



Australian Government



Centrelink
giving you options

Special Benefit Payment Rates

1 July–19 September 2008

Special Benefit

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
- A holder of a temporary visa subclass 070, 309, 310, 447, 451, 695, 785, 786, 787, 820, 826 or a holder of a 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 as an Australian resident, unless they have experienced a substantial change in circumstances beyond their control since making an irrevocable decision to come to Australia (some exemptions may apply).
- May be paid for up to 13 weeks of a temporary absence from Australia in certain limited circumstances.

Basic rates

- Generally as for Newstart Allowance or Youth Allowance.

Newstart Allowance Payment Rates

- Single, no children \$437.10 pf
- Single, with dependent child(ren) \$472.80 pf
- Single, aged 60 or over, after nine months or on Mature Age Allowance \$472.80 pf
- Partnered (each) \$394.40 pf
- Pharmaceutical Allowance may be paid. See Chart H.
- Employment Entry Payment of \$104 may be payable, this ceases from 1 July 2008.
- Education Entry Payment of \$208 may be payable.

Youth Allowance Payment Rates

- Single, no children:
 - Aged under 18, at home \$194.50 pf
 - Aged under 18, away from home \$355.40* pf
 - Aged 18 and over, away from home \$355.40* pf
 - Aged 18 and over, at home \$233.90 pf
- Single, with children \$465.60* pf
- Partnered, no children \$355.40* pf

- Partnered, with children \$390.20* pf

* Rent Assistance may be payable.

- Young people not considered independent must be assessed to get the away from home rate.
- Pharmaceutical Allowance may be payable. See Chart H.
- Payment is generally made to a parent for those aged under 18 who are not independent.
- May be reduced if in receipt of free board and/or lodgings or receiving other forms of support.
- Education Entry Payment of \$208 may be payable (single parents only).
- Employment Entry Payment of \$104 may be payable (single parents only), this ceases from 1 July 2008.
- Pensioner Education Supplement may be payable (single parents only).

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.
- Non-homeowners see Chart B.

Chart A and B—Assets test for Parenting Payment

Chart A—Assets test for homeowners

Family situation	For full allowance
Single	up to \$171 750
Partnered (combined)	up to \$243 500
Illness separated couple (combined)	up to \$243 500
One partner eligible	up to \$243 500

Chart B—Assets test for non-homeowners

Family situation	For full allowance
Single	up to \$296 250
Partnered (combined)	up to \$368 000
Illness separated couple (combined)	up to \$368 000
One partner eligible	up to \$368 000

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.

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 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)	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.	
Sickness Allowance		
Widow B Pension		
Wife Pension		
Newstart Allowance		
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).		
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.
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Youth Allowance (full-time students and Australian Apprentices)	Must be temporarily incapacitated.
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Community Development Employment Project (CDEP)	As per relevant payment type.
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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

Calling from outside Australia +61 3 6222 3455 (you can reverse charge)

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

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.