



Social Security Agreement between Australia and New Zealand

Australia's social security system

Australia's social security system is different to those of most other developed countries. 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.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) delivers Australian social security payments to individuals.

You will have to tell us about all of your, and in some instances, your partner's¹ income and assets if you want to claim an Australian pension.

How does the agreement help you?

The agreement generally allows you to lodge a claim for payment from either country. It also allows you to add together certain periods of residence in Australia and New Zealand, so you can meet the minimum residence requirements for payment.

Who can get an Australian payment?

If you live in Australia or New Zealand, you can lodge a claim for the Australian Age Pension, Disability Support Pension or Carer Payment in either country.

To qualify under the agreement, you need to meet the following basic requirements*:

Age Pension

You may be able to get Age Pension if:

- you are over the qualifying age (refer to humanservices.gov.au for details), and
- the total period of time you have lived in Australia and/or your periods of Working Age Residence in New Zealand add up to more than 10 years.

Disability Support Pension

You may be able to get Disability Support Pension (DSP) if:

- you have a disability, or
- you are permanently blind, and
- your disability/blindness occurred while you were living in Australia, or
- your disability occurred while you were living in New Zealand and the total period of time you have lived in Australia and/or New Zealand (at any time) adds up to more than 10 years.

Carer Payment

You may be able to get Carer Payment if:

- your partner receives DSP
- you are providing full-time care for your partner, and

- you have lived in Australia and/or New Zealand for more than two years.

Note: if you live outside Australia when you claim, you generally need at least 12 months Australian Working Age Residence², of which six months must be continuous.

*There may be additional requirements you need to meet before you can be paid.

Who can get a New Zealand payment?

Under the agreement, you can add periods of Australian Working Age Residence² to your periods of residence in New Zealand to meet the minimum requirement for New Zealand Superannuation, Veterans Pension and Supported Living Payment.

The New Zealand pension authorities make all decisions about New Zealand payments. For more information about New Zealand payments, you should contact the New Zealand pension authorities³.

How do I claim?

If you are in Australia, to claim:

- an Australian payment under the agreement, visit **humanservices.gov.au**
- a New Zealand payment, contact the department⁴, or
- lodge your claim at your nearest Department of Human Services Service Centre.

If you are in New Zealand, to claim:

- a New Zealand payment, contact your local New Zealand Work and Income office
- an Australian payment:
 - contact your local New Zealand Work and Income office
 - the department, or
 - download the claim forms from **humanservices.gov.au**

You can also lodge your claim at any local New Zealand Work and Income office.

Claims for payments should be lodged quickly, as back payments are not normally paid.

Claims for Australian payments can be lodged up to 13 weeks early.

For more information

If you would like more detailed information you should contact us⁴ for free help and advice.

Disclaimer

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

The information in this factsheet is accurate as at May 2016. If you use this publication after that date, please check with us that the details are up to date.

Should I lodge a claim?

We can't be sure if you will get a payment, until you lodge a claim and your circumstances are taken into account. It is your responsibility to decide whether you lodge a claim for payment or not.

From what date are the payments available?

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 do you need to do when dealing with a third party?

You may deal with a third party who is not a member of our staff. If you do so, please remember that we have not authorised any third parties to provide information or advice to you about payments.

Notes

1. Definition of a partner	For our purposes, a person is considered to be your partner if you and the person are living together, or usually live together; are married, in a registered relationship (opposite or same-sex), or in a de facto relationship (opposite or same-sex). The department 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. The department recognises all couples: opposite-sex and same-sex.
2. Residence definitions	'Australian residence' means periods when you were residing in Australia as an Australian citizen or Australian permanent visa holder. The Agreement allows 'Australian residence' to also include periods when a New Zealand citizen resides lawfully in Australia. Any period of Australian residence can be used to qualify for an Australian payment. 'Working Age Residence' is period/s of residence between the ages of 20 and 65.
3. New Zealand social insurance contact details	International Services Work and Income PO Box 27178 Wellington NEW ZEALAND Freecall™ from within Australia 1800 150 479 Call +64 4 978 1180 Fax +64 4 918 0159
4. Department of Human Services contact details	Call 131 673 from within Australia. Call 0800 441 248 from New Zealand only.

	Note: this international Freecall™ number connects you directly to the Department of Human Services. This Freecall™ may not be available from every location within New Zealand and may not be free from mobile phones or public phones. You may need to insert coins/card in payphones as for a local call and this may not be refunded at the end of the call. If you are not able to use the Freecall™ number listed above, please contact us on +61 3 6222 3455. Note: call charges apply—calls from mobile phones may be charged at a higher rate. Email international.services@humanservices.gov.au Note: email is not a secure communication medium. Fax +61 3 6222 2799 Write to GPO Box 273, Hobart, Tasmania 7001, Australia. Visit humanservices.gov.au
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