

Social Security Agreement between Australia and the USA



English

Does the Agreement help you?

The Agreement may help you increase your income by making it easier for you to receive:

- **an Australian pension:**
 - if you live in Australia and have worked and paid contributions in the USA, **or**
 - if you live in the USA and have been a resident in Australia between 16 years of age and age pension age for at least 12 months, of which at least six months must be consecutive.
- **a USA pension:**
 - if you are an Australian resident or USA national and have worked and paid contributions in the USA.

How does the Agreement help?

The Agreement generally allows you to lodge your claim for an Australian pension from Australia or the USA.

The Agreement may allow you to combine periods of your Australian residence (see 'Explanatory notes') and periods of USA contributions to meet the minimum qualifying period for an Australian pension.

You can add periods of employment or self-employment in Australia to your periods of USA contributions in order to meet the minimum qualification for a USA pension.

How do you claim?

In Australia, USA pension claim forms can be obtained by contacting Centrelink International Services.

You can contact Centrelink International Services for advice and help in claiming a USA pension and can lodge the claim at your nearest Centrelink Customer Service Centre.

In the USA, Australian pension claim forms can be obtained from www.centrelink.gov.au (follow the 'Forms' link), by contacting your local USA Social Security Administration office or by contacting Centrelink International Services. You can lodge a claim for an Australian pension at any USA Social Security Administration office.

If you live in another country with which Australia has an international social security agreement, you may lodge a claim for a benefit under this Agreement with any approved office within that third country, providing that country will accept Australian claims under other international social security agreements (see 'Explanatory notes').

Claims for Australian pensions should be lodged promptly as back payments are not normally paid. Claims can be lodged up to 13 weeks before reaching age pension age.

Australia's social security system

Australian social security payments are delivered by Centrelink. Australia's social security system differs from that of most other developed countries in that it is based on residence and need. Each person's pension is paid by the Australian Government out of general funds, rather than through contributions paid by individuals and employers into a social insurance fund. For this reason Australian pensions are income and asset tested. You will be required to disclose details of all your and/or your partner's income and assets if claiming an Australian pension.

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Australian Government



www.centrelink.gov.au

Which Australian pension can you claim?

If	you are male and over 65 years of age, or you are female and over the qualifying age (see 'Explanatory notes')	and	you have lived in Australia for more than 10 years, or the period of time you have lived in Australia and the period of time that you paid contributions in the USA adds up to more than 10 years	you can claim	Age Pension
If	you are unable to work because of a disability, or you are permanently blind	and	your disability or blindness occurred while you were living in Australia, or you have lived in Australia for more than 10 years, or the period of time you have lived in Australia and the period of time that you paid contributions in the USA adds up to more than 10 years	you can claim	Disability Support Pension
If	you are providing full time care for your partner	and	you have lived in Australia, and your partner is receiving an Australian benefit	you can claim	Carer Payment
If	you are a widow or widower	and	you have lived in Australia, and you are caring for one or more children under eight years of age who have been to Australia or have been an Australian resident	you can claim	Parenting Payment
If	you are a widow or widower	and	you have lived in Australia, and your partner died less than 14 weeks ago, and you were living together at the time	you can claim	Bereavement Allowance

Which USA pension can you claim?

Under the Agreement, you can claim the following

USA pensions:

- Retirement Pension
- Disability Pension
- Survivor's Pension.

The USA Social Security Administration make all decisions about USA pension matters and you should contact them for more details.

If you are living in Australia, you can contact Centrelink International Services for advice and help in claiming a USA pension.

What will you be paid?

Your Australian pension rate will be based on your and/or your partner's:

- income and assets (including any USA pension that you may receive), **and**
- periods of residence in Australia between 16 years of age and age pension age.

Centrelink may be advised by Australia's immigration department of your travel to and from Australia since 1994. We may use this information to ensure you are qualified for payments and that your payment rate is correct.

The USA Social Security Administration will calculate the amount of your USA pension. This will be based on your USA contributions.

Australian residence periods cannot increase the amount of USA pension you can receive.

Explanatory notes

<p>Age pension age</p>	<p>This is the age at which you become eligible for Australian Age Pension.</p> <p>Women born before 31 December 1945 have reached age pension age.</p> <p>Men born before 31 December 1945 reach age pension age at 65 years of age.</p> <p>The table below describes the gradual increases in the qualifying age for Age Pension.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Born</th> <th>Women eligible for Age Pension at age</th> <th>Men eligible for Age Pension at age</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1 January 1946 to 30 June 1947</td> <td>64</td> <td>65</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 July 1947 to 31 December 1948</td> <td>64 ½</td> <td>65</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 January 1949 to 30 June 1952</td> <td>65</td> <td>65</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 July 1952 to 31 December 1953</td> <td>65 ½</td> <td>65 ½</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 January 1954 to 30 June 1955</td> <td>66</td> <td>66</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 July 1955 to 31 December 1956</td> <td>66 ½</td> <td>66 ½</td> </tr> <tr> <td>From 1 January 1957</td> <td>67</td> <td>67</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Born	Women eligible for Age Pension at age	Men eligible for Age Pension at age	1 January 1946 to 30 June 1947	64	65	1 July 1947 to 31 December 1948	64 ½	65	1 January 1949 to 30 June 1952	65	65	1 July 1952 to 31 December 1953	65 ½	65 ½	1 January 1954 to 30 June 1955	66	66	1 July 1955 to 31 December 1956	66 ½	66 ½	From 1 January 1957	67	67
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<p>Australia's international social security agreement partners</p>	<p>Australia currently has international social security agreements with Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark*, Finland*, Germany, Greece*, the Republic of Ireland, Italy, Japan*, the Republic of Korea, Malta, the Netherlands, New Zealand*, Norway, Poland*, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland* and the USA*.</p> <p>*These countries do not accept Australian claims under other international social security agreements.</p>																								
<p>Australian residence periods</p>	<p>Australian residence means periods when you were residing in Australia as an Australian citizen or Australian permanent visa holder. Australian residence at any time is used to claim an Age Pension. The rate of Australian pension payable outside Australia is generally based on Australian residence between the ages of 16 and age pension age only.</p>																								
<p>Definition of a partner</p>	<p>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, or in a registered relationship, or in a de facto relationship.</p> <p>Centrelink considers a person to be in a de facto relationship from the time they start living with another person as a member of a couple.</p> <p>Centrelink recognises all couples, opposite-sex and same-sex.</p>																								

For more information

If you would like more detailed information you should contact Centrelink International Services for free help and advice.

- Call **13 1673** from within Australia.
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 from public and mobile phones may be timed and charged at a higher rate.
- Call **1866 3433 086** from the USA only. This international free call number connects you directly to Centrelink International Services. This free call may not be available from every location within the USA, and may not be free from mobile phones or public phones. You may need to insert coins/card in pay phones as for a local call and this may not be refunded at the end of the call.
- Call **+61 3 6222 3455** from outside Australia. You can contact your local international telephone operator to arrange a reverse charge call to this number. Some Australian telephone companies also offer services that allow you to call into Australia at no cost.
- Email **international.services@centrelink.gov.au**
Note: email is not a secure communication medium.
- Fax **+61 3 6222 2799**.
- Write to GPO Box 273, Hobart, Tasmania 7001, Australia.

Disclaimer

The information contained in this publication is intended only as a guide to payments and services available.

What are your responsibilities?

- It is your responsibility to decide if you wish to apply for a payment and to make the application, with regard to your particular circumstances.
- The information is accurate as at September 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 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.