

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the North Stradbroke Island Workers Assistance Scheme?

The North Stradbroke Island (NSI) Workers Assistance Scheme (WAS) is intended to assist affected workers find alternative employment, preferably in the local area, and support the ongoing economic viability of the NSI community.

The WAS came into effect when the *North Stradbroke Island Protection and Sustainability and Other Acts Amendment Bill 2015* was passed in May 2016. Assistance under the WAS is available for eligible affected Sibelco workers employed as at 26 May 2016, and will be available for a five-year period to May 2021.

The Queensland Government has allocated up to \$5 million for the WAS to assist affected workers transition to alternative employment.

What assistance is available to affected workers under the WAS?

The Queensland Government has allocated up to \$5 million for the WAS to assist affected workers transition to alternative employment. The WAS comprises the following elements:

- job search support;
- training and skills support;
- housing assistance;
- commuting subsidy;
- income supplementation; and
- dislocation assistance.

Employers who hire an affected worker will be eligible for a wage subsidy, once the affected worker has been employed for six months.

A full time Employment Services Manager (ESM) has been appointed, and will divide their time between the NSI and the mainland, to assist affected workers.

See the **eligibility summary table** for further information.

Who is eligible for assistance under the WAS?

Assistance under the WAS is available for Sibelco workers employed as at 26 May 2016 who are made redundant at Sibelco's operations on NSI (including the Pinkenba processing plant) as a result of the cessation of sand mining on NSI.

Sibelco permanent full time and part time workers can access all assistance elements under the WAS (eligibility requirements apply), this includes job search support, training and skills support, housing assistance, commuting subsidy, income supplementation, and dislocation assistance.

Long term casual and long term contract workers can access all assistance elements under the WAS (eligibility requirements apply) with the exception of income supplementation and dislocation assistance.

Affected workers are encouraged to contact the ESM to discuss their career options and availability of assistance under the WAS. For further information visit www.treasury.qld.gov.au/growing-queensland/nsi-workers-assistance-scheme/ or contact the ESM via email nsiwas@dsd.qld.gov.au or call **0478 405 423**.

When can affected workers apply for assistance under the WAS?

Job search and training and skills support are available to affected workers, prior to and following retrenchment. Any time off work to access services prior to the retrenchment will need to be negotiated with Sibelco.

In addition housing assistance, commuting subsidy, income supplementation and dislocation assistance are available to eligible affected workers following confirmation of retrenchment from Sibelco.

See the **summary of assistance table** for further information.

Affected workers are encouraged to contact the ESM to discuss their career options and assistance available under the WAS. For further information visit www.treasury.qld.gov.au/growing-queensland/nsi-workers-assistance-scheme/ or contact the ESM via email nsiwas@dsd.qld.gov.au or call **0478 405 423**.

I am still employed by Sibelco, can I access any support or financial assistance under the WAS?

Yes. Eligible affected Sibelco workers may access job search and training and skills support prior to retrenchment. Any time off work to access services prior to the retrenchment will need to be negotiated with Sibelco. Other assistance elements can be accessed following confirmation of retrenchment from Sibelco.

See the **summary of assistance table** for further information.

What other support is available to affected workers?

In addition to the assistance available under the WAS, affected workers can also access the following Australian Government services:

- Sarina Russo Job Access provide jobactive services on NSI. To make an appointment, call **131 559**.
- To find your local jobactive provider on the mainland visit www.jobsearch.gov.au. Retrenched workers can register directly with a jobactive provider to receive employment assistance.
- For advice on jobactive call **13 62 68** or visit www.employment.gov.au/jobactive.
- For advice on services offered by the Department of Human Services call **13 28 50** or visit www.humanservices.gov.au.

What is the role of the Employment Services Manager (ESM)?

A full time ESM has been appointed, and will divide their time between NSI and the mainland, to assist affected workers. The ESM is available as the first point of contact for affected workers regarding assistance available under the WAS.

The ESM will:

- deliver job search and training and skills support;
- support delivery of the housing assistance, commuting subsidy, income supplementation and dislocation assistance, including submitting applications;
- provide information on the types of Queensland Government and Australian Government assistance available to workers;
- support affected workers with recognition of prior learning and/or qualifications;
- provide referrals to a range of services;
- provide initial verification of applications and submit applications to the Department of Employment, Small Business and Training (DESBT) and
- engage case managers, if required, to work on a one-on-one basis with affected workers.

For further enquiries relating to assistance under the WAS or to commence discussions with the ESM, please email nsiwas@dss.gov.au or call **0478 405 423**.

Who can I contact for further information on the WAS?

For detailed guidelines, application forms and supporting documents, visit www.treasury.qld.gov.au/growing-queensland/nsi-workers-assistance-scheme/.

Affected workers are encouraged to contact the ESM to discuss their career options and assistance available under the WAS.

For further information visit www.treasury.qld.gov.au/growing-queensland/nsi-workers-assistance-scheme/ or contact the ESM via email nsiwas@dss.gov.au or call **0478 405 423**.

How do I apply for assistance under the WAS?

Affected workers must submit applications for assistance to the ESM in the first instance. The ESM will undertake an initial review of applications to ensure they meet eligibility requirements and all supporting documentation is included. The ESM will forward completed applications to the DESBT for processing of payments, where applicable.

Application forms and supporting documents are available at www.treasury.qld.gov.au/growing-queensland/nsi-workers-assistance-scheme/

When will I receive my financial assistance?

Applications for assistance will be assessed to ensure they meet all eligible requirements under the WAS, have included all necessary information and that relevant supporting documentation is attached and complete.

Payment of assistance (where applicable) will be made to the bank account nominated on the application form within 14 business days of the application and supporting documentation being submitted by the ESM to the DESBT.

Job search support will be delivered by the ESM to affected workers. This may involve contracting third parties to provide individualised support services to affected workers.

Payment for any training outside the Annual VET Investment Plan will be paid directly to the training provider, on receipt of an invoice by the WAS.

Will financial assistance under the WAS impact my Commonwealth Support Payments?

Any potential impact on Commonwealth Support Payments will depend on individual circumstances. The Australian Government has advised that the receipt of financial assistance under the WAS may impact eligibility for Commonwealth Support Payments (either full or in part).

It is the responsibility of the affected worker to make enquiries with Centrelink prior to submitting an application for financial assistance to understand any potential impacts. The affected worker in consultation with Centrelink should determine the impact of any payment under the WAS on their Commonwealth Support Payments and decide if applying for WAS financial assistance is in their best interest. The ESM is unable to advise on these impacts.

The Department of Human Services can provide further information and assistance. Please call **13 28 50** or visit www.humanservices.gov.au to obtain further advice.

Job search support

What job search support services will be available?

The ESM will deliver the job search support services element of the WAS and provide immediate, direct and tailored services to support affected workers find alternative employment. Funding is available (up to \$2,000 per worker) for individualised job search support.

Support includes:

- career counselling;
- job referral;
- resume writing;
- interview skills; and
- literacy and numeracy skills support.

Case management services will be available to provide services described above and specialised support, as required, at the discretion of the ESM.

Employees may access job search support services prior to redundancy. Any time off work to access services prior to retrenchment will need to be negotiated with Sibelco.

Sibelco permanent full time and part time, long term casual and long term contract workers are eligible for this element of the WAS. Job search support is provided up until the affected worker finds employment with ongoing mentoring provided for three months post job placement, if required.

Training and skills support

What training is considered to be approved training?

The purpose of this element of the WAS is to assist affected workers acquire additional skills to support them to find alternative employment.

For the purposes of the NSI WAS, approved training is defined as accredited training that provides links to career options for affected workers. This training needs to align to the eligible worker's individual employment goals, as discussed with and approved by the ESM.

What training programs can affected workers access?

Eligible affected workers may access assistance through the Annual VET Investment Plan which provides training and skilling support through a network of approved pre-qualified suppliers.

Programs available include:

- Certificate 3 Guarantee;
- Higher Level Skills which provides access to Certificate 4, diploma or advanced diploma qualifications; and
- User Choice which provides a funding contribution towards the cost of training and assessment for eligible Queensland apprentices and trainees.

There will also be funding made available (up to \$2,000 per worker), at the discretion of the ESM, for short courses and tickets that are not subsidised by the Annual VET Investment Plan and meet the approved training definition.

Can I access training while still employed at Sibelco?

Yes. Employees may access training and skills support services prior to redundancy. Any time off work to access services prior to the retrenchment will need to be negotiated with Sibelco.

Compensation will be made available under the NSI WAS for affected workers who wish to undertake approved training, prior to retrenchment, on leave without pay that has been approved by Sibelco. A maximum of four weeks ordinary time earnings will be available per worker. The amount will be calculated by the ESM.

Where can I find information about training options?

The ESM, in conjunction with DESBT, will provide advice on training options available for workers to facilitate appropriate career changes and/or upskilling. It is recommended that affected workers discuss training options with the ESM as soon as practical. Further information about the Annual VET Investment Plan is available at www.training.qld.gov.au/docs-data/strategies/vetinvest.

Employer wage subsidy

I have hired an affected worker, am I eligible for an employer wage subsidy?

The provision of a wage subsidy (up to \$4,000 per worker) will be paid to eligible employers who engage an affected worker in permanent employment on NSI or the mainland. The new position must be based in Queensland.

The subsidy is provided once the affected worker has been employed on a permanent basis (either full time or part time) for 6 months continuously. Sibelco permanent full time and part time, long term casual and long term contract workers are eligible for this element of the WAS.

75 per cent of the subsidy will be provided for affected workers employed permanent part time (minimum 20 hours per week). Subsidy will not be paid for permanent employment of less than 20 hours per week or for casual or contract employment.

Australian and State Government employers are excluded from receiving the subsidy. However, local government employers in South East Queensland only are eligible for the wage subsidy, noting their contribution to the surrounding labour market.

Employers will need to apply and verify the employment of the affected worker.

For further information or to apply, visit www.treasury.qld.gov.au/growing-queensland/nsi-workers-assistance-scheme.

Further information

WEB www.treasury.qld.gov.au/growing-queensland/nsi-workers-assistance-scheme

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