

Advice from the Federal Government on 14 April 2020 regarding Safe Haven Enterprise Visas

SHEV holders may be concerned that accessing income support (Special Benefit payments) via Centrelink will affect their eligibility to meet the SHEV pathway requirements to apply for a permanent visa. SHEV holders should apply for any benefits and services that they are entitled to, including Special Benefit payments, particularly if they lost their employment due to the COVID-19 outbreak and are now in need of income support.

SHEV holders who **choose not to** access social security payments will not be provided with alternative financial support. SHEV holders will still be able to count any periods of employment when they did not receive Special Benefit payments, as the total of 42 months they must work without accessing income support in regional Australia to meet the work requirement is cumulative. This means that the number of months they have already worked in regional Australia before receiving Special Benefit payments and the number of months they may work after they no longer receive Special Benefit will be added and counted towards meeting the total of 42 months.

Receiving Special Benefit payments during this period will NOT affect a SHEV holder's eligibility to apply for some other visas, but it may mean that a SHEV holder may complete their 42 months of work in a regional area later than what they may have initially anticipated. At this stage there are no changes to the SHEV pathway requirements.

The consideration of any changes to the SHEV pathway requirements may take some time and you will be notified if any changes do occur. If the Government makes any changes to the SHEV pathways requirements, we will update our website at www.homeaffairs.gov.au/shevpathways.