



Australian Government



Centrelink

giving you options

Retirement Payment Rates

1 July–19 September 2008

Age Pension • Pension Bonus Scheme

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
Before 1 July 1935	60
1 July 1935 and 31 Dec. 1936	60 ¹ / ₂
1 Jan. 1937 and 30 June 1938	61
1 July 1938 and 31 Dec. 1939	61 ¹ / ₂
1 Jan. 1940 and 30 June 1941	62
1 July 1941 and 31 Dec. 1942	62 ¹ / ₂
1 Jan. 1943 and 30 June 1944	63
1 July 1944 and 31 Dec. 1945	63 ¹ / ₂
1 Jan. 1946 and 30 June 1947	64
1 July 1947 and 31 Dec. 1948	64 ¹ / ₂
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 continuous 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 a refugee or under a 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	\$546.80*
Couple	\$456.80* each

* Since July 2000, has included a pension supplement. It is currently: single \$18.80, couple \$15.80 each.

- Paid fortnightly to a bank, credit union or building society 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.
- Not eligible for Education Entry Payment, or Pension Education Supplement.

Rent Assistance

- See Chart G.

Income test

- See Chart C.
- No income test on basic rate for age pensioners who are permanently blind.

Assets test

- Homeowners see Chart A.
- Non-homeowners see Chart B.
- Hardship provisions may apply.
- No assets test on the basic rate 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 one-off tax-free lump sum bonus.
- Must register before a bonus can be accrued. Earliest registration is the date when age and residence requirements for Age Pension are met.
- Maximum bonus accrual period is five years.
- Cannot accrue bonus after age 75.
- Must meet work test of at least 960 hours of paid work each year for a minimum of 12 months from registration date.
- Not paid if receiving 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 bonus when they finally claim Age Pension.
- 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.

Rate if maximum pension payable

Years (bonus periods)	Single	Partnered (each)
1	\$1 336.40	\$1 116.40
2	\$5 345.50	\$4 465.70
3	\$12 027.40	\$10 047.80
4	\$21 382.10	\$17 862.70
5	\$33 409.50	\$27 910.50

Pension Bonus Bereavement Payment

- Pension Bonus Bereavement Payment (PBBP) commenced on 1 January 2008. It is a payment that may be paid to the surviving partner of a deceased member of the Pension Bonus Scheme who did not claim their bonus before death. It has the same maximum rates as the Pension Bonus payment. For further information contact Centrelink on 13 2300.

Chart A and B—Assets test

Chart A—Assets test for homeowners

Family situation	For full pension/allowance*	For part pension**
Single**	up to \$171 750	less than \$540 250
Partnered (combined)	up to \$243 500	less than \$856 500
Illness separated couple (combined)	up to \$243 500	less than \$980 500
One partner eligible	up to \$243 500	less than \$856 500

Chart B—Assets test for non-homeowners

Family situation	For full pension/allowance*	For part pension**
Single**	up to \$296 250	less than \$664 750
Partnered (combined)	up to \$368 000	less than \$981 000
Illness separated couple (combined)	up to \$368 000	less than \$1 105 000
One partner eligible	up to \$368 000	less than \$981 000

Some assets are deemed to earn income, while certain assets are not included in the assets test. 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.

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

* Assets over these amounts reduce pension by \$1.50 per fortnight for every \$1000 above the amount (single and couple combined).

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

† Pharmaceutical Allowance included.

** For DSP customers, these limits apply if aged over 21 only. For those aged under 21 the same income/assets test applies, but with different limits. See your nearest Centrelink Customer Service Centre for 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 assets test limits, currently \$124 500.

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 an income support 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 \$138.00	less than \$1519.50
Single + one child	up to \$162.60	less than \$1544.10
Couple (combined)	up to \$240.00	less than \$2538.50
Illness separated couple (combined)	up to \$240.00	less than \$3003.00
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.

Payment Rates

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).
- † Pharmaceutical Allowance included.
- # These figures may be higher if Rent Assistance is paid with your pension.

Compensation payment

Compensation payments, such as weekly workers' compensation payments, are assessed differently. If the compensable injury occurred prior to receiving an income support payment each dollar of any regular compensation payment reduces the income support payment (pension or allowance) by a dollar. If the compensable injury occurred while receiving an income support payment any regular compensation payment is assessed under the normal income test. Compensation payments may include a component of taxable income and it is this component that is included as income for Family Tax Benefit purposes. Lump sum compensation payments may result in a non-payment period. Contact Centrelink for more information.

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	\$107.20	\$95.40	\$238.33
Single, no children, sharer	\$71.47	\$95.40	\$190.69
Couple, no children	\$101.00	\$155.20	\$289.87
One of a couple who are separated due to illness, no children*	\$107.20	\$95.40	\$238.33
One of a couple who are temporarily separated, no children	\$101.00	\$95.40	\$230.07

- * Includes respite care and partner in prison.
- 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 Australian Government 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.
- 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.
- Rent Assistance is subject to portability provisions where relevant.

Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC)

- For persons of age pension age, who do not receive a pension (certain residency requirements apply).

Income limits:

Single	\$50 000 pa
Couple	\$80 000 pa
Couple, illness separated, respite care, etc.	\$50 000 each pa
For each dependent child, add	\$639.60 pa

Note: Leaflets with detailed information about concessions are available.

Chart H—Pharmaceutical Allowance (PhA)

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 prison, the rate is \$5.80 per fortnight (i.e. same as for a single person).

Payment	Conditions under which PhA is paid
Age Pension	Automatically paid to customers of these payments.
Bereavement Allowance	
Carer Payment	
Disability Support Pension	
Mature Age Allowance	
Parenting Payment (Single)	
Sickness Allowance	
Widow B Pension	
Wife Pension	
Newstart Allowance	Customers must be temporarily incapacitated, or have a partial capacity to work, or be a single principal carer of a dependent child, be over 60 years of age and have been in receipt of income support continuously for at least nine months.
Partner Allowance	Customers must be either temporarily incapacitated, or be over 60 years of age and have been in receipt of income support continuously for at least nine months.
Widow Allowance	
ABSTUDY	
Special Benefit*	
*(Note: Special Benefit customers are NOT required to be Australian residents in order to be paid PhA).	

Payment Rates

Austudy	Customer must be over 60 years of age and have been in receipt of income support continuously for at least nine months.
Parenting Payment (Partnered)	Customer must be over 60 years of age and have been in receipt of income support continuously for nine months or be unable to meet participation requirements due to a temporary incapacity.
Youth Allowance (job seeker)	Must be either temporarily incapacitated or a single principal carer of a dependent child or have a partial capacity to work.
Youth Allowance (full-time students and Australian Apprentices)	Must be temporarily incapacitated.
Community Development Employment Project (CDEP)	As per relevant payment type.

Note: PhA is subject to portability provisions where relevant.

Calling Centrelink

Employment Services	13 2850
Youth Allowance	13 2490
Austudy	13 2490
ABSTUDY	13 2317
Australian Apprentices	13 3633
Pensioner Education Supplement (PES)	13 2490
Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme	13 2318
Retirement	13 2300
Disability, Sickness and Carers	13 2717
Family Assistance Office	13 6150
To speak to Centrelink in languages other than English	13 1202
For information about claiming a payment from a country other than Australia and about claiming an Australian payment while outside Australia	13 1673
Calling from outside Australia (you can reverse charge)	+61 3 6222 3455
Australian Government Services Fraud Tip-off Line or through the internet at www.centrelink.gov.au	13 1524
Customer Relations	Freecall™ 1800 050 004
Suggestions, complaints and compliments	
TTY 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
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 from your home phone to Centrelink "13" numbers from anywhere in Australia are charged at a fixed rate. That rate may vary from the price of a local call and may also vary between telephone service providers. Calls to "1800" numbers from your home phone are free. Calls from public and mobile phones may be timed and charged at a higher rate.

Centrelink self service

A growing number of Centrelink services are available through online and phone self service. Using self service you can:

- update family income estimate
- claim student Youth Allowance or Austudy
- report employment income
- update address and banking details.

Online self service

Once you have registered you can logon at www.centrelink.gov.au to access online services.

Refer to Service Available Times on our website for when online services are available.

Phone self service

Centrelink has two self service lines. For general self service, phone 13 6240, Monday to Friday from 5.30 am to 12 midnight (except for national and state-based public holidays), on Saturday from 5.00 am to 6.00 pm and on Sunday from 8.00 am to 8.00 pm.

For the reporting line, phone 13 3276, Monday to Friday from 6.00 am to 10.00 pm (except for national and state-based public holidays). Remember to call before 6.00 pm (8.00 pm for Parenting Payment) on the day you are due to report.

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 July 2008, 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 the 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.