

# MEDIA RELEASE



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## APPLY FOR FLOOD OR CYCLONE ASSISTANCE BY 28 FEBRUARY

Trucking operators and employees who have lost income as a result of the floods or cyclone Yasi have just ten days left to apply for help under the Australian Government's Disaster Income Recovery Subsidy.

The Chief Executive of the Australian Trucking Association, Stuart St Clair, said the deadline for applications was 28 February.

"Under the Disaster Income Recovery Subsidy (DIRS), small business owners and employees can get an allowance of about \$500 per fortnight for 13 weeks if they have lost income as a result of the floods," Mr St Clair said.

"Many trucking operators and employees have lost income because of the floods or the cyclone, but have not applied for help because they are struggling on by working reduced hours or by finding small amounts of work.

"You do not need to have lost all your income to qualify for the subsidy."

"Because of the uncertainty about the income rules for the subsidy, the ATA held talks this week with the office of the Minister for Human Services, Tanya Plibersek.

"Thanks to Minister Plibersek, the ATA can confirm that you are eligible for the subsidy as long as you can show that your average income per fortnight in the eight weeks immediately following your loss of income is lower than your average income per fortnight in the eight weeks immediately before the start of the disaster.

"In other words, trucking industry employees who are working reduced hours are potentially eligible, as are the owners of small trucking businesses who have lost some, but not all, of their jobs," Mr St Clair said.

Mr St Clair urged trucking operators and industry employers to apply to Centrelink rather than trying to determine their own eligibility for the subsidy.

"During every natural disaster, many people miss out on help because they assume they are not eligible. It's a particular problem in rural Australia and industries like farming and trucking, because we're an independent bunch and tend to struggle on. Instead of struggling alone, phone Centrelink on **180 22 66** and get an application form lodged. Let them decide if you are eligible," Mr St Clair said.

Getting clarity about the DIRS income rules was one of the ATA's key objectives in working with the Government to secure extra disaster assistance for the trucking industry. The ATA is working to get other assistance measures as well.

More than 800 trucking operators have been severely affected by the floods and the cyclone, with companies transporting fruit and vegetables for Lockyer Valley farmers particularly affected.

**For detailed fact sheets about the disaster assistance available, visit [www.atatruck.net.au](http://www.atatruck.net.au)**

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