

# Were you receiving Parenting Payment before 1 July 2006?

## Will your youngest dependent child be seven years or older on 1 July 2007?

Under the new income support rules, more people are being asked to look for paid work. From 1 July 2007 you will be asked to look for, or undertake, part-time paid work of at least 30 hours a fortnight.

Even though you will need to look for work, you will continue to receive Parenting Payment until your youngest child turns 16, if you remain eligible.

## How many hours work a fortnight will I need to look for?

Part-time work participation requirements involve:

- looking for a part-time job of at least 30 hours a fortnight
- participating in employment services (such as the Job Network), **and**
- meeting an annual part-time mutual obligation requirement.

You can fully satisfy your requirements by working at least 30 hours a fortnight or undertaking full-time study.

## What do I need to do now?

As you were receiving Parenting Payment before 1 July 2006, you may have already attended an interview with Centrelink to help you understand how the changes will affect you. If you are not currently employed for 30 hours or more a fortnight, Centrelink may contact you again in the coming months and ask you to attend an interview where:

- you can talk to Centrelink about your individual circumstances, including your current and future participation requirements
- you will be asked to sign an Activity Agreement, **and**
- you will be advised about Australian Government support services you can access to help you find a job. This will include information on out of school-hours care and assistance with the cost of child care.

If you are currently employed and work 30 hours or more a fortnight, Centrelink may contact you at a later date.

## What do I do if I am already working, but less than 30 hours a fortnight?

In most cases, if you are already working, but less than the required 30 hours a fortnight, you will be asked to take steps to increase your total hours of work to at least 30 hours a fortnight. If you cannot increase your hours with your current employer, you will be required to seek additional work so that you are working at least 30 hours a fortnight.

You will be helped in your job search by an employment service provider. If you are not already in contact with an employment service provider, Centrelink will refer you to one.

## What do I do if I am already working 30 hours a fortnight?

For those already working 30 hours or more a fortnight you are already meeting your participation requirements. Centrelink would still like to interview you to discuss your ongoing obligations under the new system. However, in recognition that you are currently meeting your participation requirements, this interview will take place at a future, mutually convenient time.

You will already be reporting your earnings to Centrelink and you can continue to do this.

**You do not need to do anything until Centrelink contacts you, or until your Job Network member (if you have one) refers you to an appointment with Centrelink.**

## I haven't worked for a while, where do I start?

Centrelink will put you in touch with an appropriate employment service provider. It will most likely be your local Job Network provider, and an appointment will be made for you.

If you have no recent workforce experience you are able to access assistance to help you prepare for employment when you register with the Job Network.

Job Network members guarantee high quality and ongoing employment services to parents who are registered with them. They also take account of parents' cultural backgrounds, their individual needs, and the available job opportunities.

## Is looking for work my only option?

You will be advised at your interview whether you need to register with the Job Network to help you find part-time work. Alternatively, you could be referred to a different government service for assistance. Study may be another option to meet your participation requirements. You should discuss this with Centrelink.

You may qualify for an exemption from participation requirements, for example, if you:

- are a registered and active foster carer, **or**
- are facilitating home schooling or distance education for your child(ren), **or**
- have a large family (four or more children aged under 16).

There are also exemptions if you have experienced domestic violence, or have other special family circumstances.

You are also not expected to take a job offer if work occurs outside school hours and there is no suitable child care, or if you have to travel more than 60 minutes to get to work.

## What happens if I do not want to meet my obligations?

If you do not comply with your participation requirements, for example you refuse a suitable job or voluntarily leave a suitable job, without a reasonable excuse, a penalty may apply. Centrelink will contact you to talk about your reasons for not complying before any penalties are imposed. Non-payment penalties will be imposed only for serious or persistent non-compliance and not if

your personal circumstances make it unreasonable to expect you to comply.

If you are subject to a non-payment penalty you will be eligible for financial case management where essential expenses (such as food, rent, electricity), up to the amount of the income support you would have received, are met during the non-payment period.

You will have the right to appeal if a penalty is applied.

## How to find out more

**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\* 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 [www.centrelink.gov.au](http://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 in this publication is intended only as a guide.

The information is accurate as at May 2007, but may change. If you use this publication after that date, you should check that the details are up to date.

If you wish to check that the details are up to date, or you wish to obtain any other information about this publication, you should consult Centrelink or an agent duly authorised by Centrelink to provide you with information about this publication.