act**), South Australia will introduce a portable long service leave scheme for its community services sector (**South Australian Scheme**).

Eligible employees will be able to apply for long service leave benefits under the Victorian Scheme once they have completed seven years of eligible service.

Employer eligibility

Eligibility under the South Australian Scheme in the community services sector is separated into two streams:

- workers who are providing community services, and
- workers who are supporting the provision of community services (such as administrative, HR, and payroll staff)

Employers must register as an employer if they employ one or more workers who are providing community services or supporting the provision of community services.

Schedule 2 of the South Australian Act sets out the various services that are considered as community services, including (but not limited to):

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community services
- child safety and support services
- community legal services
- family and domestic violence services, and
- seniors community support services.

Exclusions

The South Australian Scheme will not apply to employment by:

- public sector agencies
- councils, or
- a prescribed employer, or an employer of a prescribed class

Obligations

Relevant employers must register online within 28 days of the South Australian Scheme starting on 1 October 2025.

Employers must add eligible workers to the online portal by 31 December 2025, in anticipation of the first return lodgement and payment of applicable levies by 21 January 2026.



For more information about the South Australian Scheme (along with relevant forms and other documents), see the [SA Portable Long Service Leave website](#).

Northern Territory

The Northern Territory's portable long service leave scheme, managed by [NT Build](#), provides long service leave benefits to workers in the construction industry.

The Northern Territory was due to introduce a portable long service leave scheme for the community services sector, which would come into operation in early 2026. However, in May 2025, the relevant legislation was repealed, and the NT government is yet to announce an alternative scheme.

Tasmania and Western Australia

Tasmania and Western Australia have portable long service leave schemes for workers in the construction industry. Tasmania's scheme is managed by [TasBuild](#) and Western Australia's scheme is managed by [MyLeave](#).

Tasmania and Western Australia have not yet introduced a portable long service leave scheme for the community services sector.