

**From:** Kate Wheller  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 31 March 2020 8:54 AM  
**To:** senator.ruston@aph.gov.au  
**Subject:** Emergency Relief services - flexible funding remains paramount  
**Importance:** High

Good morning Senator Ruston

We welcomed the announcement on Sunday of an additional \$200 million for the FWC programs, and are grateful for the very positive moves the government is making to ease financial hardship for all Australians during these unprecedented times.

We are an existing funded ER & FC services, and are keen to know how quickly this new money will flow and whether the flexible funding model still applies. Our sector is particularly vulnerable now due to its high reliance on aging volunteers who have now been advised to stay at home.

As you are aware, the ER sector relies heavily on volunteers to deliver service. With the vast majority of volunteers over 65 years old, we are now struggling to backfill their roles. Where possible, we are redeploying paid staff from other programs, but we certainly feel, that once more of the newly unemployed Australian's seek out our services, we will struggle with staffing. We hope that the increased funding will give us provision to increase the hours of existing workers or to employ new staff. Some local centres already have the IT for services to be delivered from worker's homes (laptops and phones), and others do not. We anticipate that some centres will need funds to provide the appropriate technology over the period of lock-down.

Most of our local centres have been delivering a phone service, rather than face-to-face service for 3 weeks now. They have been nimble and resourceful in these challenging times. Our sector has demonstrated its capacity to offer flexible, responsive services, with a strong commitment to meeting the needs of those in financial hardship.

Please feel free to contact me via return email or mobile (0407 670 125) should you wish to discuss this.

I hope that you and your team remain safe and well.

Kind regards

*Kate*

.....

**Kate Wheller**

*Executive Officer, Community Information & Support Victoria (CISVic)*

Suite 907, Level 9, 343 Little Collins St, Melbourne, VIC, 3000  
M 0407 670 125  
E [kate@cisvic.org.au](mailto:kate@cisvic.org.au)  
T 039672 2000  
W [cisvic.org.au](http://cisvic.org.au)

CISVic acknowledge and pay respect to the Traditional Owners of the Land as the First Peoples of Australia. We acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded and their connection to land and culture are enduring. We hope that together we can work towards treaty and reconciliation.