



Federal Budget Report 2020 - 2021

Centrelink/Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA)

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Economic support payments

The Government proposes to provide two \$250 economic support payments to be made from early December 2020 and early March 2021 to eligible recipients of the following payments and concession cards:

- Age Pension
- Disability Support Pension
- Carer Payment
- Carer Allowance*
- Pensioner Concession Card (PCC)* - includes clients who have an automatic PCC because they lost the Age Pension due to the assets test changes on 1 January 2017
- Commonwealth Seniors Health Card
- Eligible DVA payments
- DVA Gold Card
- DVA Seniors Card
- Family Tax Benefit, including Double Orphan Pension*

**Only if you are not getting a primary income support payment (i.e. to avoid double \$250 payments to one individual).*

If you are eligible for one of the above payments/concession cards on 27 November 2020, you will be eligible for the December 2020 payment. If you are eligible for one of the above payments/concession cards on 26 February 2021, you will be eligible for the March 2021 payment.

These economic support payments are exempt from taxation and will not count as income for the purposes of any income support payment.

Pension Loan Scheme (PLS)

The Government proposes to deliver customer experience improvements for the PLS, including:

- a loan calculator to help people test their eligibility and estimate loan balances;
- electronic loan repayments;
- new online services for customers to make changes to loan terms and print or request itemised statements;
- improved access to specialist staff when customers call;
- a joint online claim for partnered customers with more relevant questions; and
- the ability for customers to complete regular loan reviews online. This is expected to start from the end of June 2021.

Veterans

The Government proposes to simplify payment arrangements for veterans from 20 September 2022.

- This includes removing the DVA Disability Pension rent test for clients who receive Rent Assistance (RA) from DVA.
- It also includes the exemption of DVA Disability Pensions from the income test for Centrelink income support payments, which means the Defence Force Income Support Allowance (DFISA) paid by the DVA to Centrelink clients is no longer needed.

Digital skills for older Australians

The Government will provide the Be Connected Program until 2023-24 to support Australians aged over 50 to gain the skills they need to participate in the digital economy.

Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS)

The Government has proposed a few measures regarding the PBS from 2020-21, including:

- implementing a revised and improved approach to the administration of PBS rebate receipts associated with medicines that have Special Pricing Arrangements; and
- providing over four years new and amended listings on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) and the Repatriation Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (RPBS).

The PBS is available for clients receiving the Pensioner Concession Card, Health Care Card, Low Income Health Care Card and Commonwealth Seniors Health Card.

If you're overseas

The Government will provide additional support to vulnerable Australian citizens whose return to Australia has been impacted by the restrictions arising from COVID-19. The support includes loans to eligible Australians overseas to cover costs of temporary accommodation, daily living expenses and tickets for commercial flights.

For any retirees stuck overseas or with children overseas, they can register with DFAT via covid19.dfat.gov.au if they need consular assistance.

Disclaimer and Warning

The information above is of a general nature only. It should not be used as a source to make financial decisions. It's also important to note that the legislation and figures related to this topic tend to change regularly and therefore the information above may not reflect the current status. We recommend that if you are looking for advice on this matter, you should contact [us](#).