

# Voluntary Income Management



**Income Management is a way to assist you in managing your money. You can apply for Voluntary Income Management if you would like Centrelink to help you manage your payments.**

## What is Income Management?

Income Management means that part of your payments from Centrelink and/or the Department of Veterans' Affairs will be managed by Centrelink to help pay for things you need.

## How do I apply for Voluntary Income Management?

You will need to apply to Centrelink to see if your payments can be income managed. You can do this by contacting Centrelink in person or by calling the Centrelink Income Management line on **13 2594**.

If you are eligible, Centrelink will then arrange for you to attend an appointment to talk about Voluntary Income Management and how it works.

If your payments cannot be income managed, Centrelink can talk to you about other available options.

## When will Income Management start?

At your first Income Management appointment, Centrelink will tell you when your payments can start being income managed.

## Where will Voluntary Income Management be available?

Voluntary Income Management is being made available in the Cannington area of Perth and in some locations in the Kimberley region of Western Australia.

## How much of my payments can be managed by Centrelink?

Centrelink will income manage 70 per cent of your regular fortnightly payments, and all of any advances and lump sum payments. However, deductions like Child Support Payments and government debt repayments will be taken out first.

### For example

Mark receives \$458.90 each fortnight on Newstart Allowance. He pays \$30.00 each fortnight in child support and \$28.90 in government debt repayments. This means he currently gets paid \$400.00 per fortnight.

Under Voluntary Income Management, 70 per cent this amount (\$280.00) will be income managed by Centrelink with the remaining amount (\$120.00) being paid into Mark's bank account.

## What about the rest of my regular fortnightly payments?

The remaining 30 per cent of your regular fortnightly payments will be paid to you in the usual way.

## Will Income Management reduce my payments?

No. Income Management will not reduce the total amount of your payments from Centrelink and/or the Department of Veterans' Affairs. Income Management will only change the way you receive your payments.

## What will happen to the money income managed by Centrelink?

The money will be used to pay for things you need such as food, clothes, rent, electricity, medicine and basic household goods. The money cannot be spent on alcohol, tobacco, pornography or gambling. Centrelink will talk with you to work out the things that will be paid for out of your income managed money.

## How do I spend my income managed money?

There are a few different ways that you can spend your income managed money. Centrelink will explain how these work when you meet with them.

## What happens to any current Centrepay deductions?

You should talk to Centrelink about any Centrepay deductions you already have.

## What happens if I do not attend my Centrelink appointment?

It is important for you to attend any appointments that are made for you. If you do not attend the first appointment with Centrelink your payments cannot be income managed.

## How long will Income Management last?

Your payments can be income managed for a maximum of 12 months. If you have volunteered for Income Management you may ask to end Income Management at any time.

## What payments are affected by Income Management?

The payments listed below, may be managed by Centrelink:

- Age Pension
- Disability Support Pension
- Wife Pension
- Carer Payment
- Parenting Payment Single/Parenting Payment Partnered
- Bereavement Payments and Allowances
- Widow B Pension

- Mature Age Allowance/Mature Age Partner Allowance
- Widow Allowance
- Newstart Allowance
- Youth Allowance
- Austudy Payment
- Sickness Allowance
- Special Benefit
- Partner Allowance
- Family Tax Benefit
- Carer Allowance
- Double Orphans Pension
- Mobility Allowance
- Pensioner Education Supplement
- Telephone Allowance
- ABSTUDY, if it includes Living Allowance
- ABSTUDY Pensioner Education Supplement
- Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme payments
- Service Pension
- Income Support Supplement
- Defence Force Income Support Allowance
- Utilities Allowance
- Rent Assistance
- Remote Area Allowance, **and**
- Pharmaceutical Allowance.

**All advance and lump sum payments will be 100 per cent income managed.**

## What about my Baby Bonus?

If your payments are being income managed any Baby Bonus payment you get will be 100 per cent income managed. Your Baby Bonus payment will be paid to you in 13 fortnightly instalments, rather than as a lump sum.

You will not lose any Baby Bonus money because of Income Management.

### For example

Tiffanie has volunteered for Income Management. After the birth of her child, Tiffanie fills out a claim form for the Baby Bonus.

Her claim is approved and she will get \$5000 to help with the costs of caring for her baby.

Under Income Management, Tiffanie's Baby Bonus will be paid in 13 fortnightly instalments of \$384.00. This amount (\$384.00) will be managed by Centrelink to pay for the things Tiffanie and her baby need.

## What happens if I move?

If you move, you will need to tell Centrelink. Centrelink will then discuss with you your future Income Management arrangements.

## What happens if I earn a wage?

Wages are not included in Voluntary Income Management, but you still need to report any earnings to Centrelink as they may affect your Centrelink payments.

Only payments from Centrelink and the Department of Veterans' Affairs can be income managed.

## What happens when Income Management ends?

Centrelink will talk to you about what will happen. If you have not used all of your income managed money it will be paid to you either as a lump sum or by instalments.

## What happens if I go off payments?

If you go off payments you will no longer be eligible for Income Management and you will need to talk to Centrelink about these arrangements.

## What happens if my payments change?

The amount of money being managed by Centrelink will probably also change. Please call the Centrelink Income Management line on **13 2594** or visit a Centrelink office for more information.

## What happens if I want to change the things being paid for from my income managed money?

You will need to talk to Centrelink about any changes you would like to make by calling the Centrelink Income Management line on **13 2594**.

## How can I confirm where my income managed money has been spent?

Every three months you will receive a list of what has been paid for out of your income managed money. You can also ask Centrelink for a list at anytime.

## Are there any options other than Voluntary Income Management?

There are options other than Voluntary Income Management to help you manage your money.

Centrepay allows you make regular payments to a registered service provider directly from your Centrelink payments.

You may also choose to have your payments sent to a Payment Nominee who can help you decide how your money should be used to buy the things you need.

## What happens to the information I provide?

Your personal information is protected by law. Centrelink may give your information to the person or organisation that you have nominated for the purpose of:

- checking the amount you have to pay, **or**
- reconciling your payment details.

Centrelink can give your information to someone else in special circumstances where Commonwealth legislation allows or requires, or where you give permission (see the *Your Right to Privacy* factsheet).

## Appeals

If you are not happy with a decision on how your Income Management payments have been arranged, you can ask a Centrelink Authorised Review Officer (ARO) for a review.

For more information on Centrelink reviews and appeals processes please refer to *Centrelink—the basics*.

## For more information

If you have any questions about Income Management call the Centrelink Income Management line on **13 2594**.

To speak to Centrelink in a language other than English, call **13 1202**.

Translated information can also be found on the Centrelink website at [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au) under the 'We speak your language' link.

## Disclaimer

The information contained in this publication is intended only as a guide. The information is accurate as at August 2008. If you use this publication after that date, please check with Centrelink that it is still correct.