Portable long service for community services

Legal information for community organisations

This fact sheet covers:

- portable long service leave
- schemes operating in the community services sector, and
- employer coverage and obligations



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 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.

Refer to the full disclaimer that applies to this fact sheet.

Portable long service leave schemes for community services operate in **New South Wales**, **Victoria**, **Queensland**, the **Australian Capital Territory** and **South Australia**. The schemes differ in who they cover, when workers become eligible for benefits and what employers must do.

If your organisation operates in one of these jurisdictions, check whether your organisation and workers are covered by the relevant scheme.

Portable long service leave

Long service leave generally provides paid leave after an employee has worked for the same employer for a long period. Most employees' long service leave entitlements come from state or territory laws.

Portable long service leave allows workers to accrue long service leave based on their service in a covered industry, even if they change employers.

Portable schemes operate in industries where workers may move between employers, including community services, construction and contract cleaning.

Each community services scheme is different. Depending on the jurisdiction, a covered employer may need to:

- register with the scheme
- register eligible workers
- report workers' service and pay, and
- pay contributions or levies to the authority administering the scheme

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Workers who build up the required recognised service can claim portable long service leave benefits under the applicable scheme.

For general information about long service leave, see the Fair Work Ombudsman's webpage 'Long service leave'.

Note – interstate service

Portable long service leave does not necessarily transfer between state and territory schemes. There are currently no reciprocal arrangements that allow community-services workers to combine service recorded under different state or territory portable long service leave schemes. Workers moving interstate should check the rules of both schemes.

New South Wales

The NSW **Community Services Industry Portable Long Service Leave Scheme** started on 1 July 2025 and is administered by the Long Service Corporation.

Under the NSW scheme, workers can claim approximately 6.1 weeks of portable long service leave after completing seven years of recognised service in the community services industry. The recognised service can be with one or more covered employers.

The scheme operates under the *Community Services Sector (Portable Long Service Leave) Act 2024* (NSW) (**NSW Act**) and supporting legislation.

Employer coverage

An organisation must generally register if it employs at least one worker covered by the scheme to perform eligible community services work in NSW. Registration obligations can also apply to a labour-hire provider that supplies workers to perform eligible community services work.

Coverage depends partly on the organisation's predominant purpose:

- if the organisation's predominant purpose is to provide community services, it generally must register all workers who fall within the scheme's definition of a worker, including workers in administrative or other support roles
- if community services are not the organisation's predominant purpose, it generally must register workers who perform eligible community services work

The scheme covers a broad range of community services, including:

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

The NSW Act sets out the detailed categories of community services covered by the scheme.

Tip

The Long Service Corporation provides eligibility information and a self-assessment process to help organisations work out whether they need to register. Organisations can also ask the Corporation for assistance if coverage remains unclear.

Exclusions

The scheme does not cover:

- Commonwealth, state or local government authorities
- employers in the residential aged care industry, or
- employers in the early childhood education and care industry

Organisations that provide different types of services should check whether the scheme applies to particular parts of their operations.F

Employer obligations

Covered employers must register with the scheme and keep information about eligible workers up to date.

Employers must also:

- record eligible workers
- submit quarterly service returns with required information about workers' service and gross ordinary wages, and
- pay the levy assessed for the relevant quarter

The levy rate can change. Employers should check the Long Service Corporation website for the current rate and reporting deadlines.

For current information about coverage, registration, quarterly returns and levy contributions, see the Long Service Corporation website.

Victoria

Victoria's Portable Long Service Benefits Scheme started on 1 July 2019 and is administered by the Portable Long Service Authority. It covers the community services, contract cleaning and security industries.

Covered community services workers can generally claim portable long service benefits after completing seven years of recognised service under the scheme. Recognised service can continue when a worker changes employers within the covered industry. A worker who is already entitled to traditional long service leave with their employer will generally claim that entitlement instead.

The scheme operates under the *Long Service Benefits Portability Act 2018* (Vic) and the *Long Service Benefits Portability Regulations 2020* (Vic).

Employer coverage

In the community services sector, an organisation generally needs to register if it employs workers in Victoria and is:

- a not-for-profit entity employing at least one person to perform community services work, or

- a for-profit entity employing at least one person to perform community services work for people with disability

The scheme also covers certain community health and women's health services, NDIS-funded community services and not-for-profit children's education and care services.

Community services work is broadly defined and can include:

- community legal, education and advocacy services
- disability and home care support
- family support and family violence services
- housing and homelessness services
- social, welfare and youth work
- drug and alcohol services, and
- migrant and refugee support services

Workers who support, supervise or manage the provision of community services can also be covered.

For a worker to be covered, they must be employed by a covered employer and covered by one of the community services sector awards specified in the *Long Service Benefits Portability Regulations 2020* (Vic). Covered workers can be employed full-time, part-time, casually, seasonally or for a fixed term.

Tip

The Portable Long Service Leave Authority provides a community services screening tool to help organisations work out whether they are covered.

Exclusions

The scheme excludes local, state and federal government bodies and certain statutory bodies. For-profit approved children's service providers are also excluded from the community services scheme.

Employers should check the current coverage rules if they are unsure whether an exclusion applies.

Employer obligations

A covered employer must register with the Portable Long Service Authority within three months of becoming an employer in the covered industry.

Employers must also:

- submit quarterly returns with required information about their covered workers, including their service and ordinary pay
- register new covered workers through their quarterly returns, and
- pay the applicable levy each quarter

Employers should check the Portable Long Service Leave Authority website for current levy rates, quarterly return requirements and deadlines.

For more information about coverage, registration and employer obligations, see the Portable Long Service Leave Authority website.

Queensland

Queensland's community services portable long service leave scheme started on 1 January 2021 and is administered by Qleave. It operates under the *Community Services Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Act 2020* (Qld).

Registered workers can claim 6.1 weeks of portable long service leave after completing seven years of recorded service in Queensland's community services industry. Service can be accumulated with different employers in the industry.

Because the scheme started on 1 January 2021, the earliest workers can claim portable long service leave from QLeave is January 2028. The QLeave scheme does not replace an employer's obligation to provide long service leave under an applicable law or industrial instrument. If an employer pays long service leave to a worker, the employer may be able to claim reimbursement from QLeave for service recorded with the scheme.

Employer coverage

An organisation is generally covered as an employer if it is established to provide, or has a purpose of providing, community services in Queensland. Labour-hire providers that supply community services workers in Queensland can also be covered.

The scheme covers workers employed by a community services provider to:

- perform community services work, or
- support, supervise or manage the provision of community services

Community services are broadly defined and include services such as counselling, employment services, foster and out-of-home care, services for LGBTI people and women's services.

Covered workers can include:

- full-time, part-time and casual employees, and
- people engaged under a contract for services, including labour-hire workers

Self-employed people who provide community services may choose to register with the scheme.

Exclusions

The scheme does not cover:

- Commonwealth, Queensland or local government workers
- workers performing work unrelated to the provision of community services
- workers in standalone childcare and early childhood education centres, kindergartens and specified school-based childcare services, or
- workers employed in nursing homes or retirement villages operated by standalone aged care providers or services

Organisations that provide both community services and excluded services should check Qleave's current coverage information.

Employer obligations

Covered employers must register with QLeave and ensure eligible workers are registered.

Employers must then:

- submit quarterly returns reporting eligible workers' service and ordinary wages, and
- pay the applicable levy

Employers should check the QLeave website for the current levy rate, the meaning of ordinary wages and current reporting requirements.

For current information about Queensland's community services scheme, see the Qleave website.

Australian Capital Territory

The ACT portable long service leave scheme for the community sector is administered by ACT Leave under the *Long Service Leave Act (Portable Schemes) Act 2009* (ACT).

After five years of recorded service, a registered worker can claim a portable long service leave benefit equivalent to 4.33 weeks. A further 0.867 weeks accrues for each year of recorded service after that. The benefit is paid by ACT Leave rather than taken as leave from the employer.

Employer coverage

An employer is covered if it has employees performing relevant community-sector services in the ACT.

Relevant services include:

- education and care services
- residential and community aged care
- certain residential care services
- community services, including services for people with disability or who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or in crisis, and
- other services specified under the scheme

Covered employees can be full-time, part-time or casual.

Self-employed contractors and working directors performing relevant services may choose to participate. They make their own contributions and, if eligible to claim, receive their contributions back with applicable interest.

Coverage depends on the type of service performed and can also be affected by declarations made under the *Long Service Leave (Portable Schemes) Act 2009* (ACT). Employers should check ACT Leave's current coverage guidance if it is unclear whether particular work is covered.

Employer obligations

Covered employers must register with ACT Leave and record the service of eligible employees.

Employers must also:

- submit quarterly returns with required information about eligible employees, including their service and gross ordinary wages, and
- pay the applicable levy

Employers should check ACT Leave for the current levy rate and reporting requirements.

For current information about coverage, registration and employer obligations, see the ACT Leave website

South Australia

South Australia's portable long service leave scheme for community services started on 1 October 2025 and is administered by SA Portable Long Service Leave - Community Services. It operates under the *Portable Long Service Leave Act 2024* (SA) and *Portable Long Service Leave Regulations 2025* (SA).

Eligible workers can take 13 weeks of long service leave after ten years of total sector service. A further 1.3 weeks accrues for each additional year of service. A worker who leaves the sector after at least seven years of service may instead be entitled to a payment.

Employer coverage

Employers with eligible workers performing community services work in South Australia must register with the scheme.

Eligible employees include:

- employees directly providing specified community services whose duties fall within prescribed classifications under the *Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010* or *Aboriginal Legal Rights Movement Award 2016*, and
- employees who spend at least half their working time supporting the provision of community services, including in roles such as administration, HR, payroll or management

Employees directly providing community services do not need to be paid under one of the prescribed awards, but their duties must fall within a prescribed classification.

Covered employees can be full-time, part-time or casual.

An employer may also choose to register certain employees who support the provision of community services for less than half their working time.

Self-employed contractors and working directors who perform community services work can choose to register with the scheme and make their own contributions.

The community services covered by the scheme are listed in the *Portable Long Service Leave Act 2024* (SA) and include services such as:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community services
- advocacy and community legal services
- alcohol and other drug services
- disability support services
- family and domestic violence services
- financial counselling
- homelessness support and social housing services
- mental health services, and
- youth support services

Employer obligations

An employer that becomes covered by the scheme must generally register within 28 days of employing an eligible worker.

Covered employers must also:

- register eligible workers
- submit quarterly returns with required information about workers' service and remuneration
- pay the applicable levy, and
- keep required records

Employers should check SA Portable Long Service Leave for the current levy rate, what payments count as remuneration and current quarterly reporting requirements.

Note – service before 1 October 2025

Special transitional rules apply to service before the portable scheme started. Employers may remain responsible for long service leave liabilities accrued under the *Long Service Leave Act 1987* (SA) before a worker entered the portable scheme.

For information about liabilities for service before 1 October 2025, see SA Portable Long Service Leave - Community Services' transitional arrangements for employers.

For current information about coverage, registration, contributions and claims, see SA Portable Long Service Leave - Community Services.

Northern Territory, Tasmania and Western Australia

The Northern Territory, Tasmania and Western Australia do not currently have portable long service leave schemes for the community services sector.

All three jurisdictions have portable long service leave arrangements for the construction industry. Western Australia also has long service leave portability arrangements for local government employees.

The Northern Territory had legislated to establish a community services portable long service leave scheme, but the legislation was repealed before the scheme began operating.

Community services workers in these jurisdictions may still have long service leave entitlements under ordinary long service leave laws or other applicable instruments.

For more information about the existing construction-industry portable long service leave schemes in these jurisdictions, see:

- NT Build
- TasBuild
- MyLeave – Construction Long Service WA