



Australian Government



# A guide to Australian Government payments

on behalf of the Department of Family and Community Services, the Department of Education, Science and Training, and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

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## Contents

Family Tax Benefit Part A	2
Family Tax Benefit Part B	4
Maternity Payment	4
Maternity Immunisation Allowance	4
Health Care Cards (Family Tax Benefit)	5
Child Care Benefit (CCB)	5
Parenting Payment	6
Double Orphan Pension	6
Carer Allowance	7
Age Pension	7
Pension Bonus Scheme	8
Disability Support Pension	8
Wife Pension	9
Bereavement Allowance	9
Widow B Pension	9
Carer Payment	10
Newstart Allowance	10
Youth Allowance	11
Austudy Payment	12
Pensioner Education Supplement	13
ABSTUDY Scheme	13
Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme	15
Partner Allowance	15
Sickness Allowance	16
Widow Allowance	16
Mature Age Allowance	16
Special Benefit	17
Mobility Allowance	17
CDEP Participant Supplement (CPS) and Supplementary Benefits (Add-ons)	18
Remote Area Allowance	18
Crisis Payment	19
<b>Income and Assets Tests</b>	
Chart A	19
Chart B	19
Chart C	20
Compensation income	20
Chart D(a)	20
Chart D	21
<b>Concessions</b>	
Chart E	21
<b>Taxable/Non-Taxable Payments</b>	
Chart F	23
<b>Rent Assistance</b>	
Chart G	23
<b>Pharmaceutical Allowance</b>	
Chart H	24

As part of the Tax Reforms introduced on 1 July 2000, the Family Assistance Office was established to provide Australian families with a simplified range of government payments and services and a wider choice of locations.



**Australian Government**  
**Family Assistance Office**

Over 550 Family Assistance Offices have been set up across the country in Medicare offices, Centrelink Customer Service Centres and Tax Office shopfront. The new payment eligibility requirements and rates are detailed below.

## Family Tax Benefit Part A

### Basic conditions of eligibility

- Must have a dependent child aged under 21; OR
- A qualifying dependent full-time student aged 21 to 24;

**Note:** A child or student cannot be a dependant if:

- they are receiving a pension, Labour Market related payment or benefit such as Youth Allowance; OR
- aged 5–15, not studying full-time and their annual income is \$11 233 or more; OR
- aged 16–24 and their annual income is \$11 233 or more or they are receiving a Prescribed Education Scheme payment such as ABSTUDY.

- Have income under a certain amount (amount varies depending on number and age of children).
- Paid to parent, guardian or approved care organisation.

### Residential requirements

- Claimant must be an Australian resident, OR a Special Category visa holder residing in Australia OR the holder of a temporary visa subclass 070, 309, 310, 447, 451, 695, 785, 786, 787, 820 or 826 OR a holder of a Criminal Justice Stay Visa.
- Child must meet the above requirements OR must be living with the claimant.
- The base rate of Family Tax Benefit Part A can continue to be paid for up to three years of a temporary absence from Australia.
- More than the base rate of Family Tax Benefit Part A can only be paid for up to 13 weeks of a temporary absence from Australia. However, the length of your last return to Australia may affect your entitlement whilst overseas.

**Note:** Family Tax Benefit may be stopped if you leave Australia without notifying the Family Assistance Office.

### Basic Rates and method of payment

- Family Tax Benefit can be paid either fortnightly or as a lump sum after the end of the financial year to a bank or credit union; or through the tax system as a lump sum payment after the end of the financial year with the added option to reduce the amounts of tax withheld from wages paid to you or your partner.
- Family Tax Benefit Part A includes a supplement which is available only after the end of the financial year following the lodgement of tax returns and may be used to offset overpayments.

### Maximum rates of Family Tax Benefit Part A

For each child	Per fortnight	Per year
Aged under 13 years	\$137.06	\$4201.15
Aged 13–15 years	\$173.74	\$5157.45
Aged 16–17 years	\$44.10	\$1777.55
Aged 18–24 years	\$59.36	\$2175.40
In an approved care organisation aged 0–24 years	\$44.10	\$1149.75

**Note:** Payment per year figures (except for the approved care organisation figure) include the Family Tax Benefit Part A supplement (\$627.80 per child for the 2005–06 financial year) but the fortnightly figures do not. The Supplement can only be paid after the end of the financial year.

- To receive more than the base rate of Family Tax Benefit Part A for children of a previous relationship, reasonable action to obtain child support must be taken. Blind pensioners are exempt from the maintenance action test.

### Base Rate of Family Tax Benefit Part A

For each child	Per fortnight	Per year
Aged under 18 years	\$44.10	\$1777.55
Aged 18–24 years	\$59.36	\$2175.40

**Note:** Payment per year figures include the Family Tax Benefit Part A supplement (\$627.80 per child for the 2005–06 financial year) but the fortnightly figures do not. The Supplement can only be paid after the end of the financial year.

### Income test

- An income estimate does not need to be provided for those who are single and who receive certain income support payments from Centrelink or the Department of Veterans' Affairs.
- For Family Tax Benefit Part A your family income can be \$33 361 a year before your payment is reduced.
- If your income is more than \$33 361 a year, your payment will reduce by 20 cents for each dollar above \$33 361, until your payment reaches the base rate of Family Tax Benefit Part A.
- Your Family Tax Benefit Part A will stay at that rate until your income reaches \$86 213 a year (plus \$3431 for each Family Tax Benefit child after the first). Family Tax Benefit Part A will decrease by 30 cents for every dollar over that amount until your payment reaches nil.
- Income limit beyond which only base rate is paid (\$pa)

No. Children aged 0–12 yrs	No. Children 13–15 years			
	Nil	One	Two	Three
Nil		\$50 260	\$67 160	\$84 059
One	\$45 479	\$62 378	\$79 278	\$96 177
Two	\$57 597	\$74 496	\$91 396	\$108 295
Three	\$69 715	\$86 614	\$103 514	\$120 413

**Note:** Income limit is higher if you are eligible for Rent Assistance.

■ Income limit at which Family Tax Benefit stops (\$pa)

No. Children aged 0–17 yrs	No. Children 18–24 years			
	Nil	One	Two	Three
Nil		\$93 465	\$104 147	\$114 829
One	\$92 139	\$102 821	\$113 503	\$125 013
Two	\$101 495	\$112 177	\$123 687	\$135 196
Three	\$110 851	*\$122 361	*\$133 870	*\$145 380

**Note:** Income limits include the effect of the \$627.80 Family Tax Benefit Part A supplement which is available only after the end of the financial year when annual family income can be assessed. Families with income approaching these amounts may only be able to be paid the Family Tax Benefit at the end of the income year and not as fortnightly payments. Income limit is higher if families are eligible for Multiple Birth Allowance.

\*Income limit is higher than stated for three children aged 13–15.

**Maintenance income test for Family Tax Benefit Part A**

- Maintenance income-free areas
  - Single parent, or one of a couple receiving maintenance \$1182.60
  - Couple, each receiving maintenance \$2365.20
  - For each additional child \$394.20
- Maintenance over these amounts may reduce Family Tax Benefit Part A by 50 cents in the dollar, until the base rate of Family Tax Benefit Part A is reached.

**Assets test**

- Family Tax Benefit Part A is not subject to an assets test.

**Family Tax Benefit Part A may also include**

**LARGE FAMILY SUPPLEMENT**

**Basic conditions of eligibility**

- Paid for fourth and each subsequent child.

**Residential requirements**

- As for Family Tax Benefit Part A.

**Basic Rates**

- \$9.52 per fortnight, or \$248.20 pa.
- Paid with Family Tax Benefit Part A.

**Income test**

- As for Family Tax Benefit Part A.

**Assets test**

- Large Family Supplement is not subject to an assets test.

**MULTIPLE BIRTH ALLOWANCE**

**Basic conditions of eligibility**

- Paid to a parent or guardian who has three or more children born during the same birth who are aged under six.

**Residential requirements**

- As for Family Tax Benefit Part A.

**Basic Rates**

- Triplets \$114.80 per fortnight, or \$2993.00 pa.
- Quadruplets or more \$153.02 per fortnight, or \$3989.45 pa.
- Paid with Family Tax Benefit Part A.
- Ceases when children turn six.

**Income test**

- As for Family Tax Benefit Part A.

**Assets test**

- Multiple Birth Allowance is not subject to an assets test.

**RENT ASSISTANCE**

**Basic conditions of eligibility**

- Family Tax Benefit Part A customers who are receiving more than the base rate and paying private rent.
- Not paid to people paying rent to a government housing authority.

**Residential requirements**

- As for Family Tax Benefit Part A.

**Basic Rates**

- Normally paid with Family Tax Benefit Part A.
- Number of children, relationship status and amount of rent paid determine rate.

Family situation	Maximum payment per fortnight	No payment if your fortnightly rent is less than	Maximum payment if your fortnightly rent is more than
Single, one or two children	\$116.62	\$116.20	\$271.69
Single, three or more children	\$131.74	\$116.20	\$291.85
Couple, one or two children	\$116.62	\$171.92	\$327.41
Couple, three or more children	\$131.74	\$171.92	\$347.57

**Income test**

- As for Family Tax Benefit Part A.

**Assets test**

- Rent Assistance is not subject to an assets test.

**OTHER PAYMENTS**

- Recipients of Family Tax Benefit Part A may be eligible for other payments delivered by Centrelink. These include:
  - Parenting Payment (see page 6)
  - Double Orphan Pension (see page 6)
  - Carer Allowance (see page 7)

## Family Tax Benefit Part B

### Basic conditions of eligibility

- Gives extra assistance to sole parent families and to two parent families with one main income where one parent chooses to stay at home or to balance some paid work with caring for their children.
- Family must have a dependent child aged under 16; or
- A qualifying dependent full-time student up to the age of 18 (who doesn't get Youth Allowance or a similar payment).

### Residential requirements

- As for Family Tax Benefit Part A with the exception that Family Tax Benefit Part B can only be paid for up to 13 weeks of a temporary absence from Australia.

**Note:** *Family Tax Benefit may be stopped if you leave Australia without notifying the Family Assistance Office.*

### Basic Rates

- Payments are made either fortnightly to a bank or credit union account or through the tax system as a lump sum payment at the end of the financial year, with the added option to reduce the amounts withheld from wages paid to you or your partner.
- Family Tax Benefit Part B includes a supplement which is available only after the end of the financial year following the lodgement of tax returns and may be used to offset overpayments.
- Maximum rate of Family Tax Benefit Part B

Age of youngest child	Per fortnight	Per year
Under 5 years	\$117.60	\$3372.60
5–15 years (or 16–18 years if a full-time student)	\$82.04	\$2445.50

**Note:** *Payment per year figures include the Family Tax Benefit Part B supplement (\$306.60 per family for the 2005–06 financial year) but the fortnightly figures do not. The supplement can only be paid after the end of the financial year.*

### Income test

- Sole parents automatically receive the maximum amount of Family Tax Benefit Part B.
- For two parent families, the income of the main earner is not taken into account. It is the income of the lower earner that affects how much Family Tax Benefit Part B the family will receive. The lower earner can earn up to \$4088 each income year before it affects their Family Tax Benefit Part B. Payments are reduced by 20 cents for each dollar of income earned over \$4088.
- Two parent families can still receive some Family Tax Benefit Part B if:
  - their youngest child is aged under 5 years and the lower earner has income less than \$20 951 per annum; or
  - their youngest child is aged between 5 and 18 years and the lower earner has income less than \$16 316 per annum.

### Assets test

- Family Tax Benefit Part B is not subject to an assets test.

## Maternity Payment

### Basic conditions of eligibility

- Paid to families following the birth (including stillbirths) or adoption of a baby.
- The dependent child requirements for Family Tax Benefit are met within 13 weeks of the child's birth, or within 13 weeks of the child being entrusted into the claimants care.
- Payable to:
  - a parent of the baby; OR
  - families who have care of a newborn child within 13 weeks of the child's birth, and are likely to continue to have care of the child for no less than 13 weeks; OR
  - families who have a child entrusted to their care for adoption before the child is two years of age and in the case of an overseas adoption the child must enter Australia before the child's second birthday.
- The claim must be made within 26 weeks of the child's birth, or, in the case of a local adoption, within 26 weeks of the child coming into the care of the adoptive family. For an overseas adoption the claim must be made within 26 weeks of the child entering Australia.

### Residential requirements

- As for Family Tax Benefit Part A.

### Basic Rates

- Usually the payment is a one-off lump sum payment of \$3119.
- The payment is made into a bank or credit union account. Maternity Payment cannot be paid through the tax system.
- For a multiple birth, Maternity Payment is paid for each child: for example, \$6238 is paid for twins.

### Income test

- No income test.

### Assets test

- No assets test.

## Maternity Immunisation Allowance

### Basic conditions of eligibility

- Paid for children aged 18–24 months who are fully immunised.
- May be paid for stillborn babies and children who die before 24 months.
- Must be claimed on or before the child turns two years of age.
- Maternity Immunisation Allowance may be paid if an approved immunisation exemption has been obtained for the child.

### Residential requirements

- As for Family Tax Benefit Part A.

### Basic Rates

- One-off lump sum payment of \$219.00.
- Payment is made into a bank or credit union account. Maternity Immunisation Allowance cannot be paid through the tax system.

### Income test

- No income test.

### Assets test

- No assets test.

## Health Care Cards

### Basic conditions of eligibility

- Receiving the maximum rate of Family Tax Benefit Part A by instalment.

### Residential requirements

- As for Family Tax Benefit Part A, or in Australia and receiving a pension under the NZ agreement.

### Basic Rates

- Card issued every six months.

### Income test

- As for Family Tax Benefit Part A.

### Assets test

- No assets test.

## Child Care Benefit (CCB)

### Basic conditions of eligibility

- The child must attend approved or registered child care.
- The claimant or partner must be liable for the payment of the child care fees.

### Residential requirements

- Claimant or partner must be an Australian resident; OR
- A New Zealand citizen holding a Special Category Visa residing in Australia; OR
- An Australian Government sponsored student; OR
- Holders of certain temporary visas (subclass 070, 309, 310, 447, 451, 695, 785, 786, 787, 820 or 826); OR a holder of a Criminal Justice Stay Visa
- A non-resident experiencing hardship or special circumstances.

### Other factors affecting eligibility

- Children aged under seven must have age appropriate immunisation, be on a catch-up schedule, or have an exemption.

- Both parents, or the sole parent, must meet the work/study/training test to receive CCB for registered care or CCB for more than 20 hours per child per week of approved care.
- Grandparents who are the primary carers for their grandchildren may be exempted from the work/study/training test to receive CCB up to 50 hours per child per week of approved care.
- Grandparents who are the primary carers for their grandchildren and who are receiving an income support payment from Centrelink or from the Department of Veterans' Affairs are eligible for a special rate of CCB, Grandparent CCB (GCCB), to cover the full cost of approved care for up to 50 hours per child per week.

### Basic Rates—approved care

- Up to \$2.88 per hour for a non-school child (\$144.00 for a 50 hour week).
- Minimum rate of \$0.483 per hour (up to \$24.15 per week) for incomes over an upper threshold.
- Rates for school children are 85 per cent of the non-school child rates.
- Can be paid directly to child care services to reduce the fees charged. Fee reductions are based on an estimate of adjusted taxable income, with reconciliation after the end of the income (financial) year.
- Alternatively, payment can be made as a lump sum to parents after the end of the income (financial) year.

### Basic Rates—registered care

- \$0.483 per hour (up to \$24.15 per week) for a non-school child.
- Rates for school children are 85 per cent of the non-school child rates.
- Paid by direct credit on presentation of receipts.

### Income test—approved care

- Maximum rate payable for family incomes under \$33 361 or families on income support.
- Minimum rate payable over the following thresholds:

Number of children in care	Upper income threshold
One	\$ 95 683
Two	\$103 739
Three+	\$117 848 + \$19 677 for each child after the third

### Income test—registered care

- No income test.

### Assets test

- No assets test.





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## Additional payments delivered by Centrelink:

### Parenting Payment

#### Basic conditions of eligibility

- Must have qualifying child aged under 16 (sole and partnered parents).
- Can be paid to only one member of a couple.
- When youngest qualifying child is aged 13 or over, must enter into a participation agreement allowing participation in a broad range of activities.

#### Residential requirements

- Australian resident for 104 weeks (not including absences), or a refugee, or became a sole parent while an Australian resident, or has a qualifying residence exemption.
- Can be paid for up to 13 weeks for a temporary absence from Australia. The length of your last return to Australia may affect your entitlement during the absence from Australia.
- Different rules apply if person is covered by an International Social Security Agreement.

#### Basic Rates

- Sole Parents: up to \$488.90\* per fortnight.  
\* Since July 2000, has included a supplement. It is currently \$17.50.
- Partnered Parents: up to \$365.00 per fortnight (up to \$437.60 per fortnight if separated by illness or respite care couple, or partner in gaol).
- Pharmaceutical Allowance is paid to Parenting Payment (Single) recipients; it may be paid to Parenting Payment (Partnered) recipients—see Chart H (page 24).
- Education Entry Payment of \$208 may be payable.
- Employment Entry Payment of \$104 may be payable (sole parents only).

#### Rent Assistance

- Normally paid with Family Tax Benefit Part A.

#### Income Test

Sole Parents

- See Chart C (page 20).

Partnered Parents

*Partner is not a pensioner*

- For maximum payment, the customer's income must be no more than \$62 per fortnight AND the partner's income must be no more than \$607 per fortnight.

- Customer's income reduces rate by 50 cents for each dollar between \$62 and \$245, and by 70 cents for each dollar above \$245 per fortnight.
- Partner's income up to \$607 per fortnight has no effect. Income over this amount reduces the rate by 70 cents for each extra dollar.
- A part payment may be available provided all of the following conditions are met:
  - customer's income must be less than \$635.71 per fortnight; AND
  - partner's income must be less than \$1128.43 per fortnight; AND
  - the combined income of the couple must be less than \$1242.71.
- These conditions are a guide only. Some customers who meet these conditions will not be eligible for a payment. Eligibility can only be confirmed following a full assessment of a couple's income under the relevant income test.
- Different limits apply if the partner receives Youth Allowance or Austudy Payment.

*Partner is a pensioner*

- For maximum payment, the couple's combined income must be no more than \$124 per fortnight.
- Couple's combined income reduces payment by 25 cents for each dollar between \$124 and \$490, and by 35 cents for each dollar above \$490 per fortnight.
- For part payment, the couple's combined income must be less than \$1271.42 per fortnight.

#### Assets Test

- Homeowners see Chart A (page 19).
- Non-homeowners see Chart B (page 19).
- Hardship provisions may apply.

### Double Orphan Pension (DOP)

#### Basic conditions of eligibility

- Child(ren) aged under 16 in care and control of customer.
- Full-time dependent students aged 16–21 who do not receive Youth Allowance.
- Both the child's parents are dead; OR
- One parent is dead and the whereabouts of the other is unknown to the claimant; OR
- One parent is dead and the other parent is in prison for not less than 10 years or held on remand and charged with an offence that may be punishable by imprisonment for a term of at least 10 years; OR
- One parent is dead and the other parent is a patient of a psychiatric hospital or nursing home indefinitely.
- Refugee children under certain circumstances.
- Payable to a guardian or approved care organisation.

#### Residential requirements

- Must be an Australian resident; OR a Special Category Visa (SCV) holder residing in Australia; OR

- Holder of a certain temporary visa, subclass 309, 310, 447, 451, 695, 785, 786, 820 or 826, or the holder of a Criminal Justice Stay Visa.
- May be paid for up to three years of a temporary absence from Australia, subject to continuing qualification.
- Different rules apply if person is covered by an International Social Security Agreement.

#### Basic Rates

- The base rate of DOP is \$47.50 per fortnight.
- An additional component of DOP may be payable. The additional component will be equal to the difference between the carer's entitlement to Family Tax Benefit for the young person and the Family Allowance/Family Tax Benefit received for the young person immediately before they became a double orphan. The additional component will not be payable to approved care organisations.

#### Income test

- No income test.

#### Assets test

- No assets test.

### Carer Allowance (CA)

#### Basic conditions of eligibility

An income supplement paid to someone who provides daily care and attention at home to a person with a disability or medical condition who is:

- Aged 16 years or over where the disability causes a substantial functional impairment; OR
- A dependent child aged under 16 years:
  - for a Health Care Card only, the child must require 'substantially more care and attention' compared to a child of the same age without a disability;
  - for Carer Allowance and a Health Care Card, the child's disability must appear on a list of disabilities/conditions which result in automatic qualification or must cause the child to function below the standard for his or her age level.
- The child and the carer must live together in the same private residence or, if the child is hospitalised at the time of the claim, there must be an intention for the child to return home to live with the carer.

#### Residential requirements

- Claimant and Care receiver must be Australian resident.
- May be paid for up to 13 weeks of a temporary absence from Australia.

#### Basic Rates

- \$94.70 per fortnight
- May be paid in addition to an income support payment.

#### Rent Assistance

- Not payable.

#### Income test

- No income test.

#### Assets test

- No assets test.

### Age Pension (AP)

#### Basic conditions of eligibility

- Men aged 65 or over OR women see table below.

Women born between	Eligible for Age Pension at age
1 July 1935 and 31 Dec. 1936	60 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>
1 Jan. 1937 and 30 June 1938	61
1 July 1938 and 31 Dec. 1939	61 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>
1 Jan. 1940 and 30 June 1941	62
1 July 1941 and 31 Dec. 1942	62 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>
1 Jan. 1943 and 30 June 1944	63
1 July 1944 and 31 Dec. 1945	63 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>
1 Jan. 1946 and 30 June 1947	64
1 July 1947 and 31 Dec. 1948	64 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>
1 Jan. 1949 and later	65

#### Residential requirements

- Must be an Australian resident and in Australia on the day the claim is lodged, unless claiming under an International Social Security Agreement.
- Must have been an Australian resident for a total of at least 10 years, at least five of these years in one period; OR
- Residence in certain countries with which Australia has an International Social Security Agreement may count towards Australian residence; OR
- Have a qualifying residence exemption (arrived as refugee or under special humanitarian program); OR
- A woman who is widowed in Australia, when both she and her late partner were Australian residents and who has 104 weeks residence immediately prior to claim; OR
- Person was in receipt of Widow B Pension, Widow Allowance, Mature Age Allowance or Partner Allowance immediately before turning Age Pension age.
- Can generally be paid for the total period of absence from Australia (some exemptions may apply), however, after 26 weeks the rate may change.

**Note:** *Special rules in the case of travel to New Zealand, or if covered by an International Social Security Agreement.*

#### Basic Rates

Status	Pension rate per fortnight
Single	\$488.90*
Couple	\$408.20* each

\* Since July 2000, has included a pension supplement. It is currently: single \$17.50, couple \$14.60 each.

- Paid fortnightly to bank or other account.
- If a couple is separated because of illness, they may each be able to be paid at the single pension rate. The combined income and assets of the couple are used to work out their rates.
- The single rate may be payable to one member of a couple if partner not receiving payment is imprisoned or in a psychiatric hospital.
- Partnered rate payable to one member of a couple if partner is not receiving a pension, benefit or allowance.
- Pharmaceutical Allowance is paid. See Chart H (page 24).
- Not eligible for Employment Entry Payment or Education Entry Payment.

### Rent Assistance

- See Chart G (page 23).

### Income test

- See Chart C (page 20).
- No income test for age pensioners who are permanently blind.

### Assets test

- Homeowners see Chart A (page 19).
- Non-homeowners see Chart B (page 19).
- Hardship provisions may apply.
- No assets test for age pensioners who are permanently blind.

## Pension Bonus Scheme

### Basic conditions of eligibility

- Allows people who work and defer claiming Age Pension to earn a tax-free lump sum bonus.
- Must register before a bonus can be accrued. Earliest registration is the date age and residency requirements for Age Pension are met.
- Must defer pension for a minimum of 12 months from date of registration. Maximum bonus accrual period is five years.
- Cannot accrue bonus after age 75.
- Must complete at least 960 hours of paid work each year.
- Not paid if received income support (except Carer Payment) since meeting age and residency requirements for Age Pension.
- Can be affected by 'gifting rules' if more than \$10 000 is given away in a single year or more than \$30 000 over a five year period.

### Basic Rates

- Members claim both the bonus and Age Pension when they finally retire.
- Amount of bonus is based on how long a person defers pension from the date of registration, and rate of pension payable at time of claim.
- This is a one-off payment.

Rate if maximum pension payable

Years (bonus periods)	Single	Partnered (each)
1	\$1 194.90	\$997.60
2	\$4 779.50	\$3 990.60
3	\$10 753.80	\$8 978.80
4	\$19 117.90	\$15 962.30
5	\$29 871.80	\$24 941.00

## Disability Support Pension (DSP)

### Basic conditions of eligibility

- Aged 16 or over but under Age Pension age at date of claim lodgement; AND
- Must have a physical, intellectual, or psychiatric impairment assessed at 20 points or more; AND
- Inability to work for at least the next two years as a result of impairment; AND
- Inability, as a result of impairment, to undertake educational or vocational training which would equip the person for work within the next two years; OR
- Aged 16 or over but under Age Pension age at date of claim lodgement; AND
- Be permanently blind.

### Residential requirements

- Must be an Australian resident and in Australia on the day the claim is lodged, unless claiming under an International Social Security Agreement.
- Must have been an Australian resident for a total of at least 10 years, at least five of these years in one period; OR
- Residence in certain countries with which Australia has an International Social Security Agreement may count towards Australian residence; OR
- Have a qualifying residence exemption (arrived as refugee or under special humanitarian program); OR
- Immediately eligible if inability to work occurred while an Australian resident or during temporary absence from Australia.
- May be paid for up to 13 weeks of an absence from Australia or indefinitely in some cases if terminally ill and leaving Australia indefinitely. Different rules apply if person is covered by our International Social Security Agreement.

### Basic Rates

- See Age Pension rates, except if aged under 21 without children, see below.
- Disability Support Pension under 21, no children (includes Youth Disability Supplement).

Single, aged under 18	Rate per fortnight
at home	\$277.90
independent	\$429.40
Single, aged 18–20 years	
at home	\$315.00
independent	\$429.40



<b>Member of a couple</b>	
aged under 18	\$408.20
aged 18–20	\$408.20

- DSP not subject to parents' income and assets.
- Youth Disability Supplement of \$94.70 per fortnight is payable to DSP customers aged under 21 and is included in the above rates.
- Rate payable to those aged under 21 cannot exceed rate payable to those aged over 21.
- Pharmaceutical Allowance is paid. See Chart H (page 24).
- Employment Entry Payment of \$312 may be payable.
- Education Entry Payment of \$208 may be payable.

#### Rent Assistance

- See Chart G (page 23).
- Rent Assistance not payable to single persons aged under 21, without dependants, who live with their parents or guardian.

#### Income test

- See Chart C (page 20).
- For those aged under 21, also see Chart C (page 20).
- No income test on basic rate for Disability Support Pensioners who are permanently blind.

#### Assets test

- Homeowners see Chart A (page 19).
- Non-homeowners see Chart B (page 19).
- No assets test on basic rate for Disability Support Pensioners who are permanently blind.
- Hardship provisions may apply.

## Wife Pension

#### Basic conditions of eligibility

- From 1 July 1995, no new grants of Wife Pension. Current recipients (wife of an Age or Disability Support Pensioner) may continue to receive this Pension.

#### Residential requirements

- May be paid for up to 13 weeks while overseas. May be paid for longer in certain circumstances or if International Social Security Agreement Provisions apply.

#### Basic Rates

- See Age Pension.
- Pharmaceutical Allowance is paid. See Chart H (page 24).
- Education Entry Payment of \$208 may be payable.

#### Rent Assistance

- See Chart G (page 23).

#### Income test

- See Chart C (page 20).

#### Assets test

- Homeowners see Chart A (page 19).

- Non-homeowners see Chart B (page 19).
- Hardship provisions may apply.

## Bereavement Allowance

#### Basic conditions of eligibility

- Person whose partner has died.
- Has no qualifying child for Parenting Payment (Single).
- Living with partner immediately before death.
- Paid for a maximum of 14 weeks from date of death of partner (can be extended if a widow is pregnant).

#### Residential requirements

- Has been an Australian resident and in Australia for a total of 104 weeks; OR has a qualifying residence exemption.
- Immediately eligible if both the person and the partner were Australian residents when the partner died.
- May be paid outside Australia for the period of the payment.

#### Basic Rates

- Single pension rate (see Age Pension).
- Pharmaceutical Allowance is paid. See Chart H (page 24).
- Not eligible for Employment Entry payment or Education Entry Payment.

#### Rent Assistance

- See Chart G (page 23).

#### Income test

- See Chart C (page 20).

#### Assets test

- Homeowners see Chart A (page 19).
- Non-homeowners see Chart B (page 19).

## Widow B Pension

#### Basic conditions of eligibility

- From 20 March 1997, no new grants of Widow B Pension. Current recipients continue to receive this pension until eligible for Age Pension.

#### Residential requirements

- May be paid for up to 13 weeks while overseas. May be paid indefinitely in certain circumstances or if International Social Security Agreement Provisions apply.

#### Basic Rates

- See Age Pension.
- Pharmaceutical Allowance is paid. See Chart H (page 24).

#### Rent Assistance

- See Chart G (page 23).

#### Income test

- See Chart C (page 20).

### Assets test

- Homeowners see Chart A (page 19).
- Non-homeowners see Chart B (page 19).
- Hardship provisions may apply.

## Carer Payment

### Basic conditions of eligibility

- Person providing constant care for
  - a person who has a physical, intellectual or psychiatric disability; OR
  - a child with a profound disability; OR
  - two or more children with disabilities; OR
  - an adult and that adult's dependent child;who needs care permanently or for an extended period.
- Cannot receive Carer Payment as well as other income support payment, such as Age Pension, Newstart Allowance or Parenting Payment. However, person may be entitled to other payments such as Carer Allowance or Family Tax Benefit.
- The person being cared for must receive social security income support or a service pension; OR
  - not have qualifying residence for a pension; OR
  - meet the Special Care receiver income and assets limits.
- The carer is not required to live with or adjacent to the person being cared for, but must be providing constant care.

### Residential requirements

- Claimant and Care receiver must be living in Australia and be Australian residents, unless covered by an International Social Security Agreement.
- Available to newly arrived migrants after 104 weeks as an Australian resident in Australia (some exemptions may apply).
- May be paid for up to 13 weeks of a temporary absence from Australia.
- May be paid for up to 63 days in a calendar year during a period of respite, either in Australia or outside Australia.

### Basic Rates

- See Age Pension.
- Pharmaceutical Allowance is paid. See Chart H (page 24).

### Rent Assistance

- See Chart G (page 23).

### Income test

- Carer: see Chart C (page 20).
- Person being cared for: see Chart C (page 20), unless person is not receiving a social security or Veterans' Affairs income support payment in which case a Special Care Receiver income test applies (see below).

### Assets test

- Carer: homeowners see Chart A (page 19).
- Non-homeowners see Chart B (page 19).

- Hardship provisions may apply.
- Person being cared for: see Chart A or B (page 19), unless person is not receiving a social security or Veterans' Affairs income support payment in which case a Special Care Receiver assets test applies (see below).

### Carer Payment Special Care Receivers Income and Assets Limits

- Non-customer care receiver income test for Carer Payment
  - The income limit for a non-customer care receiver to qualify their carer for Carer Payment is \$83 499.
- Non-customer care receiver assets test for Carer Payment
  - The assets limit for a non-customer care receiver to qualify their carer for Carer Payment is \$515 250.
  - If non-customer care receiver assets are over \$515 250 under certain circumstances the non-customer care receiver's assets test may not disqualify the carer from Carer Payment.
  - Current liquid assets limits for non-customer care receivers are \$6 000 (single) and \$10 000 (partnered).

## Newstart Allowance (NSA)

### Basic conditions of eligibility

- Must be unemployed, capable of undertaking, available for and actively seeking work, undertaking an activity to improve employment prospects or temporarily incapacitated for work.
- Aged 21 or over but under Age Pension age and registered as unemployed.
- May do training and voluntary work with approval.
- Willing to enter into an activity agreement if required, allowing participation in a broad range of activities.
- NSA recipients incapacitated for work remain on NSA, subject to medical certificates.

### Residential requirements

- Must be an Australian resident.
- Available to newly arrived migrants after 104 weeks as an Australian resident in Australia (some exemptions may apply).
- If not required to look for work you may be paid for up to 13 weeks of a temporary absence from Australia in certain circumstances.

### Basic Rates

- Single, no children \$404.50 pf
- Single, with dependent child(ren) \$437.60 pf
- Single, aged 60 or over, after nine months or on MAA (includes Pharmaceutical Allowance) \$443.40 pf
- Partnered (each) \$365.00 pf
- Advances of allowance of up to \$500 may be available.
- Pharmaceutical Allowance may be paid. See Chart H (page 24).

- Employment Entry Payment of \$104 may be payable.
- Education Entry Payment of \$208 may be payable.
- Participants in Work for the Dole or the Language, Literacy & Numeracy Program may be eligible for an additional payment of \$20.80 a fortnight.
- If a couple is separated because of illness, they may each be paid at the single rate.
- The single rate may be payable to one member of a couple if the partner not receiving payment is imprisoned.

### Rent Assistance

- See Chart G (page 23).
- Rent Assistance not available to single people aged under 25, without dependants, who live with their parent or guardian.
- Where both members of a couple without children are receiving an allowance or benefit, Rent Assistance is shared.

### Income test

- See Chart D (page 21).
- A personal income test is applied.

### Assets test

- Homeowners see Chart A (page 19).
- Non-homeowners see Chart B (page 19).
- Payment may be deferred when liquid assets exceed \$2500 (single) or \$5000 (couple or single with dependants).
- Hardship provisions may apply.

## Youth Allowance (YA)

### Basic conditions of eligibility

- Full-time students and New Apprentices aged 16 to 24 years, or temporarily incapacitated for study or undertaking New Apprenticeship:
  - students aged 16 and 17 must generally be in full-time study;
  - students and New Apprentices aged 25 or over, getting Youth Allowance immediately before turning 25 AND remaining in the same course of study or New Apprenticeship.
- Unemployed, aged under 21, looking for work or combining part-time study with job search, or undertaking any other approved activity, or temporarily incapacitated for work.
- Independent, aged 15 and above the school leaving age (e.g. homeless) who are in full-time study or undertaking a full-time New Apprenticeship or combination of approved activities.

### Residential requirements

- Must be an Australian resident.
- Available to newly arrived migrants after 104 weeks as an Australian resident in Australia (some exemptions may apply).

- If exempt from activity test may be paid for up to 13 weeks for temporary absence from Australia in certain circumstances. The length of your last return to Australia may affect your entitlement during the absence from Australia.

### Basic Rates

- Single, no children:
  - Aged under 18, at home \$183.20
  - Aged under 18, away from home \$334.70\*
  - Aged 18 and over, away from home \$334.70\*
  - Aged 18 and over, at home \$220.30
- Single, with children \$438.50\*
- Partnered, no children \$334.70\*
- Partnered, with children \$367.50\*

\* Rent Assistance may be payable.

- Special rate for long-term income support recipients or migrants studying English aged 21 or over commencing full-time study or New Apprenticeship.
  - Single, living at home \$270.50 pf
  - Single, living away from home \$406.50 pf
  - Partnered, no children \$367.50 pf

- Young people not considered independent must be assessed to get the away from home rate.

- Pharmaceutical Allowance may be paid. See Chart H (page 24).

- Payment is generally made to a parent for those aged under 18 who are not independent.

- Advance of Youth Allowance of up to \$500 may be payable.

- Work for the Dole participants may be eligible for an additional payment of \$20.80 per fortnight.

### Fares Allowance

- Only paid to tertiary students who have to live away from their permanent home for study.
- Reimbursement of the cost of cheapest practicable form of public transport, regardless of transport actually used.
- Not payable for daily travel.

### Rent Assistance

- See Chart G (page 23).
- Rent Assistance for single people without children may only be paid to those who receive the away from home rate of Youth Allowance.
- Where both members of a couple without children are getting an allowance or benefit, Rent Assistance is shared.

### Parental Income test

- If not independent, a parental income test applies.
- Rate reduces if parent's income exceeds threshold of \$29 550 PLUS for additional dependent children:
  - \$1230 for first dependent child aged under 16;
  - \$2562 for each additional dependent child aged under 16;

- \$3792 for each dependent child:
  - aged between 16–24 in full time study OR
  - aged between 16–24 undertaking a full-time New Apprenticeship OR
  - aged between 16–20 and seeking employment OR who receives a boarding allowance or second home allowance under the Assistance for Isolated Children scheme.
- \$7585 for a tertiary student living away from home, where there are two such children in the family.
- Rate reduces by \$1 for every \$4 over the threshold.
- After applying parental income test, a personal income test is applied.
- The parental income and assets tests does not apply if the parent(s) hold a current low-income Health Care Card or they receive a designated income support payment through either Centrelink or the Department of Veterans' Affairs. The Family Actual Means Test may still apply.
- In some circumstances (where parental income decreases/increases substantially) parent/s' income in the current tax year is used.

### Personal Income test

- Gross income is assessed.
- There is an income-free area of \$62 per fortnight for job seekers and \$236 per fortnight for students and New Apprentices.
- Income above the income-free area reduces payment unless credit in Income Bank (for students and New Apprentices—see below) or working credit (see page 21).
- See Chart D(a) (page 20).

### Income Bank

- Allows Youth Allowance students to accumulate up to \$6000 of any unused portion of their fortnightly income-free area.
- Allows Youth Allowance New Apprentices to accumulate up to \$1000 of any unused portion of their fortnightly income-free area.
- Income Bank credits can be used to offset any income earned that exceeds the fortnightly income-free area.

### Assets test

- If not independent, family assets test applies (no personal assets test):
  - No payment can be made if family's assets exceed \$515 250.
  - A 75 per cent discount for farm/business assets applies to the family assets test.
- If independent:
  - Homeowners see Chart A (page 19);
  - Non-homeowners see Chart B (page 19).
- Payment may be deferred when liquid assets exceed \$2500 (single) or \$5000 (couple or single with dependants).
- Hardship provisions may apply to the personal assets test.

### Family Actual Means Test

- Family actual means (i.e. family spending and savings) in the 2004–2005 tax year is used where you are not independent and where one or both of your parents:
  - had an interest in a trust, private company or unlisted public company;
  - was self-employed (except as a sole trader engaged wholly or mainly in primary production) or a partner in a partnership;
  - earned in excess of A\$2500 (including tax exempt income) from a source in Norfolk Island or overseas;
  - was a wage or salary earner who claimed or will claim a tax deduction for a business loss (whether current or carried forward) that does not consist only of a passive investment loss in your partnership income tax returns;
  - had an interest in assets held overseas in excess of A\$2500 or is a migrant who first entered Australia under a business skills category (business migrant) after 31 December 1987.
- In certain circumstances family actual means in the current tax year may be used.
- Where a family member receives Exceptional Circumstances Relief Payment the Family Actual Means Test does not apply.

### Austudy Payment

#### Basic conditions of eligibility

- To qualify for Austudy Payment, a person must be undertaking qualifying study or a full-time New Apprenticeship and be aged 25 or over.

#### Residential requirements

- Must be an Australian resident.
- Available to newly arrived migrants after 104 weeks as an Australian resident in Australia (some exemptions may apply).
- May be paid for up to 13 weeks of a temporary absence from Australia, or longer in certain circumstances. The length of your last return to Australia may affect your entitlement during the absence from Australia.

#### Basic Rates

- |  |             |
|--|-------------|
| ■ Single   | \$334.70 pf |
| ■ Single, with children  | \$438.50 pf |
| ■ Partnered, with children   | \$367.50 pf |
| ■ Partnered, no children   | \$334.70 pf |
| ■ Special rate for long-term income support recipients commencing full-time study or New Apprenticeship: |             |
| - Single   | \$406.50 pf |
| - Partnered, no children   | \$367.50 pf |
| ■ Advance of Austudy Payment of up to \$500 may be available.  |             |

- Pharmaceutical Allowance may be paid. See Chart H (page 24).

### Fares Allowance

- Only paid to tertiary students who have to live away from their permanent home to study.
- Reimbursement of the cost of cheapest practicable form of public transport, regardless of transport actually used.
- Not payable for daily travel.

### Rent Assistance

- Not payable.

### Personal Income test

- Gross income is assessed.
- The income-free area is \$236 per fortnight.
- Income above the income-free area reduces payment (unless credit in Income Bank).
- See Chart D(a) (page 20).

### Income Bank

- Allows Austudy Payment students to accumulate up to \$6000 of any unused portion of their fortnightly income-free area.
- Allows Austudy Payment New Apprentices to accumulate up to \$1000 of any unused portion of their fortnightly income-free area.
- Income Bank credits can be used to offset any income earned that exceeds the fortnightly income-free area.

### Assets test

- Homeowners see Chart A (page 19).
- Non-homeowners see Chart B (page 19).
- Payment may be deferred when liquid assets exceed \$2500 (single) or \$5000 (couple or single with dependants).
- Hardship provisions may apply to the assets test.

## Pensioner Education Supplement (PES)

### Basic conditions of eligibility

- Receipt of a FaCS or Department of Veterans' Affairs income support payment because a person has a disability, is a sole parent, carer, widow allowee or Widow B pensioner, or wife pensioner partnered to a disability support pensioner.
- Studying an approved course at an approved educational institution.

### Residential requirements

- Must be an Australian resident.
- Available to newly arrived migrants after 104 weeks as an Australian resident in Australia (some exemptions may apply).
- May be paid for up to 13 weeks of a temporary absence from Australia or longer if it is part of the course.

### Basic Rates

- \$62.40 per fortnight for:
  - approved students with at least a 50 per cent study load; OR
  - approved students who are either disability support pensioners or invalidity service pensioners; OR
  - approved students with War Widow(er) Pension receiving an invalidity income support supplement who have a dependent child.
- \$31.20 per fortnight for:
  - approved students, other than those above, with at least a 25 per cent study load.

### Fares Allowance

- Fares allowance is payable to tertiary PES students who live away from partner/child to study.
- Reimbursement of cheapest practicable form of public transport.

### Income and Assets test

- No income or assets tests apply.

## ABSTUDY Scheme

### Basic conditions of eligibility

- Person is:
  - of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent according to the ABSTUDY definition of Aboriginality;
  - studying an approved course at an approved education institution; OR
  - undertaking a full-time New Apprenticeship AND
  - not receiving other government assistance for study.

### Residential requirements

- Must be an Australian citizen and normally live in Australia.

### Basic Rates

- Living Allowance:

Standard	Per fortnight
Aged under 16 years tertiary	\$25.20
Aged under 16 years in State Care and Foster Care Allowance paid	\$183.20
Aged 16–17 years in State Care and Foster Care Allowance paid	\$183.20
Aged 18–20 years in State Care and Foster Care Allowance paid	\$220.30
Aged under 16 years in State Care and no Foster Care Allowance paid	\$334.70
Aged 16–20 years in State Care and no Foster Care Allowance paid	\$334.70
Aged 16–17 years	\$183.20
Aged 18–20 years	\$220.30
Aged 21 years or over*	\$404.50
<b>Away from home</b>	
Aged under 16 years	\$183.20



Aged 16–20 years	\$334.70	– Masters	\$420.00
Aged 21 years or over*	\$404.50	– PhD	\$840.00
<b>Independent–single, no children</b>		Compulsory course fees or Student Contribution Amounts (previously known as HECS)	actual costs
Aged under 16 years	\$334.70	■ Fares Allowance (students only)	actual costs
Aged 16–20 years	\$334.70	■ Away From Base Assistance	actual costs
Aged under 16 years at home	\$183.20	Maximum payment for Masters/PhD is \$2080.00 per year.	
Aged 16–17 years at home	\$183.20	■ Remote Area Allowance. (See page 18.)	
Aged 18–20 years at home	\$220.30	■ Pharmaceutical Allowance may be paid. See Chart H (page 24).	
Aged 21 years or over*	\$404.50	■ The Pensioner Education Scheme (PES) is also payable under ABSTUDY (see PES page 13).	
Single, aged 60 years or over* (includes Pharmaceutical Allowance)	\$443.40	■ Advance of ABSTUDY of up to \$500 may be payable.	
<b>Independent–partnered, no children</b>			
Aged under 16 years	\$334.70		
Aged 16–20 years	\$334.70		
Aged 21 years or over*	\$365.00		
<b>Independent–single with dependent child</b>			
Aged under 16 years	\$438.50		
Aged 16–20 years	\$438.50		
Aged 21 years or over*	\$437.60		
<b>Independent–partnered with dependent child</b>			
Aged under 16 years	\$367.50		
Aged 16–20 years	\$367.50		
Aged 21 years or over*	\$365.00		
* These amounts are indexed every March & September.			
■ School Term Allowance	\$540.80 pa		
■ School Fees Allowance (at home):			
Turning 16 before 1 July in school year	\$78.00 pa		
Aged under 16 years at 30 June in school year	\$156.00 pa		
■ School Fees Allowance (boarding):			
Maximum rate (subject to income test)	\$7246.00 pa		
Income test-free	\$6150.00 pa		
■ Incidentals Allowance:			
Less than 12 week course	\$64.30 pa		
12 to 16 week course	\$112.60 pa		
17 to 23 week (one semester) course	\$224.10 pa		
24 week to one year course	\$455.60 pa		
■ Additional Incidentals Allowance			
Essential course costs in excess of			
less than 12 week course	\$110.60 pa		
12 to 16 week course	\$219.00 pa		
17 to 23 week (one semester) course	\$438.00 pa		
24 week to one year course	\$877.30 pa		
Maximum in a year	\$2080.00 pa		
■ Lawful Custody Allowance	essential course costs		
■ Aged under 16 years Boarding Supplement	\$1974.90 per semester		
■ Residential Costs Option	\$41.60 pf plus actual costs		
■ Masters and Doctorate allowances:			
Masters and Doctorate student living allowance	\$19231.00 pa \$737.70 pf		
Relocation Allowance (\$530.00 adult; \$260.00 child)	\$1520.00 maximum		
Thesis Allowance			

### Rent Assistance

- See Chart G (page 23).

### Means tests

- Income test on Living Allowance and Rent Assistance.
- The 'at home' rate of Schools Fees Allowance and the School Term Allowance are payable to applicants eligible for an income support payment, ABSTUDY Living Allowance, CDEP wages or a Health Care Card.
- Parental means tests do not apply to students in State care.

### Personal Income Test–Income Bank

- Same as for Austudy Payment and the Youth Allowance personal income test and Income Bank for full-time students and New Apprentices. Applies to students and New Apprentices aged 16 or over and independent New Apprentices aged under 16.

### Parental Income Test

- Same as for Youth Allowance except for some additional circumstances where the parental income and assets tests doesn't apply and the parental income threshold is raised due to dependent siblings. Contact Centrelink for details.
- Applies to dependent students and New Apprentices.

### Family Assets Test

- Same as for Youth Allowance. Applies to dependent students and New Apprentices.

### Family Actual Means Test

- Same as for Youth Allowance. Applies to dependent students and New Apprentices.

### Independent–Assets Test

- Same as for Youth Allowance and Austudy payment.

### Independent–Partner Income Test

- For students and New Apprentices aged under 21—same as for Youth Allowance.
- For students and New Apprentices aged 21 and over—same as for Newstart Allowance except for 50 cents in the dollar abatement of partner income over the income-free area and adjustments for dependent children.

## Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme

### Basic conditions of eligibility

- Families of primary, secondary and under 16 year old tertiary students who do not have reasonable daily access to an appropriate government school, primarily because of geographic isolation can receive assistance:
  - for students who must board away from home, in a school, hostel or privately; OR
  - to maintain a second home so that a student can access school daily; OR
  - for students who are enrolled in full-time studies in an approved distance education course.
- An appropriate government school is normally one that offers tuition at the grade or year in which the student is qualified to enrol (e.g. Year 11). Where the student has a health-related condition (including a disability) or special educational needs, the nearest appropriate government school is the one which provides access to the facilities, programs, and/or environment required to meet those needs.
- Students must:
  - normally have reached minimum school entry age and be aged under 19 as at 1 January (certain pensioner students may get paid AIC up to their 21st birthday);
  - be a citizen or a permanent resident of Australia; and
  - be undertaking approved studies at an approved institution.

### Residential requirements

- The applicant must be normally living in Australia, and be an Australian or New Zealand citizen or an Australian permanent resident.

### Allowances and maximum rates

- Boarding Allowance
  - Maximum rate of two components: \$7246.00 pa
  - Basic (not income tested) \$6150.00 pa
  - Additional (subject to parental income and actual board costs) \$1096.00 pa
- Second Home Allowance (limited to a maximum of three students in a family) \$179.16 pf per student
- Distance Education Allowance
  - Primary rate \$3075.00 pa
  - Secondary rate \$3075.00 pa
- AIC Pensioner Education Supplement \$62.40 pf  
For students aged under 21 who receive a Disability Support Pension or Parenting Payment (Single) and who are studying at primary level.

### Rent Assistance

- Not payable.

### Income test

- No income test is applied to Basic Boarding Allowance, Distance Education Allowance, Second Home Allowance or the AIC Pensioner Education Supplement.
- Additional Boarding Allowance reduces by one dollar for each four dollars of parental income over \$29 950. If parental income exceeds \$33 933 once adjusted only Basic Boarding Allowance is payable.

**Note:** *Adjusted parental income includes the applicant and his/her partner's combined taxable income as adjusted by deductions/add-backs for other dependent students and younger children in the family; maintenance payments made or received; negative gearing and certain fringe benefits. If the student's actual boarding charges are \$5750 or less, only Basic Boarding Allowance is payable. If the applicant or his/her partner is in receipt of certain Australian Government income support payments, or holds a current Health Care Card, this test may be waived.*

- Where the applicant is eligible for Additional Boarding Allowance, payment is payable up to:
  - the entitlement under the Parental Income Test; or
  - the student's boarding costs.
- Depending on parental income, a student may receive a higher level of Commonwealth assistance if he/she is eligible for Youth Allowance or ABSTUDY Payment.

**Note:** *Families receiving an AIC allowance for a student may continue to receive Family Payment for the same student. Family Payment cannot be paid for students aged 16 or over receiving Youth Allowance or ABSTUDY Payment.*

### Assets test

- No assets test is applied for AIC allowances.

## Partner Allowance (PA)

No new claims for Partner Allowance from 20 September 2003.

### Basic conditions of eligibility

- Born on or before 1 July 1955.
- Member of couple (partner must be on a qualifying pension, allowance, Austudy Payments or ABSTUDY Payment at time of Partner Allowance claim).
- No recent workforce experience (see Widow Allowance).
- No dependent children aged under 16.

### Residential requirements

- Must be an Australian resident.
- May be paid for up to 13 weeks of a temporary absence from Australia.

### Basic Rates

- Maximum rate \$365.00 pf
- Employment Entry Payment of \$104 may be payable.
- Education Entry Payment of \$208 may be payable.

- Pharmaceutical Allowance may be paid. See Chart H (page 24).

#### Rent Assistance

- See Chart G (page 23).
- Where both members of a couple without children are receiving an allowance or benefit, Rent Assistance is shared.

#### Income test

- See Chart D (page 21).
- Partners of people receiving Special Benefit see Special Benefit.

#### Assets test

- Homeowners see Chart A (page 19).
- Non-homeowners see Chart B (page 19).
- Hardship provisions may apply.

## Sickness Allowance (SA)

#### Basic conditions of eligibility

- Aged 21 or over but under Age Pension age, AND
- Temporarily incapacitated for work (or full-time study and on Austudy Payment or ABSTUDY Payment).
- Must have a job or full-time study to which they can return.
- A medical certificate from a qualified medical practitioner must be supplied.
- Not payable to Youth Allowance recipients who become incapacitated for study.

#### Residential requirements

- Must be an Australian resident.
- Available to newly arrived migrants after 104 weeks in Australia (some exemptions may apply).
- May be paid for up to 13 weeks of a temporary absence from Australia in certain circumstances.

#### Basic Rates

- Single: See Newstart Allowance.
- Partnered: See Newstart Allowance.
- Pharmaceutical Allowance is paid. See Chart H (page 24).

#### Rent Assistance

- See Newstart Allowance.

#### Income test

- See Chart D (page 21).

#### Assets test

- See Newstart Allowance.

## Widow Allowance (WA)

No new claims after 1 July 2005 unless the woman was born on or before 1 July 1955.

#### Basic conditions of eligibility

- Woman aged 50 or over.

- Not a member of a couple.
- Widowed, divorced or separated (including separated de facto) since turning 40.
- No recent workforce experience.
- Recent workforce experience means work of at least 20 hours a week, for 13 weeks or more during last 12 months.
- If claimed on or after 20 September 2003, required to attend interview with a Centrelink Personal Advisor annually.

#### Residential requirements

- Must be an Australian resident.
- Available to newly arrived migrants after 104 weeks as an Australian resident in Australia (some exemptions may apply); OR
- Both the woman and her partner were Australian residents when she was widowed, divorced or separated some other exemptions may apply.
- May be paid for up to 13 weeks of a temporary absence from Australia.

#### Basic Rates

- See Newstart Allowance.
- Pharmaceutical Allowance may be paid. See Chart H (page 24).

#### Rent Assistance

- See Chart G (page 23).

#### Income test

- See Chart D (page 21).

#### Assets test

- Homeowners see Chart A (page 19).
- Non-homeowners see Chart B (page 19).
- Hardship provisions may apply.

## Mature Age Allowance (MAA)

No new claims for Mature Age Allowance from 20 September 2003

#### Basic conditions of eligibility

- Aged 60 or over but less than Age Pension age.
- In receipt of a Department of Family and Community Services or Department of Veterans' Affairs income support payment for the preceding nine months and on Newstart Allowance at time of claim; OR have received a payment of a pension or a non-activity tested allowance in the 13 weeks preceding the claim; OR have previously received Mature Age Allowance at any time.
- Have no recent workforce experience (see Widow Allowance).

#### Residential requirements

- Must be an Australian resident.

- May be paid for up to 13 weeks of a temporary absence from Australia.

#### Basic Rates

- See Newstart Allowance.
- Employment Entry Payment of \$104 may be payable.
- Education Entry Payment of \$208 may be payable.
- Pharmaceutical Allowance is paid. See Chart H (page 24).

#### Rent Assistance

- See Chart G (page 23).

#### Income test

- See Chart D (page 21).

#### Assets test

- Homeowners see Chart A (allowance conditions—page 19).
- Non-homeowners see Chart B (allowance conditions—page 19).
- Hardship provisions may apply.

## Special Benefit (SpB)

#### Basic conditions of eligibility

- In financial hardship and unable to earn a sufficient livelihood for themselves and dependants due to reasons beyond their control.
- Not able to get any other income support payment.
- For short-term payment, available funds must not be more than the applicable fortnightly Newstart or Youth Allowance rate.
- For long-term payment available funds must be no more than \$5000.

#### Residential requirements

- Must be an Australian resident, or
- Holder of a certain temporary visa, subclass 070, 309, 310, 447, 451, 695, 785, 786, 787, 820, 826, or
- CJSV (Criminal Justice Stay Visa)—issued specifically for the purpose of assisting in the administration of criminal justice in relation to the offence of people trafficking, sexual servitude or deceptive recruiting.
- Available to newly arrived migrants after 104 weeks in Australia, unless they have experienced a substantial change in circumstances beyond their control since making an irrevocable decision to come to Australia (some other exemptions may apply).
- May be paid for up to 13 weeks of a temporary absence from Australia in certain circumstances.

#### Basic Rates

- Generally as for Newstart Allowance or Youth Allowance.
- May be reduced if in receipt of free board and/or lodgings or receiving other forms of support.
- Certain recipients of SpB may qualify for an Education Entry Payment of \$208.

- Pharmaceutical Allowance may be paid. See Chart H (page 24).

#### Rent Assistance

- Generally as for Newstart Allowance, Sickness Allowance or Youth Allowance depending on circumstances.

#### Income test

- No income free area, benefit reduced by one dollar for each one dollar of income.

#### Assets test

- Homeowners see Chart A (page 19).
- Non-homeowners see Chart B (page 19).

## Mobility Allowance

#### Basic conditions of eligibility

- Paid to a person with a disability aged 16 or over who cannot use public transport without substantial assistance and undertaking any combination of the following for 32 hours every four weeks:
  - paid or voluntary work or vocational training.
- Payable to a person undertaking job search activities under an agreement between: Centrelink and a service provider funded by the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations; or Centrelink and a disability employment assistance service provider funded by the Department of Family and Community Services.
- Also payable to a person receiving Newstart Allowance, Youth Allowance or Austudy Payment, if they satisfy the activity test associated with these payments.
- Required to travel to and from their home in order to undertake one or more of the above activities.

#### Residential requirements

- Must be an Australian resident.
- Available to newly arrived migrants after 104 weeks as an Australian resident in Australia (some exemptions may apply).
- May be paid for up to 13 weeks of temporary overseas absence.

#### Basic Rates

- \$71.40 per fortnight
- Paid fortnightly to bank or other account.
- A lump sum advance equal to six months allowance may be paid once a year.

#### Rent Assistance

- Not payable.

### Income test

- No income test. Mobility Allowance is not payable if you have been provided with a car from Department of Veterans' Affairs under the Vehicle Assistance Scheme. A person who is supplied with a GST-free car under the Goods and Services Act is not prevented from receiving Mobility Allowance.

### Assets test

- No assets test.

## CDEP Participant Supplement (CPS) and Supplementary Benefits (Add-ons)

- Provides assistance to Community Development Employment Project (CDEP) participants.

### Basic conditions of eligibility

- CDEP participants are paid wages from CDEP organisations. They may also receive some additional assistance from Centrelink (outlined below), if they are:
  - listed on the CDEP scheme participant schedule;
  - receiving CDEP scheme wages; AND
  - qualified for a Centrelink income support payment.

### Residential requirements

- The residence qualifications applying to the primary payment for which the CDEP participant is qualified.

### Basic Rates

- CDEP Participant Supplement (CPS) \$20.80 per fortnight.
- Rent Assistance see Chart G (page 23).
- Pharmaceutical Allowance, see relevant allowance or pension type at Chart H (page 24).
- Pensioners on CDEP may also receive some remaining pension after application of the CDEP dollar-for-dollar income test, see below.
- Pensioners who are still entitled to a part pension will continue to qualify for a Pensioner Concession Card.
- CPS recipients may also get:
  - automatic access to a Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card if applicable, see Chart E (page 21); AND
  - Family Tax Benefit Part A free of income and assets testing.
- CPS recipients other than pensioners can choose to receive their payment fortnightly or quarterly.
- Remote Area Allowance is payable to pensioners only.

### CDEP Participant Supplement (CPS) Income test

- CPS is payable if income is below:
  - Single \$804.00 pf
  - Partnered \$740.00 pf
- Total income of both partners must be under \$1480.00 per fortnight.

- Pensioners are eligible for the CPS while they retain some pension. Where they have lost their last dollar of pension then the CPS income test applies.

### Income test for add-on assistance

#### Allowees

- Allowees claiming Rent Assistance or Pharmaceutical Allowance must meet the same income test as other income support recipients.
- Only CDEP wages over the amount that the person would receive if they were receiving an income support payment (the person's threshold) are counted as ordinary income. CDEP wages below that threshold are ignored. The normal allowance income test is then applied, see Chart D (page 21).

#### Pensioners

- CDEP income will reduce the pension by one dollar for every dollar earned on CDEP up to a maximum threshold of \$394.60 for singles and \$356.00 each for couples. CDEP wages over this amount will be treated as ordinary income, see Chart C (page 20). The threshold will generally be lower for pensioners aged under 21.

### Assets test

- Refer to relevant allowance or pension type.

## Remote Area Allowance (RAA)

### Basic conditions of eligibility

- Tax-free allowance for pensioners/allowees/beneficiaries.
- Income Zone Tax Offset (formerly Zone Rebate) will be reduced by the amount of the allowance paid.

### Residential requirements

- Resident of ORDINARY TAX ZONE A; OR SPECIAL TAX ZONE A (with certain exceptions); OR SPECIAL TAX ZONE B.
- Can be for the first eight weeks of a temporary absence from Australia.

### Basic Rates

- Single: \$18.20 per fortnight
- Couple: \$15.60 per fortnight each
- Plus \$7.30 per fortnight for each dependent.

### Rent Assistance

- Not payable.

### Income test

- No income test.

### Assets test

- No assets test.



## Crisis Payment

### Basic conditions of eligibility

- Must:
  - be qualified for a social security pension or benefit and the pension or benefit must be payable;
  - be in severe financial hardship;
  - have left their home and be unable to return home because of an extreme circumstance, such as domestic violence or have served at least 14 days in gaol; and
  - have established or intend to establish a new home.
- Must claim:
  - within seven days after the extreme circumstance occurred (either within seven days of leaving the home or within seven days of the person making the decision they cannot return home); OR
  - within seven days of release from gaol.

### Residential requirements

- Must be in Australia at the time the extreme circumstance occurs.

### Basic Rates

- A one-off payment, equal to one week's payment (without add ons) of the person's pension, benefit or allowance.

## Chart A and B—Assets test for pensions or allowances and Austudy payments

### Chart A—Assets test for homeowners

Family situation	For full pension/ allowance*	For part pension#†
Single**	up to \$157 000	less than \$322 000
Partnered (combined)	up to \$223 000	less than \$497 500
Illness separated couple (combined)	up to \$223 000	less than \$553 000
One partner eligible	up to \$223 000	less than \$497 500

### Chart B—Assets test for non-homeowners

Family situation	For full pension/ allowance*	For part pension#†
Single**	up to \$270 500	less than \$435 500
Partnered (combined)	up to \$336 500	less than \$611 000
Illness separated couple (combined)	up to \$336 500	less than \$666 500
One partner eligible	up to \$336 500	less than \$611 000

**Note:** *The rate of payment is calculated under both the income and assets tests. The test that results in the lower rate (or nil rate) will apply.*

# Limits will increase if Rent Assistance is paid with your pension.

\* Assets over these amounts reduce pension by three dollars per fortnight for every \$1000 above the limit (single and couple combined).

NSA/WA/PA/SA/SpB/Parenting Payment/YA and Austudy Payment and MAA not payable if assets exceed these amounts.

† Pharmaceutical Allowance included.

\*\* For DSP customers, these limits apply if aged over 21 only. For under 21 the same income/assets test applies, but with different limits. See your nearest Centrelink Customer Service Centre for information.

Some assets are deemed to earn income, while certain assets are not included in the assets test. Contact Centrelink for more information.

### Extra Allowable Amount for Retirement Village and Granny Flat Residents

If your Entry Contribution is equal to or less than the Extra Allowable Amount, you are assessed as a non-homeowner. Your Entry Contribution will count as an asset. You may qualify for Rent Assistance. The Extra Allowable Amount is the difference between the non-homeowner and homeowner asset test limits, currently \$113 500.

### Hardship provisions

If you have assets but little or no income you are expected to rearrange your affairs to provide for yourself. In some cases that is not possible. If you are in 'severe financial hardship' you may be able to get a social security payment. Different tests apply to such cases.

## Chart C—Income Test for Pensions

### Income test for pensions

Family situation	For full pension (pf)*	For part pension (pf)#†
Single**	up to \$124	less than \$1360.75
Single + one child	up to \$148.60	less than \$1385.35
Couple (combined)	up to \$220	less than \$2275.50
Illness separated couple (combined)	up to \$220	less than \$2693.50
Additional children	add \$24.60 per child	

Some assets are deemed to earn income, while there are special rules for other types of income. Contact Centrelink for more information.

**Note:** *The rate of payment is calculated under both the income and assets tests. The test that results in the lower rate (or nil rate) will apply.*

\* Income over these amounts reduces the rate of pension payable by 40 cents in the dollar (single), 20 cents in the dollar each (for couples).

\*\* For DSP customers, these limits apply if aged over 21 only. For under 21 the same income/assets test applies, but with different limits. See your nearest Centrelink Customer Service Centre for information.

† Pharmaceutical Allowance included.

# These figures may be higher if Rent Assistance is paid with your pension.

### Compensation income

Compensation income, such as weekly workers' compensation payments, is assessed under a separate income test. For each dollar of compensation income the social security payment (pension or allowance) is reduced by a dollar. Family Tax Benefit Part A is not affected by the compensation rules. Lump sum compensation payments are also subject to special rules.

## Chart D(a)—Personal Income test for Youth Allowance, Austudy Payment, ABSTUDY

### Income test

Family Situation	For full Allowance (pf)*	For part Allowance (pf)
Single, aged under 18, at home		
Students and New Apprentices	up to \$236	less than \$520.57
Job seekers	up to \$62	less than \$346.57
Single, aged 18 or over, at home		
Students and New Apprentices	up to \$236	less than \$573.57
Job seekers	up to \$62	less than \$399.57
Single or partnered, no dependants, away from home		
Students and New Apprentices	up to \$236	less than \$737.00#
Job seekers	up to \$62	less than \$563.00#
Partnered, with dependants		
Students and New Apprentices	up to \$236	less than \$783.86#
Job seekers	up to \$62	less than \$609.86#
Single, with dependants		
Students and New Apprentices	up to \$236	less than \$885.29#
Job seekers	up to \$62	less than \$711.29#
Single, long-term unemployed aged 21 or over, undertaking full-time study or New Apprenticeship, at home	up to \$236	less than \$645.29
Single, long-term unemployed aged 21 or over undertaking full-time study or New Apprenticeship, away from home	up to \$236	less than \$839.57#
Partnered, long-term unemployed, no dependants, aged 21 or over undertaking full-time study or New Apprenticeship, no children	up to \$236	less than \$783.86#

\* For job seekers, fortnightly income between \$62 and \$142 reduces fortnightly allowance by 50 cents in the dollar. Income above \$142 reduces payment by 70 cents in the dollar.

For students and New Apprentices, fortnightly income between \$236 and \$316 reduces the fortnightly allowance by 50 cents in the dollar. Income above \$316 reduces payment by 70 cents in the dollar. For students and New Apprentices the income test is subject to Income Bank credit.

Partner income which exceeds the cut-off point reduces fortnightly allowance by 70 cents in the dollar.

# These figures may be higher if you are eligible for Rent Assistance or Pharmaceutical Allowance.

**Note:** *For ABSTUDY recipients aged 21 years and over the income test is aligned to NSA. The ABSTUDY living allowance is reduced by one dollar for every whole two dollars by which the partner's income exceeds the qualifying limit.*

## Chart D–Income Test for NSA, WA, PA, SA, MAA

### Income test

Family Situation	For full Allowance (pf)*	For part Allowance (pf)**
Single no children	up to \$62	less than \$662.71
Single aged over 60 after nine months, or on MAA	up to \$62	less than \$718.29***
Single, with dependent child(ren)	up to \$62	less than \$710.00
Partnered (each)	up to \$62	less than \$606.29

\* Fortnightly income between \$62 and \$142 reduces fortnightly allowance by 50 cents in the dollar.

For income above \$142 per fortnight, fortnightly allowance reduces by 70 cents in the dollar.

Partner income which exceeds cut-out point reduces fortnightly allowance by 70 cents in the dollar.

\*\* These figures may be higher if you are eligible for Pharmaceutical Allowance or Rent Assistance.

\*\*\* This figure includes Pharmaceutical Allowance.

### Working Credit

Working Credit helps working-age people to keep more of their income support payment when they take up work. When people have little or no income, they will build up 'working credits'. Then if they do work, their working credits increase the amount they can earn before their income support payment is reduced. For example someone with 150 working credits is able to earn an extra \$150 above the income free area before their payment starts to reduce.

It also helps people who take up short-term jobs by making it easier for them to get their payments restarted (for up to 12 weeks). This means that people don't have to reapply for payments, they just need to prove that their job has ended, or that their income has dropped, and Centrelink will restart their payments.

### Maintenance income

Maintenance income does not affect payments other than Family Tax Benefit and parentally means-tested Youth Allowance.#

#### ■ Maintenance income-free areas:

Single parent or member of a couple receiving maintenance	\$1182.60 pa
Couple, both receiving maintenance	\$2365.20 pa
For each additional child add	\$394.20 pa

■ Maintenance over these amounts may reduce Family Tax Benefit Part A by 50 cents in the dollar, until the minimum amount of Family Tax Benefit per child is reached.

■ Pensioners who are blind are exempt from the maintenance income test.

# Applies only if eligible to receive more than the minimum rate.

## Chart E–Concessions#

### Automatic issue Health Care Card (HCC)

The HCC is automatically issued to people receiving:

■ Newstart Allowance, Partner Allowance, Sickness Allowance, Special Benefit, Widow Allowance and Youth Allowance (job seekers only).

Once customers move off income support, they must generally stop using their HCC. However long-term recipients of the above payments (i.e. 12 months or more), can retain their HCC for six months after returning to work. This provision is designed to assist people to make the transition from income support to work.

■ Parenting Payment (partnered), Exceptional Circumstances Relief Payment, Farm Family Restart Income Support and those receiving the maximum rate of Family Tax Benefit Part A by fortnightly instalments.

■ Mobility Allowance, where the recipient does not already hold a Pensioner Concession Card, because they are also in receipt of a pension.

■ Carer Allowance (CA), paid to parents/carers in respect of a child with a disability. Other parents/carers of children with a disability who do not receive CA may receive a HCC subject to less stringent disability-related eligibility criteria.

■ Parenting Payment (single). Such customers receive a HCC for six months if they have been long-term recipients of income support (i.e. 12 months or more), and their payment stops due to the person commencing employment, or due to the level of earnings from employment. This provision eases the transition from income support to work.

■ Community Development Employment Project Scheme Participant Supplement where the recipient is qualified for a social security payment (attracting a HCC), but that payment is not payable due to either the assets test, or the rules relating to seasonal or intermittent workers. These customers receive the HCC applicable to the payment type for which they are qualified.

A HCC is also available, under certain circumstances, to people who remain qualified for certain payments during a nil rate period under the Working Credit scheme.

### Claim required Health Care Card (HCC)

Low-income earners and foster children can obtain specific types of HCCs:

■ A 'low-income' HCC is available on application to people with income below certain levels. Once eligible, the qualifying income limits may be exceeded by up to 25 per cent before eligibility for the card is lost. The income test applies to average weekly gross income for the eight weeks immediately prior to applying for the card. Income limits for the period September 2005 to March 2006 are:

Single	\$351.00 pw
Couple (combined)	\$585.00 pw
Single or Couple with one child	\$619.00 pw
For each additional child add	\$34 pw

These limits (except for the child add-on) are indexed twice yearly, in March and September, based on movements in the Consumer Price Index.

There is no assets test for the low-income HCC.

- A foster child HCC is available, on application, to assist foster children and carers. The card can be claimed by the foster carer on behalf of the child. The foster child HCC is issued only in the name of the child, and can only be used to obtain concessions on services utilised by the child. The foster child HCC is not means tested.

Certain residence requirements must also be met to qualify for any type of HCC.

### **Pensioner Concession Card (PCC)**

A PCC is automatically issued to:

- All social security pensioners, Department of Veterans' Affairs Service pensioners and war widows receiving income support supplement. Social security pensions include Age Pension, Disability Support Pension, Wife Pension, Carer Payment, Parenting Payment (Single), Bereavement Allowance, and Widow B Pension;
- Older benefit recipients, that is:
  - Mature Age Allowance recipients; and
  - customers aged 60 years or over who are receiving Newstart Allowance, Partner Allowance, Widow Allowance, Parenting Payment (partnered), Sickness Allowance, or Special Benefit, and have been in continuous receipt of one or more of the above payments (or a social security pension) for nine months or more;
- Customers who are participating in the Pension Loans Scheme, and are qualified to receive a part-rate pension.
- Community Development Employment Project (CDEP) participants who are qualified for a social security pension but that payment is not payable due to the result of either the assets test or the rules relating to seasonal or intermittent workers, and who therefore qualify for the CDEP Scheme Participant Supplement (CPS);
- CDEP participants who are qualified for Newstart Allowance, Partner Allowance, Widow Allowance, Parenting Payment (partnered), Youth Allowance, Special Benefit or Mature Age Allowance (paid under Newstart conditions), but where that payment is not payable due to the result of either the assets test or the rules relating to seasonal or intermittent workers, and who therefore qualify for the CDEP CPS. Note that these customers must be aged 60 years or over, and have been in continuous receipt, or have been taken to be in continuous receipt of one or more of the above payments (or a social security pension) for nine months or more;

Once customers move off income support, they must generally stop using their PCC. However in some instances, certain customers can retain their PCC for a short period after returning to work. These provisions are designed to assist people to make the transition from income support to work.

PCCs can be retained in the following circumstances when a person loses qualification for the relevant social security payment:

#### **Disability Support Pension (DSP) recipients**

- retain their PCC for 12 months after losing qualification for the pension due to commencing employment of 30 hours or more per week, or because of the level of earnings from this employment.

#### **Wife Pension (DSP) recipients**

- retain their PCC for 12 months after losing qualification if their partner has been receiving DSP, and their partner loses qualification for the pension due to commencing employment of 30 hours or more per week, or because their partner's income from employment causes them to lose qualification for DSP.

#### **Older benefit recipients (as defined earlier)**

- retain their PCC for a further six months if their payment stops due to the person or their partner commencing employment, or due to the level of earnings from this employment.

#### **Parenting Payment (single) recipients**

- PCC entitlement ceases if a customer loses entitlement to Parenting Payment (single) due to an increase in income due to employment. A Health Care Card is issued for the ensuing six months, provided the customer has been in continuous receipt for the last 12 months of either:
  - a social security pension (except for a Special Needs Pension); or
  - a social security benefit (other than Austudy or Youth Allowance paid to students).

A PCC is also available, under certain circumstances, to people who remain qualified for certain payments during a nil rate period under the Working Credit scheme.

### **Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC)**

The CSHC is targeted at self-funded retirees of Age Pension age (see chart under Age Pension) who do not qualify for an Age Pension because of assets or income levels.

To qualify for a CSHC a person must make a claim for the card, and meet the following criteria:

- not be receiving a social security pension or benefit or a DVA service pension; and
- be of Age Pension age; and
- be an Australian resident or Special Category Visa (SCV) holder residing in Australia. An Australian resident is one of the following:
  - an Australian citizen;
  - a holder of a permanent visa;
  - a Special Category Visa holder who is a protected SCV holder; and
- have been in Australia for a period of, or periods totalling, 104 weeks; and
- have an annual adjusted taxable income of less than \$50 000 for singles; \$80 000 for couples (combined

income); and \$100 000 combined or \$50 000 each for couples separated by illness, respite care or gaol. An amount of \$639.60 per year is added for each dependent child. There is no assets test.

### Seniors Concession Allowance

Seniors Concession Allowance (SCA) is paid to holders of the Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC) to assist in meeting household expenses. The payment is made twice a year in June and December and each instalment is adjusted to increases in the Consumer Price Index. The current annual rate of SCA is \$206.00.

### Telephone Allowance

Telephone Allowance (TAL) is a quarterly payment to assist with the cost of maintaining a telephone service—it is not paid to assist with the costs of telephone calls.

TAL is paid to pensioners, certain allowees and eligible CSHC holders.

TAL is paid quarterly on the customer's first delivery day after 1 January, 20 March, 1 July, and 20 September each year.

The current rate of TAL is \$81.60 per annum (\$20.40 per quarter). This amount is shared between both members of an eligible couple.

### Utilities Allowance

Utilities Allowance (UA) is paid to Australians of Age (or Veteran) Pension age in receipt of income support, to assist with meeting utilities bills. The payment is made twice a year in March and September and instalments from September 2005 will be adjusted to increases in the Consumer Price Index. The current annual rate of UA is \$101.20 for singles and \$50.60 for each eligible member of a couple.

## Chart F—Taxable/Non-Taxable\*

### Taxable

- Age Pension, Disability Support Pension (for people of Age Pension age), Widow Pension, Carer Payment (if carer or person being cared for is of Age Pension age), Wife Pension (if wife or husband of Age Pension age), Parenting Payment, Bereavement Allowance, Newstart Allowance, Widow Allowance, Sickness Allowance, Special Benefit, Youth Allowance, Mature Age Allowance, Partner Allowance, Austudy Payment, ABSTUDY Living Allowance, and Education Entry Payment.

### Non-taxable

- Disability Support Pension (if under Age Pension age), Wife Pension (if both spouses are under Age Pension age), Carer Payment (if carer and person being cared for are both under Age Pension age), Family Tax Benefit Part A (including Rent Assistance, Multiple Birth Allowance), Family Tax Benefit Part B, Carer Allowance, Youth Disability Supplement, Student Financial Supplement Scheme, Fares Allowance, Double Orphan Pension, Mobility Allowance, Pharmaceutical Allowance, Employment Entry Payment, Remote Area Allowance (offsets the Zone Tax

Rebate), Rent Assistance, Telephone Allowance, Utilities Allowance, Seniors Concession Allowance, Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme allowances, Pensioner Education Supplement, ABSTUDY supplementary benefits, Maternity Payment, Pension Bonus Scheme, Pension Loans Scheme, Large Family Supplement, Maternity Immunisation Allowance, Child Care Benefit and Crisis Payment.

**Note:** *The tax treatment of payments made during a bereavement period may differ due to special rules that apply.*

## Chart G—Rent Assistance

Family Situation	Maximum payment per fortnight	No payment if your fortnightly rent is less than	Maximum payment if your fortnightly rent is more than
Single, no children	\$99.20	\$88.20	\$220.47
Single, no children, sharer	\$66.13	\$88.20	\$176.38
Couple, no children	\$93.60	\$143.60	\$268.40
One of a couple who are separated due to illness, no children*	\$99.20	\$88.20	\$220.47
One of a couple who are temporarily separated, no children	\$93.60	\$88.20	\$213.00

\* Includes respite care and partner in gaol.

- Rent Assistance for families with children is usually paid with Family Tax Benefit. See Family Tax Benefit for current rates.
- Rent Assistance is not paid:
  - to people paying rent to a government housing authority, although in some situations sub-tenants may qualify for Rent Assistance.
  - for residents of Commonwealth funded nursing homes and hostels.
  - to single disability support pensioners aged under 21, without dependants, living with parents.
  - to other single people aged under 25, living with parents.
  - to students without dependants, who receive Austudy Payment.
- Special rules apply to single sharers, people who pay board and lodging or live in a retirement village.
- Rent Certificates are required to verify rent where a customer does not have a formal written tenancy agreement or is not named as a tenant on a formal written tenancy agreement.
- Rent Assistance is paid as part of another payment. It may be reduced due to the income test rules applying to that primary payment.



## Chart H—Pharmaceutical Allowance

Rate: \$5.80 per fortnight for eligible single people, and \$2.90 per fortnight for each eligible member of a couple (i.e. \$5.80 in total if both members of a couple are eligible). However, where a person is a member of an illness separated couple or a respite care couple or where a partner is in gaol, the rate is \$5.80 per fortnight (i.e. same as for a single person).

Payment	Conditions under which PhA is paid
Age Pension	
Bereavement Allowance	
Carer Payment	
Disability Support Pension	
Mature Age Allowance	Automatically paid to recipients of these payments
Parenting Payment (Single)	
Sickness Allowance	
Widow B Pension	
Wife Pension	
Newstart Allowance	Recipient must be temporarily incapacitated, OR be over 60 years of age AND have been in receipt of income support continuously for at least 9 months.
Partner Allowance	
Widow Allowance	
ABSTUDY	
Austudy Payment	Recipient must be over 60 years of age AND have been in receipt of income support continuously for at least 9 months.
Parenting Payment (Partnered)	
Special Benefit	Based on the PhA criteria for NSA or YA depending on the basic rate that applies to the customer. (Note that SpB recipients are NOT required to be an Australian residents in order to be paid PhA.)
Youth Allowance	Recipient must be temporarily incapacitated.
CDEP	As per relevant payment type.

**Note:** *PhA is subject to portability provisions where relevant.*

## Calling Centrelink

To make an appointment to see someone at your nearest Customer Service Centre	<b>13 1021</b>
Employment Services	<b>13 2850</b>
Youth Allowance	<b>13 2490</b>
Austudy Payment	<b>13 2490</b>
ABSTUDY	<b>13 2317</b>
Pensioner Education Supplement (PES)	<b>13 2490</b>
Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme	<b>13 2318</b>
Retirement	<b>13 2300</b>
Disability, Sickness and Carers	<b>13 2717</b>
Family Assistance Office	<b>13 6150</b>
For information in languages other than English	<b>13 1202</b>

For information on Social Security Agreements with other countries, payment of Australian pensions overseas or claiming overseas pensions **13 1673**

If calling from overseas (reverse charges) **+61 3 6222 3455**

Australian Government Services Fraud Tip-off Line **13 1524**  
or through the internet at **www.centrelink.gov.au**

Customer Relations **Freecall™1800 050 004**  
for complaints, compliments or feedback

TTY Payment Enquiries **Freecall™1800 810 586**  
Only for people who are deaf or who have a hearing or speech impairment. A TTY phone is required to use this service.

TTY Customer Relations **Freecall™1800 000 567**  
For complaints, compliments or feedback. Only for people who are deaf or who have a hearing or speech impairment. A TTY phone is required to use this service.

Information on payment rates is also available on the Centrelink website at: **www.centrelink.gov.au**

Calls to '13' numbers cost 25 cents from anywhere within Australia. Calls to '1800' numbers are free of charge. Calls from public pay phones or mobile phones may be charged at a higher rate.

This publication has been prepared by Centrelink to give you information about payments and services it delivers on behalf of the Department of Family and Community Services (FaCS), Department of Education, Science and Training (DEST) and Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR).

### Disclaimer

The information contained in this publication is intended only as a guide to payments available.

### What are your responsibilities?

- It is your responsibility to decide if you wish to apply for a payment and to make the application, having regard to your particular circumstances.
- The information is accurate as at 1 January 2006, but may of course change. If you use this publication after that date, please check with Centrelink that the details are up to date.

### From what date are benefits payable?

Most government payments are paid from, or after, the date on which the application is made. So the sooner you lodge your application the quicker you may be paid.

### What is the position if you deal with a third party?

You may deal with a third party who is not a member of Centrelink's staff. If you do so, please remember that Centrelink has not authorised any third parties to provide information or advice to you about payments. **If you think a decision about your payment is incorrect, you can contact Centrelink and ask for the decision to be reconsidered.**

**If you are not satisfied with the service you received from Centrelink you can talk to our Customer Relations staff on Freecall™1800 050 004. If you are still not satisfied, you can contact the Commonwealth Ombudsman whose local number is listed in your phone book.**