

Casual or part-time workers: avoid a Centrelink debt



You must tell Centrelink if there are any changes to your circumstances or those of your partner that could affect your payment rate or entitlements. It is important that you get the right amount so you don't have to pay money back or risk a fine, community service or even a criminal record.

Here are some of the things you need to tell Centrelink about within 14 days

Have things changed?

- Have your income details changed?
- Have your partner's income details changed?
- Have your, or your partner's hours of work changed?
- Has your marital status changed or have you entered into a de facto relationship?
- Have you changed your address or rent details?
- Have your assets changed?
- Are you leaving Australia temporarily or permanently?

You need to tell Centrelink:

- the exact amount of earnings, before tax, from all sources, over the past 14 days, for you and your partner
- the number of hours you and your partner have worked over the past 14 days.

If you have a new partner, you must declare how much they have earned before tax.

Remember: you need to submit your last "Application for Payment" form (the form that verifies your entitlement to payment) even if you have found work, because you may still be entitled to a reduced payment.

Dependants

If you are being paid as a dependant, you should also tell Centrelink if:

- your parents' income details change
- you have a brother or sister who leaves or returns home
- you leave home
- you are paid an Away from Home rate and you return home (even temporarily).

Reporting your employment income

Centrelink may ask you to report your earnings and your partner's earnings, as well as any other changes, on the same day each fortnight. If so, Centrelink will send you a "Reporting Statement" telling you when to report.

To help us pay you the right amount you should bring your pay slips with you.

You can pick up an "Income Record Form" from any Centrelink Customer Service Centre to help you keep track of your and your partner's work.

Remember: Centrelink matches information with the Australian Taxation Office and verifies income with employers. Earnings-related debts are legally recoverable and may also incur an additional recovery fee.

How to find out more

Newstart Allowance	13 2850
Youth Allowance	13 2490
Family Tax Benefit	13 6150
Indigenous Call Centre	13 6380
To speak to Centrelink in languages other than English	13 1202
Customer Relations	Freecall™ 1800 050 004
Suggestions, complaints and compliments	
Australian Government Services Fraud Tip-off Line	13 1524
TTY* 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.

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

Check the “we speak your language” link on Centrelink’s website for information in languages other than English.

Note: 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.

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 August 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.