

This chapter covers the payments and services Centrelink delivers on behalf of the Departments of Education, Science and Training; and Employment and Workplace Relations to youth, students and Australian Apprentices. It also covers the services young people can be referred to by Centrelink.

Working age participation

As the gateway to the Job Network, to other providers of Australian Government employment services and a wide range of other government and community services, Centrelink can refer customers to services designed to help improve their chances of getting a job; accessing study, training and work experience placements; building up skills and confidence for work; undertaking community work; and ultimately, to help them become financially independent.

Centrelink helps people during important transition periods in their lives, such as moving from school to work or further education and training. Centrelink's education and training services assist people who are studying full-time (and in some cases studying part-time) or doing a full-time Australian Apprenticeship, and young people aged 16 to 24 years who are undertaking training or looking for work. Centrelink youth and student services may also provide assistance for young people who are ill, injured or have a disability.

Payments

- Youth Allowance (full-time student)
- Austudy
- ABSTUDY
- Assistance for Isolated Children
- Pensioner Education Supplement
- Fares Allowance.

Youth Allowance (full-time student)

Purpose

Youth Allowance (full-time student) provides assistance for young people aged between 16 and 24 years who are studying full-time, undertaking a full-time Australian Apprenticeship or young people aged between 16 and 20 years who are undertaking training and/or looking for work. It may also provide assistance for young people who are ill or temporarily incapacitated.

Youth Allowance provides a simple and flexible payment structure with incentives for young people to further their education and training.

Qualifications

To qualify for Youth Allowance a young person must be:

- aged between 16* and 24** years and studying full-time, or
- aged between 16* and 24** years and undertaking a full-time Australian Apprenticeship, or
- aged between 16* and 20 years and actively looking for work, undertaking an approved activity such as Work for the Dole or have temporary exemption from the activity test (for example, due to illness), or
- aged between 16* and 20 years and the principal carer of a dependent child aged between six and 15 years (if partnered) or between eight and 15 years (if single), actively looking for suitable work, undertaking an approved activity such as Work for the Dole or have a temporary exemption from the activity test (for example, due to illness), or
- aged between 16* and 20 years and assessed by a Job Capacity Assessor as having a partial capacity for work and have reduced activity test requirements, and

- an Australian resident (that is, must be living in Australia), and be one of the following:
 - an Australian citizen, or
 - a permanent visa holder, or
 - a protected special visa holder (that is, someone who arrived on a New Zealand passport and who was in Australia on 26 February 2001 or for 12 months in the two years immediately before that date, or who was assessed as “protected” before 26 February 2004), and
 - present in Australia when claiming.
- * The minimum age for Youth Allowance may be 15 years if a person is above the school leaving age in their state or territory and considered independent.
- ** The maximum age for Youth Allowance may be 25 years or over if the person was receiving Youth Allowance immediately before turning 25 years and is still doing the same course or Australian Apprenticeship.

Newly arrived residents generally have a 104 week waiting period. There are some exemptions, including for refugees, the holders of certain other permanent visas, Australian citizens and in some circumstances their partners and dependent children.

For more information about the 104 week waiting period, see Chapter 8.

Young people aged under 18 years, and who are not principal carers, and who have not completed Year 12 (or equivalent), usually have to be in full-time education or training to qualify for Youth Allowance. However, when full-time education is not appropriate, young people have the option of entering into an Activity Agreement requiring them to undertake a range of approved activities. In certain circumstances, temporary exemptions from undertaking full-time education or training may be granted.

Approved activities generally include some appropriate education or training. This requirement does not apply if a person claims Youth Allowance (or ceases study) within three months of their 18th birthday.

People who are aged 21 years and over and are unemployed may be eligible for Newstart Allowance.

For more information about Newstart Allowance and Youth Allowance (job seeker), see Chapter 2.

Payment outside Australia

Youth Allowance may be paid for temporary absences outside Australia in particular circumstances. Youth Allowance customers thinking about travelling outside Australia for any reason must contact Centrelink before they leave to get advice about whether conditions apply.

For more information about payment outside Australia, see Chapter 17.

Compensation

Payment of Youth Allowance may be affected if a person gets Workers’ Compensation or third party damages.

For more information about compensation, see Chapter 16.

Activity test for students

Most young people receiving Youth Allowance as a student need to satisfy the activity test by undertaking full-time study or training, an apprenticeship or traineeship. Young people who are the principal carer of a dependent child, or who have been assessed as having a partial capacity to work, have reduced activity test requirements but can satisfy the activity test in much the same way.

For more information about activity test requirements for partial capacity to work, see Chapter 2.

Full-time study/training

For most full-time students enrolment in, and undertaking, an approved course will be their “approved” activity.

Full-time study/training is defined as:

- enrolment at an approved institution such as school, college, university or TAFE, and
- undertaking at least 75 per cent of the institution’s full-time study load.

The courses generally approved for Youth Allowance include:

- secondary education
- TAFE courses
- associate diplomas and certain other diplomas
- undergraduate courses
- graduate courses (excluding most Masters and all Doctorate courses).

Full-time students who are between study programmes (vacation periods) continue to be regarded as full-time students as long as they intend to resume study in the following term or semester.

Full-time Australian Apprenticeship

A person may be entitled to Youth Allowance as an Australian Apprentice if they are undertaking a full-time Australian Apprenticeship.

Important: Part-time Australian Apprentices may be entitled to receive Youth Allowance if they combine their training with other agreed activities.

Combining looking for work with study or other activities

For information about doing part-time study, see the “Combining looking for work with study or other activities” section in Chapter 2.

Rate of payment

The rate of Youth Allowance depends on whether the young person is single or partnered, whether they have children, and whether they live at home or need to live away from home.

A Parental Means Test applies if a young person is classified as “dependent” for Youth Allowance purposes. The young person’s rate of Youth Allowance will depend on their parents’ income, assets and in some cases their family’s actual means (see later in this chapter) and their assessed capacity to work. The Parental Means Test does not apply to young people who are considered independent for Youth Allowance purposes (see below).

Information about Youth Allowance payment rates is available by asking Centrelink for the latest payment rates factsheet or visiting the Centrelink website at www.centrelink.gov.au

Independence criteria

A young person is considered independent if they:

- have earned an amount equivalent to 75 per cent of the Commonwealth Training Award Rate applicable in an 18 month period since leaving secondary school (\$18 525 at December 2006)
- have worked to support themselves for at least 18 months, working full-time at least 30 hours a week during the preceding two years (or for a period or periods of 12 months if considered disadvantaged)
- have worked part-time for at least 15 hours a week for at least two years since last leaving secondary school
- are a job seeker who has a partial capacity to work, that is, unable to work full-time due to illness, disability or other barrier but assessed as able to work at least 15 hours a week within two years
- are a refugee who is not wholly or substantially dependent on someone else on a long-term basis
- are an orphan
- are unable to live at home because it is unreasonable for them to do so
- are in state care, or only stopped being in state care because of their age
- have or have had a dependent child
- are or have been married (including living in a marriage-like relationship for 12 months or more, or six months in special circumstances)
- are aged 25 years or over, or
- have parents who cannot exercise their responsibilities.

Personal Income Test

A Personal Income Test applies to all Youth Allowance recipients. It is based on the income they earn each fortnight, whether it is from work, investments or other sources.

Full-time students and Australian Apprentices can earn up to \$236 (before tax) a fortnight without affecting their Youth Allowance payment. If they earn between \$236 and \$316 a fortnight, this will reduce their fortnightly Youth Allowance by 50 cents in the dollar for every dollar over the \$236 limit. Income above \$316 a fortnight will reduce Youth Allowance by 60 cents in the dollar for every dollar over \$316.

Youth Allowance customers who are working will usually be required to report their earnings to Centrelink each fortnight. The earnings reported will be checked with their employer from time to time. There are penalties for failing to notify Centrelink within 14 days of any earnings received or earned, and/or providing incorrect or misleading details. Not declaring income may lead to a 10 per cent recovery fee being added to the amount of the debt.

Income Bank

The Income Bank is available to people on Youth Allowance, Austudy and ABSTUDY who are full-time students or full-time Australian Apprentices or who participate in full-time training. Students can accumulate any unused part of their fortnightly income-free area of \$236 a fortnight over the duration of their study, up to a maximum of \$6000. Australian Apprentices can also accumulate any unused part of their fortnightly income-free area of \$236 a fortnight over the duration of their Australian Apprenticeship, up to a maximum of \$1000. The Income Bank can then be used to offset income earned at a later date, thus allowing both students and Australian Apprentices the flexibility to earn money later, without it necessarily affecting their payment of Youth Allowance, Austudy and ABSTUDY.

Students and Australian Apprentices can convert some or all of their Income Bank balance to Working Credit (maximum 1000 credits) if they stop studying or undertaking their Australian Apprenticeship and are still getting an income support payment.

For more information about Working Credit, see Chapter 2.

Personal Assets Test

A Personal Assets Test also applies if the young person is considered independent. Information on current assets test limits is available by asking Centrelink for a copy of the latest payment rates factsheet, or visiting the Centrelink website at www.centrelink.gov.au

Partner Income Test

A Partner Income Test applies to an independent Youth Allowance recipient who is a member of a couple. Only income above the income-free area earned by the Youth Allowance recipient will affect the rate of Youth Allowance. The amount of the partner income-free area depends on their age and whether or not the partner is receiving a payment from Centrelink.

Youth Allowance customers whose partner receives a pension have a joint income test. That is, the income of both partners is added and half the combined income is the assessable income for each of the partners.

Parental Means Test

The Parental Means Test is used to measure the extent to which parents can financially help their dependent children, whether they are a student, Australian Apprentice or a job seeker.

There are three parts to the Parental Means Test:

- **Family Assets Test**—this test takes into account personal, farm and/or business assets inside and outside Australia. Assets include the value of goods, cars, boats, furniture, money, investments, real estate and personal property. It does not include the principal family home and up to two hectares of the land that the home stands on that is used for domestic purposes. A discount applies to net business or farm assets. Youth Allowance is not payable when total family assets are above the allowable limit.
- **Parental Income Test**—under this test, income includes combined parental taxable income, child support received, any fringe benefits received from employers, income from outside Australia and net passive business losses. An offset is allowed for any child support paid.
- **Family Actual Means Test**—for most wage and salary earners (Pay As You Go taxpayers), the income and assets tests are enough to determine the rate of Youth Allowance a young person can get. However, taxable income is not always a good indicator of a family's ability to support their dependent children, particularly when some families are able to minimise their taxable income. If the young person's parents are self-employed, have income or assets outside Australia, have claimed a business loss, have interests in a trust or company, or are business migrants, the Family Actual Means Test may apply.

Some customers are exempt from the income, assets and actual means tests. Contact Centrelink for more information about these exemptions.

More information about the Family Actual Means Test and Parental Means Test is available by calling **13 2490**, or visiting the Centrelink website at www.centrelink.gov.au

Other payments and concessions

Students and Australian Apprentices receiving Youth Allowance may be eligible for:

- a Low Income Health Care Card
- Pharmaceutical Allowance
- Remote Area Allowance
- Fares Allowance (students only).

For more information about these payments and concessions, see Chapter 13.

They may also be eligible for:

- a higher rate of payment if they have to live away to study, to work as an Australian Apprentice, to participate in training or to look for work
- a higher rate of payment if they are a single principal carer who has specific exemptions from the activity test
- Youth Disability Supplement if they are full-time students and job seekers under the age of 21 years who are assessed by a Job Capacity Assessor as having a capacity to work of less than 30 hours a week, and/or
- an Advance Payment of their future entitlement. The amount of the Advance Payment is repaid by automatic deductions from the next 13 fortnightly payments. An Advance Payment can be paid only once in any 12 month period. It can be paid in two separate instalments.

How to claim

For information about how to make a claim, see Chapter 14.

More information about Youth Allowance is available by calling Centrelink on **13 2490**, or visiting the Centrelink website at www.centrelink.gov.au

Austudy

Purpose

Austudy provides assistance to full-time students and full-time Australian Apprentices aged 25 years and over who are undertaking an approved course of education at an approved institution or undertaking a full-time Australian Apprenticeship.

Qualifications

To be eligible for Austudy, a person must be aged 25 years or over, an Australian resident, and doing an approved full-time course at an approved institution or doing a full-time Australian Apprenticeship.

Residence requirements

To claim Austudy a person must:

- be an Australian resident (that is, must be living in Australia) and be one of the following:
 - an Australian citizen, or
 - a permanent visa holder, or
 - a protected special category visa holder (that is, someone who arrived on a New Zealand passport and who was in Australia on 26 February 2001 or for 12 months in the two years immediately before that date, or who was assessed as “protected” before 26 February 2004), and
- present in Australia when claiming.

Newly arrived residents generally have a 104 week waiting period. There are some exemptions, including for refugees, the holders of certain other permanent visas, Australian citizens and in some circumstances their partners and dependent children.

For more information about the 104 week waiting period, see Chapter 8.

Payment outside Australia

Austudy may be paid for certain temporary absences outside Australia in particular circumstances. Austudy customers thinking about travelling outside Australia for any reason must contact Centrelink before they leave to get advice about whether conditions apply.

For more information about payment outside Australia, see Chapter 17.

Full-time study/training

A student is considered to meet the activity test under Austudy if they are engaged in approved full-time study, or are approved to undertake a concessional study load.

A person may also be entitled to Austudy as an Australian Apprentice if they are undertaking a full-time Australian Apprenticeship (apprenticeship or traineeship).

Full-time study means a study load that is considered full-time by an approved institution (at least 75 per cent of the normal full-time student study load). If the course attracts Student Contribution Payments (previously known as Higher Education Contribution Scheme) a student must have an equivalent full-time student load (EFTSL) of at least 0.375 each teaching period or semester (for semester based courses) or 0.75 EFTSL for a year if the course has at least one full year subject. This also applies if a person is studying externally or by correspondence.

A concessional study load means that in certain circumstances an individual may be able to undertake less than a full-time study load. A person may undertake a study load of at least 66 per cent of the normal study load if:

- it is the institution's normal requirement for the course, or
- they were given a specific direction or recommendation in writing by the academic registrar (or equivalent).

A person may undertake a study load of at least 25 per cent of the normal full-time study load if they cannot study because they have a substantial disability (medical or specialist documentation is required).

More information about study load requirements is available by calling Centrelink on **13 2490**.

Approved courses

Generally, secondary education courses, graduate courses, undergraduate courses, associate diplomas and certain

diplomas and TAFE courses will be approved for Austudy. Austudy is not available for Masters and Doctorate study.

If a student stops studying prematurely or changes their study details, they must notify Centrelink within 14 days of becoming aware of the change.

If people do not meet their obligations for Austudy, including informing Centrelink about changes in circumstances, they may have a participation failure applied and/or an overpayment. In this event, payments may be stopped for a period. (See the "Activity test and participation requirements penalties" section later in this chapter.)

Personal Income Test

All people applying for Austudy have a Personal Income Test based on how much a person earns each fortnight.

Students and Australian Apprentices can earn up to \$236 (before tax) a fortnight without affecting their Austudy. Those who earn between \$236 and \$316 a fortnight will have their fortnightly payment reduced by 50 cents in the dollar for every dollar over the limit. Any income above \$316 a fortnight will reduce Austudy by 60 cents in the dollar for every dollar over this amount. This may be affected by the Income Bank (see the "Income Bank" section earlier in this chapter).

Personal Assets Test

A Personal Assets Test also applies. Information on current assets test limits is available by asking Centrelink for a copy of the latest payment rates factsheet, or visiting the Centrelink website at www.centrelink.gov.au

Partner Income Test

The Partner Income Test applies to a person receiving Austudy who is a member of a couple. Only income earned by the Austudy recipient's partner above the income-free area will affect the rate of Austudy. The amount of the partner income-free area depends on their age and whether or not the partner is receiving income support payments from Centrelink.

A joint income test is applied for Austudy recipients whose partner receives a pension. That is, the income of both partners is added and half the combined income is the assessable income for each of the partners.

Rate of payment

Austudy rates depend on whether the person is single or has a partner, whether they have children, and whether the person has been receiving certain Centrelink payments for 26 weeks out of the 39 weeks immediately before starting the course or Australian Apprenticeship.

Information on current Austudy rates is available by asking Centrelink for a copy of the latest payment rates factsheet, or visiting the Centrelink website at www.centrelink.gov.au

Compensation

Payment of Austudy may be affected if a person gets Workers' Compensation or third party damages.

For more information about compensation, see Chapter 16.

Other payments and concessions

Students and Australian Apprentices receiving Austudy may be eligible for:

- a Low Income Health Care Card
- Pharmaceutical Allowance
- Remote Area Allowance
- Fares Allowance (students only)
- an Advance Payment of their future entitlement. The amount of the Advance Payment is repaid by automatic deductions from the next 13 fortnightly payments. An Advance Payment can be paid only once in any 12 month period. It can be paid in two separate instalments
- Rent Assistance—from 1 January 2008, it is proposed to extend the payment of Rent Assistance to eligible Austudy recipients.

For more information about these payments and concessions, see Chapter 13.

How to claim

For information about how to make a claim, see Chapter 14.

More information about Austudy is available by calling Centrelink on **13 2490**, or visiting the Centrelink website at www.centrelink.gov.au

Activity test and participation requirement penalties

Not meeting obligations—participation failures

A participation failure may occur when people receiving Youth Allowance and Austudy as full-time students do not meet their activity test by:

- not notifying they have stopped study
- not notifying they have reduced their study load
- having more than the allowable unapproved absences
- not complying with guidelines, rules or regulations
- failing to enter an Activity Agreement when asked to do so.

A participation failure may be applied if they do not meet one of these requirements and their payment may stop. When they get paid again will depend on how quickly they get back to meeting their participation requirement. If a person has three or more participation failures in 12 months, their payment may stop for eight weeks.

Customers with a participation or serious failure have the right to have their case reviewed and should contact Centrelink to discuss any decision they think is wrong.

For more information about reviews and appeals, see Chapter 18.

Financial Case Management

Customers who have their payment stopped for eight weeks as a result of a repeated participation failure or a serious failure will be assessed for eligibility for Financial Case Management.

Financial Case Management will be offered if:

- customers have dependent children
- an eight week non-payment period is likely to cause hardship to other vulnerable dependants, or
- customers are considered exceptionally vulnerable.

Customers who are not eligible for Financial Case Management services will be offered referrals to other assistance when appropriate.

For more information about Financial Case Management, see Chapter 2.

ABSTUDY

Purpose

ABSTUDY is a Department of Education, Science and Training programme delivered by Centrelink. It helps Indigenous primary and secondary students* and tertiary students, including those doing Masters and Doctorate courses. ABSTUDY is also available to Indigenous full-time Australian Apprentices.

* Aged 14 years and over at 1 January in the year of study.

Qualifications

To be eligible for ABSTUDY, a person must:

- be an Australian citizen
- be an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person*
- be enrolled in an approved course, or
- be undertaking a full-time Australian Apprenticeship, and
- not be receiving or will not receive any other Australian Government study or training assistance including Community Development Employment Projects.

* The ABSTUDY definition of an Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person requires that the person:

- is of Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent, and
- identifies as an Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person, and
- is accepted as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in the community in which he or she lives or has lived.

Assistance available

ABSTUDY provides means tested income support payments (Living Allowance) to eligible students and full-time Australian Apprentices. Other means tested and means test free allowances and a range of supplementary benefits are also available to eligible ABSTUDY students and Australian Apprentices to help meet the costs associated with education expenses, tuition fees, and board and travel between their home and place of study. Students and Australian Apprentices receiving ABSTUDY may also be eligible for:

- a Low Income Health Care Card
- Rent Assistance
- Pharmaceutical Allowance
- Remote Area Allowance
- Fares Allowance (not available to Australian Apprentices).

Information on current ABSTUDY rates is available by asking Centrelink for a copy of the latest payment rates factsheet, or visiting the Centrelink website at www.centrelink.gov.au

Secondary and tertiary students receiving certain payments or pensions from Centrelink or the Department of Veterans' Affairs are not eligible for ABSTUDY income support payments but may qualify for the ABSTUDY Pensioner Education Supplement to undertake full-time or part-time study.

Youth Disability Supplement may also be available for full-time students under the age of 21 years who are assessed by a Job Capacity Assessor as having a capacity to work less than 30 hours a week.

For more information about other payments and concessions, see Chapter 13 or ask Centrelink for a copy of the *ABSTUDY Guide*.

Means tests

Dependent students and full-time Australian Apprentices are subject to the same Parental Means Test as applied to Youth Allowance (see the "Youth Allowance" section earlier in this chapter).

Full-time students and Australian Apprentices aged 16 years and over are subject to the same Personal Income Test as applied to Youth Allowance and Austudy (see the "Youth Allowance" and "Austudy" sections in this chapter) and also have access to the Income Bank (see the "Income Bank" section earlier in this chapter).

Independent students and Australian Apprentices may also be subject to a Personal Assets Test and, when applicable, tests on their partner's income and the couple's combined assets.

Information on the current income test and assets test limits is available by asking Centrelink for a copy of the latest payment rates factsheet, or visiting the Centrelink website at www.centrelink.gov.au

Payment outside Australia

ABSTUDY may be paid for temporary periods outside Australia in particular circumstances. ABSTUDY recipients thinking about travelling outside Australia for any reason must contact Centrelink before they leave to get advice about whether conditions apply.

For more information about payment outside Australia, see Chapter 17.

How to claim

For information about how to claim, see Chapter 14.

More information about ABSTUDY is available by calling Centrelink on **13 2317**, or visiting the Centrelink website at www.centrelink.gov.au

Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme

Purpose

The Assistance for Isolated Children (AIC) Scheme is a Department of Education, Science and Training programme delivered by Centrelink.

The AIC Scheme helps families of primary and secondary students who are unable to attend an appropriate state school on a daily basis because of geographic isolation or because the student has a disability or special health-related or education need. AIC also helps families of tertiary students under either the minimum age that the state or territory requires them to participate in education or training or 16 years of age (whichever is the greater) where the student is geographically isolated from an appropriate state school.

An appropriate state school is one that:

- offers the student's level of study, or
- provides access to the facilities, programmes and/or environment required if the student has a disability or special health-related or educational needs.

Qualifications

Assistance is available for families:

- with students who must board away from home in a school, hostel or privately
- who maintain a second home so that a student can attend school daily
- with students who are enrolled in full-time studies at an approved distance education institution, or
- with primary (or equivalent ungraded level) students who are getting Disability Support Pension or Parenting Payment (Single) who board away from home, live in a second home, or study by distance education.

Payments are intended to help such families with expenses incurred in providing access to education for their children.

Students must normally have reached minimum school entry age and be aged under 19 years at 1 January of the year of study. (Exceptions—students with a health-related condition, including a disability, may be eligible from the age of three and a half years. Tertiary students must be under either the minimum age that the state or territory requires them to participate in education or training or 16 years of age, whichever is greater, and certain pensioner students may get paid AIC up to their 21st birthday.)

Students and applicants must be Australian citizens or permanent residents or New Zealand citizens permanently settled in Australia. The student must be undertaking approved studies at an approved institution.

The AIC allowances available are—Boarding Allowance, Second Home Allowance, Distance Education Allowance and the AIC Pensioner Education Supplement. With the exception of the Additional Boarding Allowance (which is subject to a Parental Income Test), all AIC allowances are free from means testing.

Payment outside Australia

Assistance for Isolated Children may be paid for certain temporary absences outside Australia in particular circumstances. AIC payment customers thinking about travelling outside Australia for any reason must contact Centrelink before they leave to get advice about whether conditions apply.

For more information about payment outside Australia, see Chapter 17.

How to claim

For information about how to make a claim, see Chapter 14.

More information about AIC and how to claim is also available by calling Centrelink on **13 2318**, or visiting the Centrelink website at **www.centrelink.gov.au**

Pensioner Education Supplement

Purpose

The Pensioner Education Supplement (PES) is a non-taxable payment available to customers who are receiving certain Centrelink or Department of Veterans' Affairs income support payments and who are undertaking approved full-time or part-time study. For part-time study the student must be studying at least a minimum of 25 per cent of a full-time study load and may be approved for single parents, carers and people with a substantial disability.

PES aims to help customers with the costs associated with study and is free from income and assets testing.

Assistance available

PES is available at two rates, the full rate and half rate. The rate payable depends on the student's study load and the type of income support payment they receive.

Fares Allowance may be payable to certain PES recipients undertaking tertiary study (for more information see the "Fares Allowance" section later in this chapter).

PES recipients may be entitled to an Education Entry Payment.

Qualifications

To qualify for Pensioner Education Supplement customers must:

- be receiving a qualifying payment
- be at least 16 years of age, and
- be studying in an approved course at least 25 per cent of the full-time load.

In some cases customers may continue to receive PES when they claim a non-qualifying payment such as Newstart Allowance or Youth Allowance (job seeker). If a person is eligible to receive PES, it will be discussed with them as part of claiming that payment.

Residence requirements

To claim PES a person must:

- be an Australian resident (that is, must be living in Australia), and be one of the following:
 - an Australian citizen, or
 - a permanent visa holder, or
 - a protected special category visa holder (that is, someone who arrived on a New Zealand passport and who was in Australia on 26 February 2001 or for 12 months in the two years immediately before that date, or who was assessed as "protected" before 26 February 2004), and
- present in Australia when claiming.

Newly arrived residents generally have a 104 week waiting period. There are some exemptions, including for refugees, the holders of certain other permanent visas, Australian citizens and in some circumstances their partners and dependent children.

Payment outside Australia

Pensioner Education Supplement may be paid for certain temporary absences outside Australia in particular circumstances. Pensioner Education Supplement customers thinking about travelling outside Australia for any reason must contact Centrelink before they leave to get advice about whether conditions apply.

For more information about payment outside Australia, see Chapter 17.

How to claim

For information about how to claim, see Chapter 14.

Fares Allowance

Purpose

Centrelink delivers Fares Allowance on behalf of the Department of Education, Science and Training. This allowance is paid to certain categories of tertiary students to cover the cost of fares for travelling between their permanent home and educational institution, providing the permanent home and institution are within Australia and its external territories. If studying for the full year, the equivalent of two return trips home may be paid. Fares Allowance is also available to secondary boarding students who are eligible for ABSTUDY “away-from-home” entitlements.

Qualifications

Fares Allowance is available to students receiving:

- Youth Allowance as a full-time tertiary student or when study is the only activity the student is required to fulfil
- ABSTUDY as a full-time or part-time tertiary student
- ABSTUDY as a secondary student
- Austudy as a full-time or part-time tertiary student, or
- Pensioner Education Supplement as a full-time or part-time tertiary student.

Students may be eligible if they are:

- considered dependent, and get the away-from-home rate of Youth Allowance
- secondary or tertiary students and get the away-from-home rate of ABSTUDY Living Allowance, or are required to attend compulsory course activities away from their normal place of residence
- considered independent, are partnered and live away from their partner for study purposes
- sole-parents who get Youth Allowance, Austudy, ABSTUDY or Pensioner Education Supplement and live away from their dependent children for study purposes, or
- studying an approved external course at an Australian institution and have to travel to the institution for a compulsory residential component of their course.

Important: Fares Allowance in the case of Youth Allowance, Austudy and Pensioner Education Supplement is only available to tertiary students.

The number of trips covered are:

- a single journey from the student’s permanent home to the tertiary education institution to start study for the year

- one return journey between the institution and the student’s permanent home during the year (only if getting Youth Allowance, Austudy, or the Pensioner Education Supplement for six months or more)
- a single journey between the institution and the student’s permanent home on completing or discontinuing studies
- dependent on the student’s level of study for ABSTUDY recipients.

External studies students are entitled to one return trip for each course they are enrolled in that requires attendance at the institution for a residential component.

Some students getting ABSTUDY have access to additional Fares Allowance entitlements.

How to claim

For information about how to claim, see Chapter 14.

More information about Fares Allowance is available by calling Centrelink on **13 2490** (Youth Allowance, Austudy and Pensioner Education Supplement), **13 2317** (ABSTUDY), **13 2850** (Employment Services), or visiting the Centrelink website at **www.centrelink.gov.au**

Services

- Centrelink Psychologists
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- support for Indigenous youth
- support for people with disabilities, illnesses or injuries.

Centrelink Psychologists

Centrelink Psychologists are registered health professionals who provide professional assessments, including Job Capacity Assessments. Centrelink Psychologists see people of different ages, from all types of backgrounds and with a wide range of concerns. Their work focuses on assessing work capacity and determining which services and programmes will be suitable for people who may need help or support. Centrelink Psychologists provide advice and recommendations for assistance and initiate referrals to the most appropriate services (for example, the Job

Network, Disability Employment Network, or community organisations).

Centrelink Psychologists also provide specialist assessments and offer short-term psychological interventions such as cognitive behaviour therapy, counselling, behaviour management and modification and motivational interviewing to facilitate a customer's engagement with the Job Network.

For more information about Centrelink Psychologists, see Chapter 13.

Centrelink Job Capacity Assessors

Centrelink Job Capacity Assessors are allied health professionals. They come from a range of disciplines including psychologists, social workers, physiotherapists and occupational therapists. Job Capacity Assessors help identify a person's ability to work and any barriers they face in getting and maintaining employment.

Centrelink Job Capacity Assessors may provide assessments for:

- job seekers claiming or receiving Centrelink payments who have been identified as having barriers preventing them from working
- people claiming Disability Support Pension or those having their Disability Support Pension reviewed
- voluntary job seekers such as mature aged people or Disability Support Pension recipients wanting to get a job.

Following the assessment, Centrelink Job Capacity Assessors can directly refer clients to an employment or support service that meets their individual needs. Services include the Job Network, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Disability Employment Network, Personal Support Programme, Job Placement, Employment and Training or Job Capacity Account short-term interventions. Many Job Capacity Assessors also provide Job Capacity Account short-term intervention services to help prepare people to receive employment assistance from the Job Network.

For more information about Job Capacity Assessments, see Chapter 9.

Social work services

Centrelink Social Workers provide professional assessments including Job Capacity Assessments, counselling and referral to community support services for customers who may be facing difficult personal and family situations.

For more information about social work services, see Chapter 13.

Outreach

Purpose

Centrelink visits state, territory and local government organisations and places like schools, youth refuges, community sector youth services, TAFE colleges and universities. The focus is on providing a regular and educative information service about the wide range of programmes and services on offer for both young people and organisations involved with them.

Further details

Centrelink Youth Officers can help customers outside mainstream Customer Service Centres. This out servicing is undertaken at various times of the year, for example, at education institutions during enrolment periods.

Career Information Centres

Purpose

Centrelink's Career Information Centres provide a comprehensive free service to all Australian residents including students, the unemployed, or people who are looking at changing jobs. Career Information Centres can help customers make informed decisions about education, training and employment options and pathways.

Further details

Career Information Centres have a selection of printed, video and computerised information to help plan or decide on a career, including:

- a comprehensive library containing information about many different occupations
- information about courses provided by colleges, TAFE and universities in each state/territory
- information about employment trends and opportunities
- resources to help prepare applications and résumés.

An Australia wide network of 12 offices provides this service to all Australian residents. For people living in rural, regional or remote areas, personal assistance can be provided by phone, mail, email or fax to anywhere in Australia.

Contact details for Career Information Centres in each state/territory are listed in Appendix 1.

Career Planning

Purpose

The Career Planning Programme helps people of all ages to make appropriate and realistic career choices. Customers who are having trouble deciding on a career and needing direction—whether it is deciding on a course of study, upgrading their existing skills or finding the right job—can get help through Career Planning.

Assistance includes:

- identifying and matching job seeker goals to interests and identifying abilities
- looking at the range of jobs available in a job seeker's area of interest
- finding out about training or study available for their career choice
- planning a strategy to find available work in their chosen field.

Further details

Centrelink can refer eligible job seekers registered with Centrelink to professional counsellors who provide a free group-based career planning service.

Career Planning is offered to all job seekers registered with Centrelink who are getting payments. Young people aged between 15 and 20 years who are registered but not eligible for payment, can also request or be offered Career Planning.

To find out more about Career Planning, customers can visit a Centrelink Customer Service Centre or call **13 2490** or **13 2850**.

Youth Pathways

Purpose

Youth Pathways is a programme aiming to assist young people aged 13 to 19 years who are at risk of not successfully completing Year 12 (or equivalent) and going on to further education, training or employment and active participation in the community.

Assistance includes:

- personal one-on-one assistance to help identify strengths, goals and barriers
- individual support to achieve their goals
- individual support and guidance to help overcome barriers
- other services aimed at better equipping young people to move successfully through school and on to further education, training or employment.

To find out more about Youth Pathways, customers can visit a Centrelink Customer Service Centre, or call **13 2490**, or call the Youth Pathways Hotline on **1800 635 035**.

Language, Literacy and Numeracy Programme

Eligible job seekers can access language, literacy and numeracy training that aims to help them improve their chances of getting and keeping a job, as well as making their everyday lives easier.

For more information about the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Programme, see Chapter 2.

Australian Apprenticeship Access Programme

The primary focus of the Australian Apprenticeships Access Programme is to help job seekers obtain employment or further education or training.

For more information about the Australian Apprenticeship Access Programme, see Chapter 2.

Other information services

Other services available from Centrelink include access to:

- JobSearch Kiosks and phones to help job seekers access Job Network services
- the Centrelink website
- a wide variety of information booklets and brochures.

More information about services and payments for youth and students is available by calling **13 2490**, or visiting the Centrelink website at **www.centrelink.gov.au**

Support for young people who are homeless or at risk of leaving home prematurely

Centrelink can help young people who are experiencing family conflict or who are disadvantaged or homeless, access a number of programmes and services, including those provided directly by Centrelink and those in the wider community.

Centrelink Community Officers—provide visiting services to a number of community based agencies and services. These services can help young people who are homeless and who may have difficulty attending a Centrelink Customer Service Centre.

Centrelink Social Workers—can provide short-term counselling and support to young people and their families

and help them with family mediation/reconciliation. When this is not possible the social workers can refer the young person to community based services, for help with accommodation, independent living skills, health and longer-term counselling. Centrelink Social Workers assess young people for the independent rate of Youth Allowance if there are serious reasons why they cannot live at home.

Youth Allowance/ABSTUDY Independent Rate/Unreasonable to Live at Home—young people may qualify for a higher rate of payment if there are serious reasons why they cannot live at home. If a young person aged under 18 years claims this payment, they will be given an appointment to see a social worker. The social worker will undertake a comprehensive assessment, contacting a range of parties including the young person's parents, to determine if it is unreasonable for the young person to live at home. In undertaking this assessment, the social worker may provide short-term counselling and assistance to the young person and their family. The social worker will also make referrals, when appropriate, to community based services.

Centrelink also offers referrals to the following services:

Reconnect—an initiative funded by the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs to provide a range of community based early intervention services aimed at family reconciliation and other support for young people aged between 12 and 18 years who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Reconnect aims to improve the young person's level of engagement with family, work, education, training and the community. Reconnect is about:

- family reconciliation
- improving relationships with parents and other family members
- engaging or maintaining a young person in education, training and/or employment and with their community
- improving a young person's experience of independence when this is appropriate
- working in close partnership with the community, including Indigenous communities.

Job Placement, Employment and Training (JPET)—an early intervention programme focusing on youth in transition. It provides help to young people aged between 15 and 21 years who are ex-offenders, refugees, or wards of the state, or who are at risk of becoming homeless. The programme provides help to overcome a range of personal barriers preventing young people from participating effectively in employment, education or training and having a sustainable future. JPET can offer young people support and advice to find a place to live, work out finances, stay at school, get a job or do training that suits them.

To find out more about JPET, customers can visit a Centrelink Customer Service Centre or call **13 2490**.

Commonwealth/State/Territory Protocol for Unsupported Young People—under an agreement between the Australian Government and all states and territories, Centrelink Social Workers refer specific groups of young people who claim payments to the relevant state and territory departments responsible for the care and protection of young people. This agreement involves a process for state and territory departments to provide information to Centrelink about whether the young person is considered to be at risk of harm and any proposed action to be taken by the state or territory departments. The process also allows for case discussions between the two departments to occur, to ensure that young people in these groups get an appropriate level of support.

The following groups of young people are referred under the protocol agreements:

- young people aged under 15 years at the time they claim payments (under 16 years in Tasmania, South Australia, Queensland and Western Australia)
- young people aged between 15 and 17 years and their siblings who have been abused or who are regarded as being in serious and imminent risk of harm
- young people who are on a care and protection order with state and territory departments.

Centrelink also offers referrals to other programmes see Chapter 2 for a complete list.

Support for Indigenous youth

Young Indigenous customers have access to services offered by Centrelink. There is also a range of Department of Education, Science and Training, Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and other government department programmes specifically designed to give extra help to these young customers. Centrelink can refer young Indigenous customers to these programmes.

Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme

The Department of Education, Science and Training scheme, arranges for qualified tutors to give extra tuition to Indigenous students who need help with their studies. It also provides help to students from primary and secondary school to TAFE college, university, or other formal post-schooling education or training.

Tertiary students should contact the Indigenous Student Centre at their education institution.

The Department of Education, Science and Training Indigenous Education units are located throughout Australia and can be contacted by calling **Freecall™1800 800 821**.

Further assistance

See under “Wage Assistance” and “JobSearch Indigenous Employment Service” headings in Chapter 2 for information about these programmes for Indigenous people.

Support for people with disabilities, illnesses or injuries

Centrelink helps people with disabilities, illnesses or injuries to access services that will help them find work or training tailored to their individual needs.

For more information, see Chapter 9.

How to find out more

Internet

Visit the Centrelink website at www.centrelink.gov.au

Phone

13 2490	Youth Allowance (students), Austudy and Pensioner Education Supplement.
13 3633	Australian Apprentices.
13 2317	ABSTUDY.
13 2318	Assistance for Isolated Children.
13 1673	For information on International Social Security Agreements with other countries, payment of Australian benefits outside Australia, and claiming pensions from other countries.
13 1202	For information or help in languages other than English.
Freecall™1800 810 586	A TTY phone is required to use this service. This is for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment. Customers can also call the National Relay Service on 13 3677 (using a TTY or computer) and ask the operator to call a local “13” or “1800” number.

A full list of Centrelink phone numbers is on the back cover of this book. See Appendix 1 for Centrelink phone numbers and Customer Service Centre addresses listed by state/territory.

Important: 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.

Department of Education, Science and Training

Freecall™1800 639 629	Australian Apprenticeships.
Freecall™1800 635 035	Youth Pathways.
Freecall™1800 800 821	Indigenous Tutorial Assistance Scheme.
Freecall™1800 639 109	for the student Teletypewriter service for hearing and speech impaired people.

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations

Freecall™1800 077 700	Green Corps.
13 2490	Job Placement, Employment and Training programme.

Publications

Centrelink has a wide range of publications about youth and student payments and services. This includes information guides, booklets and brochures on Youth Allowance, Austudy, ABSTUDY, Assistance for Isolated Children, Pensioner Education Supplement, Work for the Dole and Mutual Obligation.

These publications can be downloaded from the Centrelink website at www.centrelink.gov.au (go to “Publications”). They are also available at Centrelink Customer Service Centres together with information from other government and non-government organisations.