

Centrelink customers travelling within Australia



Are you planning a trip around Australia or travelling to find work?

If you are a Centrelink customer travelling within Australia, there are some important things you need to know.

Generally, if you and/or your partner leave your principal home for a travelling holiday or to find work and plan to return to that home once the holiday is over, the absence is regarded as temporary and Rent Assistance is not payable on any accommodation charges you incur while travelling. After 12 months, if you are still travelling (even if it is a temporary absence), the value of your principal home is treated as an asset and you and/or your partner may be able to receive Rent Assistance for holiday accommodation. The amount you receive will be based on the amount you pay for accommodation.

If you decide to rent out your principal home during your absence, the rental income you receive is counted as income in assessing the rate of your pension or allowance. Rent Assistance is still not payable for the first 12 months of your temporary absence.

What if I don't own my home?

Rent Assistance is paid to assist with the cost of occupying your principal home. If you permanently leave a rental property to travel throughout the country, you must provide Centrelink with the details of your new principal home which could be a caravan park or motel, for example, even though this may change on a regular basis.

If you and/or your partner continue to pay rent for your principal home while travelling, that is you leave your rental accommodation temporarily, Rent Assistance will continue to be assessed on the amount you pay for renting the property. Rent Assistance will not be assessed for the accommodation you stay in while travelling nor can the amounts be combined.

What do I have to tell Centrelink and when?

You should tell Centrelink of any changes to your accommodation details as soon as they occur to ensure you receive the correct rate of payment. Rules for providing accommodation information to Centrelink vary according to the type of payment you receive.

If you receive a payment and you are **not** required to lodge fortnightly forms or notify Centrelink of your earnings each fortnight to receive your payment and you want to be paid Rent Assistance whilst you are travelling, you must notify Centrelink of your new accommodation details on the day you change address and/or start to pay a different amount of rent. This must be done every time you change accommodation details to make sure you receive your full Rent Assistance entitlement. Arrears of Rent Assistance can only be paid from the date you notify Centrelink.

Notification can be made in writing, by fax or by calling in to any Centrelink office or by phoning Centrelink on the 13 number you normally ring.

If you don't let Centrelink know on the date your accommodation changes, Rent Assistance can only be paid at a higher rate from the day you advise Centrelink.

www.centrelink.gov.au



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If you receive a payment where you **are** required to lodge a form or notify Centrelink of your earnings each fortnight to receive your payment, you can advise your accommodation changes on the day you are required to report. If you are eligible for a higher rate of Rent Assistance, payment will be made from the date you move.

To claim your entitlement to Rent Assistance you must take or send your Rent Certificate or rent receipts with a Rent Declaration form to Centrelink.

If you receive Rent Assistance with your **Family Tax Benefit**, you must advise any change to your circumstances (for example, new address or rent details) before the end of the financial year following the financial year in which the event occurred to make sure you receive the correct rate of payment.

How to find out more

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| Employment Services | 13 2850 |
| Youth and Student Services | 13 2490 |
| Family Assistance Office | 13 6150 |
| Disability, Sickness and Carers | 13 2717 |
| Retirement Services | 13 2300 |
| In languages other than English | 13 1202 |
| Customer Relations | Freecall™ 1800 050 004 |
| (for complaints, compliments and suggestions) | |
| Australian Government Services Fraud | |
| Tip-off Line | 13 1524 |
| TTY* payment enquiries | Freecall™ 1800 810 586 |
| *TTY is only for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment. A TTY phone is required to use this service | |
| To make an appointment | 13 1021 |

Go to our website at www.centrelink.gov.au

Important: Calls to '13' numbers from a standard telephone service can be made from anywhere within Australia for not more than the cost of a local call (call charges may vary depending upon the telephone service provider). Calls to '1800' numbers are free of charge. Calls from public and mobile telephones may be charged at a higher rate.

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 November 2005, 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.