

Seniors Concession Allowance



What is the Seniors Concession Allowance?

The Seniors Concession Allowance is an ongoing payment paid in four instalments in March, June, September and December. You do not need to apply for the Seniors Concession Allowance. It is paid automatically to Australian residents who hold a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card (CSHC).

Most self-funded retirees do not receive concessions for energy, rates, water and sewerage, and motor vehicle registration from state and territory governments. The Seniors Concession Allowance acknowledges the contribution made by self-funded retirees in providing for their own retirement.

Who is eligible for the Seniors Concession Allowance?

To be eligible for the allowance you must:

- qualify for a CSHC on 20 March, 20 June, 20 September, or 20 December each year
- not be permanently absent from Australia
- if 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 Seniors Concession Allowance—20 March, 20 June, 20 September, or 20 December each year, **and**
- have been qualified for a CSHC immediately prior to departure.

Cardholders should note that if you travel overseas your CSHC will be cancelled. When you return to Australia you will need to reapply for a CSHC.

Customers in receipt of some Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry payments may be entitled to the Seniors Concession Allowance provided they meet the

eligibility criteria for CSHC. This applies to recipients of Farm Help Income Support, Exceptional Circumstances Relief Payment and Sugar Industry Income Support.

Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) customers who hold a DVA Commonwealth Seniors Health Card and meet the qualification criteria will be paid Seniors Concession Allowance by DVA.

Who can qualify for a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card?

The CSHC is available to self-funded retirees. To qualify you must:

- be an Australian resident in Australia to retain the card
- not be receiving a social security pension or benefit, or a DVA service pension
- be of age pension age, **and**
- meet an annual adjusted taxable income test. There is no assets test.

Note: Holders of a CSHC may also qualify for Telephone Allowance. For more information and to provide telephone and internet subscriber details, go to www.centrelink.gov.au where you can access Centrelink's Online Services or call Retirement Services on **13 2300**.

How will the allowance be paid?

You do not need to apply for the Seniors Concession Allowance. It is paid automatically if you are an Australian resident and the holder of a CSHC.

The Seniors Concession Allowance will only be paid into the bank account that is already registered for each cardholder. No payment of the Seniors Concession Allowance can be made until such time as the cardholder provides bank account details to Centrelink.

How much will I be paid?

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

Seniors Concession Allowance payments will be paid to eligible cardholders in four instalments each year—in March, June, September and December. The payments are not taxable and will be adjusted each March and September in line with the Consumer Price Index.

Where both members of a couple hold a CSHC, they will both receive full payment of the Seniors Concession Allowance. Where only one member of a couple holds a CSHC, only the cardholder will be paid the allowance.

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.