



2016-17 Federal Budget

What it means for carers

The following is an over-view of the key 2016-17 Federal Budget measures which may impact carers. It is not a comprehensive list of all Budget measures which may have an effect on carers.

For more detailed information on all 2016-17 Federal Budget measures visit www.budget.gov.au.

For information about income support payments call one of the following Department of Human Services/Centrelink numbers:

- Carers (Carer Payment and Carer Allowance): Mon-Fri 8am-5pm on **132 717**
- Families (Family Tax Benefit, Child Care Benefit, Parenting Payment, Double Orphan Pension, Baby Bonus): Mon-Fri 8am-8pm on **136 150**
- People with disability (Disability Support Pension, Mobility Allowance, Sickness Allowance): Mon-Fri 8am-5pm on **132 717**
- Students and trainees (Austudy, Low Income Health Care Card, Pensioner Education Supplement, Youth Allowance): Mon-Fri 8am-5pm on **132 490** Or for ABSTUDY Mon-Fri 8am-5pm on **1800 132 317**

Please note that the following list of Federal Budget measures includes some measures which are subject to the passage of legislation.

Removal of Carer Allowance backdating provisions

What has changed?

From 1 January 2017, new claims for Carer Allowance will no longer be backdated. Currently, payment of Carer Allowance can in some circumstances be backdated up to 12 weeks before the date a claim is lodged or when first contact is made.

Please note this does not affect Carer Payment, which does not have backdating provisions.

Who does this affect?

Any new customers who lodge a claim for Carer Allowance on or after 1 January 2017.

What does it mean for me?

If you are thinking about claiming Carer Allowance, it is important to lodge an Intent to Claim with Centrelink at the earliest opportunity. Carers will still be able to access the Allowance from the time they lodge an Intent to Claim with Centrelink or the date they first contact DHS registering their Intent to Claim. If you are found eligible, you will still receive back payment to when the Intent to Claim was lodged.

NB: This budget measure is subject to the passage of legislation.

Review of Disability Support Pension (DSP) recipients

What has changed?

- From 1 July 2016, there will be additional reviews of Disability Support Pension (DSP) customers over 3 years. It is expected there will be around 30,000 reviews each year.
- These reviews will use the current DSP qualification criteria using the January 2012 revised Impairment Tables.
- Reviews will include a Job Capacity Assessment, and each year up to 10,000 people will also undergo a Disability Medical Assessment.

Who does this affect?

These additional reviews will be targeted at those DSP recipients who are thought to be most at risk of not meeting the current eligibility criteria for DSP and who may have the capacity to work. The Department has not yet identified who this will include. They will use a 'risk profiling' approach to select people for review.

Recipients who have been granted DSP on 'manifest grounds' under the current rules, as well as people working in Australian Disability Enterprises or under Supported Worker Systems will be excluded.

What does this mean for me?

Current recipients of DSP and their families and carers don't need to do anything yet. Reviews of DSP recipients will only start if the measure is passed by Parliament. If and when this occurs, the Department will contact recipients directly and provide further information on what you need to do.

NB: This Budget measure is not subject to the passage of legislation.

Cessation of the Single Income Family Supplement

What has changed?

From 1 July 2017, the Single Income Family Supplement (SIFS) of up to \$300 per financial year will not be available to new customers. Existing customers may continue to receive the SIFS if they remain eligible.

Who does this affect?

This measure affects new SIFS customers from the 2017-18 Financial Year. Existing customers may continue to receive the Single Income Family Supplement past 1 July 2017 while they remain eligible.

What does this mean for me?

For those who currently receive the Single Income Family Supplement, nothing will change.

NB: This Budget measure is subject to the passage of legislation.

Mobility Allowance changes

What has changed?

- From 1 January 2017, the Mobility Allowance will only be available to new customers who are:
 - under 65 years of age with a significant or permanent disability
 - engaged in work or vocational training, and
 - not able to use public transport without substantial assistance.
- The period during which a customer can receive Mobility Allowance while not engaging in a qualifying activity will be reduced from 12 to 4 weeks.
- Recipients of the Mobility Allowance who are assessed as eligible for support under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) won't be allowed to continue to receive Mobility Allowance once the NDIS is available in their area.

- If an NDIS participant exits from the scheme, they will not be able to return to Mobility Allowance at a later date.

Who does this affect?

This affects both new and existing Mobility Allowance recipients.

However, existing Mobility Allowance customers will 'grandfathered', which means they can remain on the payment based on the current eligibility criteria. If they cancel their payment, they will lose their 'grandfathered' status and will be subject to the new eligibility criteria.

The measure will start on 1 January 2017 and is ongoing until the Mobility Allowance ceases on 1 July 2020.

NB: This Budget measure is subject to the passage of legislation.

Cessation of the Energy Supplement for all new recipients

What has changed?

From 20 September 2016, the Energy Supplement will not be available for new customers of social security payments, family payments and the Commonwealth Seniors Health card.

The Energy Supplement is an ongoing payment for pensioners, families who receive assistance, income support payment customers and Commonwealth Seniors Health card holders.

The amount of the Energy Supplement depends on your circumstances and the payment you receive.

Who does this affect?

From 20 September 2016, there will be no new customers for the Energy Supplement.

However, you may continue to be paid the Energy Supplement if on 19 September 2016 you continue to receive one of the following:

- ABSTUDY
- Age Pension
- Austudy
- Commonwealth Seniors Health Card
- Carer Payment
- Disability Support Pension
- Family Tax Benefit
- Newstart Allowance
- Parenting Payment
- Partner Allowance
- Sickness Allowance
- Special Benefit
- Farm Household Allowance
- Bereavement Allowance
- Widow B Pension
- Widow Allowance
- Wife Pension
- Youth Allowance

What does this mean for me?

If you continue to receive one of the payments listed above, nothing will change for you.

If you transition between one of the above payments (without a gap) you will also continue to receive the Energy Supplement.

However, if you cease receiving one of the listed payments and then apply again for a payment in the future, you won't be eligible to receive the Energy Supplement.

NB: This Budget measure includes components that are subject to the passage of legislation.

Simplifying eligibility for the Health Care Card for students

What has changed?

From 1 January 2019, all student income support recipients will be automatically issued with a Health Care Card.

This change will allow Youth Allowance (Student), Austudy and ABSTUDY recipients to be automatically issued a Health Care Card at the same time as their grant of payment.

Who does this affect?

All students claiming Youth Allowance (Student), Austudy and ABSTUDY.

What does this mean for me?

For students claiming Youth Allowance (Student), Austudy and ABSTUDY, you will no longer have to apply separately for a Health Care Card, you will automatically be issued it.

NB: This Budget measure is subject to the passage of legislation.