

Students: avoid a Centrelink debt



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

Income

Have you or your partner:

- earned or received any income?
- received any leave or redundancy payments?

Have your:

- income details changed?
- partner's income details changed?

Reporting your employment income

Centrelink may ask you to report your earnings (before tax) as well as any other changes on the same day each fortnight. If this is the case, Centrelink will send you a Reporting Statement telling you when to report.

Centrelink has eServices options that make it easy for you to report your employment income. You can report your income using online services at www.centrelink.gov.au. To use Centrelink eServices options you must first be registered.

Study

Have you:

- stopped studying?
- changed the number of hours you are studying?
- changed your course?
- changed educational institutions?
- had more than five days unapproved absence?

Personal

Have you:

- become partnered or separated from your partner?
- changed your address or rent details?
- left Australia temporarily or permanently?

Australia's immigration department may advise Centrelink if you leave or return to Australia. This information will be updated as changes occur and may automatically affect your entitlements.

Dependants

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

- there are changes to your parents' income or your family's assets
- your parents' relationship status changes (that is, they separate, reconcile or become partnered)
- you have a brother or sister who leaves or returns home
- you are paid an away from home rate and you return home (even temporarily).

Changes in sibling circumstances

Changes in the circumstances of any siblings also receiving Youth Allowance, ABSTUDY (living allowance) or Assistance for Isolated Children (additional boarding allowance) may impact on your eligibility and rate of payment. It is important to check with Centrelink when sibling circumstances change.



Example

Taylor is 19 years old and studying away from home at university in 2010. She claims Youth Allowance and is rejected due to her parents' income being too high at \$95 000. Taylor's brother Caleb then turns 16 and claims Youth Allowance. Under the parental income test both Taylor and Caleb can now receive Youth Allowance and Taylor is also eligible for scholarship payments for her university study. If Taylor then ceases study and stops receiving Youth Allowance, her brother will no longer be eligible for payment.

Definition of a partner

For Centrelink purposes a person is considered to be your partner if you and the person are living together, or usually live together, and are:

- married,
- in a registered relationship (opposite-sex or same-sex), **or**
- in a de facto relationship (opposite-sex or same-sex).

Centrelink considers a person to be in a de facto relationship from the time they commence living with another person as a member of a couple. From 1 July 2009 Centrelink recognises all couples, opposite-sex and same-sex.

Important information

If you do not tell Centrelink about these changes, you could quickly end up owing a lot of money including an additional recovery fee if your earnings are not declared correctly. There is also a chance you may miss out on some services that are available to help you find work, improve your skills or enrol in a different course of study.

More information

Youth Allowance, Austudy and Pensioner Education Supplement	13 2490
ABSTUDY	13 2317
To speak to Centrelink in languages other than English	13 1202
Customer Relations (for complaints, compliments and suggestions)	Freecall™ 1800 050 004

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 April 2010, 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.

Can 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.