

Cape York Voluntary Income Management



Income Management is a way to assist you in managing your money. If you live in a community participating in the Cape York Welfare Reform Trial, and you would like Centrelink to help you manage your payments, you can voluntarily apply to the Family Responsibilities Commission to have your payments income managed.

Voluntary Income Management is being made available in the Aurukun, Coen, Hope Vale and Mossman Gorge communities and associated outstations.

What is Income Management?

Income Management means that part of your Centrelink payments will be managed by Centrelink to help pay for things you need.

How do I apply for voluntary Income Management?

You need to apply to the Family Responsibilities Commission who will then contact Centrelink about commencing Income Management.

If you are eligible, Centrelink will 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 will start being income managed.

How much of my payments will be income managed by Centrelink?

The Family Responsibilities Commission will tell Centrelink how much of your payments will be income managed. It is likely to be 60 or 75 per cent of your regular fortnightly payments and all of any advances and lump sum payments. Deductions like Child Support payments and government debt repayments will be taken out first.

For example

Tom 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, 75 per cent of this amount (\$300.00) will be income managed by Centrelink with the remaining amount (\$100.00) being paid into Tom's bank account.

What about the rest of my regular fortnightly payments?

The remaining amount 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. 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, things for your children and basic household goods. The money cannot be spent on alcohol, tobacco, pornography or gambling products. 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 the options 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.

How long will my payments be income managed?

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

What payments can be income managed?

- Abstudy Living Allowance
- Austudy payment
- Bereavement Allowance
- Disability Support Pension
- Mature Age Allowance
- Mature Age Partner Allowance
- Newstart Allowance
- Parenting Payment Partnered
- Parenting Payment Single
- Partner Allowance

- Sickness Allowance
- Special Benefit
- Widow Allowance
- Widow B Pension
- Wife Pension
- Youth Allowance
- Abstudy Pensioner Education Supplement
- Baby Bonus
- Bereavement Payment
- Carer Allowance
- Child Disability Assistance
- Double Orphan Pension
- Family Tax Benefit
- Maternity Immunisation Allowance
- Mobility Allowance
- Pensioner Education Supplement
- Pharmaceutical Allowance
- Rent Assistance
- Remote Area Allowance
- Telephone Allowance
- Utilities Allowance

Most 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

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

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

Under Income Management, Emma'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 Emma 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 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 in 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. 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 statement of what has been paid for out of your income managed money. You can also ask Centrelink for a statement 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.

Family Income Management can help you to work out a budget to meet your goals.

Centrepay allows you to 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 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**.

Disclaimer

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