

Utilities Allowance



What is Utilities Allowance?

Utilities Allowance is a payment to help older Australians with the cost of household bills such as energy, rates, water and sewerage.

Who can get it?

Utilities Allowance is paid to people receiving:

- income support who are of age pension age. This includes payments such as Age Pension, Austudy or Parenting Payment
- Disability Support Pension
- Carer Payment
- Wife Pension
- Widow B Pension
- Bereavement Allowance
- Mature Age Allowance
- Widow Allowance, **and**
- Partner Allowance.

For a man, age pension age is 65 years or over. Women reach age pension age at different ages, depending on their date of birth (see table below). By 2014, the minimum qualifying age for women will be 65 years.

Date of birth	Qualifying age
1 July 1935 to 31 December 1936	60½
1 January 1937 to 30 June 1938	61
1 July 1938 to 31 December 1939	61½
1 January 1940 to 30 June 1941	62
1 July 1941 to 31 December 1942	62½
1 January 1943 to 30 June 1944	63
1 July 1944 to 31 December 1945	63½
1 January 1946 to 30 June 1947	64
1 July 1947 to 31 December 1948	64½
1 January 1949 and later	65

To be eligible for Utilities Allowance, you must also be:

- in Australia, **or**
- if you are temporarily absent from Australia, you must have been in Australia for any part of the 13 weeks prior to the date that you are qualified to receive Utilities Allowance.

How do I get Utilities Allowance?

Your eligibility for Utilities Allowance is automatically assessed. If you are eligible, payments of Utilities Allowance will be made with your regular Centrelink payment, on or after 20 March, 20 June, 20 September and 20 December each year.

How much will I be paid?

Refer to the *A Guide to Australian Government Payments* booklet for the current rate of Utilities Allowance.

Utilities Allowance is:

- adjusted twice a year in March and September in line with the Consumer Price Index
- paid every three months on, or in the fortnight following, 20 March, 20 June, 20 September and 20 December
- a non-taxable payment, **and**
- not subject to an income assets test.

What if I don't want to get Utilities Allowance?

Your eligibility for Utilities Allowance is assessed when you claim your pension or income support payment. If you do not wish to receive Utilities Allowance, you should contact Centrelink as soon as possible on **13 2300**.

How to find out more

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

Retirement **13 2300**

Disability and Carers **13 2717**

To speak to Centrelink 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.

For information or to make an appointment **13 1021**

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 February 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 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.