

# Utilities Allowance



## What is Utilities Allowance?

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

## Who can get it?

Utilities Allowance is paid to people under age pension age receiving Widow Allowance or Partner Allowance and to recipients of Disability Support Pension (under 21 with no dependant children).

From 20 September 2009, Utilities Allowance is not payable to income support recipients of age pension age, people receiving Disability Support Pension, Carer Payment, Widow B Pension, Wife Pension or Bereavement Allowance as they receive Pension Supplement.

For most pensioners, the value of Utilities Allowance has been either added into the Pension Supplement or forms part of the rate paid under transitional arrangements.

The last quarterly payment of Utilities Allowance for these pensioners will be made soon after 20 September 2009. See the *Pension Supplement* factsheet.

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

- in Australia, **or**
- temporarily absent from Australia for a period not exceeding 13 weeks.

## 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 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](http://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 September 2009, 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.