

INCOME MANAGEMENT

Expansion

Income management is proposed to be extended to five new locations: Bankstown NSW, Logan and Rockhampton Qld, Playford SA, and Shepparton Vic.

Income management will apply to people living in these areas who are referred by child protection authorities, identified as vulnerable, or who volunteer for the program.

Date of effect: 1 July 2012 (subject to the introduction and passage of legislation)

SEAM

Expansion

It is proposed to extend the Improving School Enrolment and Attendance Measure or SEAM to link school attendance to income support in more indigenous communities.

The likely affected communities are: Yirrkala, Maningrida, Galiwin'ku, Ngukurr, Numbulwar, Umbakumba, Angurugu, Gapuwiyak, Gunbalanya, Milingimbi, Lajamanu and Yuendumu, the townships of Alyangula and Nhulunbuy, Alice Springs, Tenant Creek and Katherine.

Date of effect: subject to the introduction and passage of legislation

PLACE BASED CHANGES

Young parents

New requirements are proposed for recipients of Parenting Payment in Playford (SA) Rockhampton (Qld) Hume (Vic) Burnie (Tas) Bankstown (NSW) Wyong (NSW) Logan (Qld) Kwinana (Qld) Greater Shepparton (Vic) and Shellharbour (NSW).

Payments could be suspended for not attending the Centrelink interviews, and for not entering into or fulfilling a plan.

Dates of effect: 1 January 2012 (for new applicants under 20) 1 July 2012 (for new and existing recipients under 23 on payments for more than two years) (subject to the passage of legislation)

NEWLY ARRIVED RESIDENTS

Two year wait for sponsored spouses

Currently provisional partner visa holders can receive Special Benefit without a two year waiting period because of their relationship with their Australian partner.

From 1 January 2012 the waiting period will apply unless there has been a substantial change in circumstances.

Victims of domestic violence, or newly single migrants in hardship would be protected as these would be substantial changes in circumstances.

In other situations, payments would not be available until two years after permanent residency is granted.

Date of effect: 1 January 2012

DISABILITY SUPPORT PENSION

New impairment tables

New impairment tables will be applied to new claims and to existing recipients on review.

It is predicted that some people are likely to no longer qualify under the new tables. This would mean cancellation after a review, and transfer to an activity tested Allowance at a lesser rate of payment

The proposed new tables are available at:

<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au>

To work out what impact the new tables are likely to have, a person should take the proposed new tables to their doctor for an opinion.

Date of effect: 1 January 2012

DISABILITY SUPPORT PENSION

Activity testing under 35s

It is proposed to activity test those under 35.

The proposal would affect those under 35 with an assessed work capacity of eight hours or more per week.

Payments could be suspended for not attending an interview with Centrelink, but there should be no penalty for not entering or not fulfilling a participation plan.

Date of effect: 1 July 2012 (subject to the introduction and passage of legislation)

YOUTH ALLOWANCE

Start-up and relocation scholarships

The amounts of the relocation and student start-up scholarships will reduce. The Relocation scholarship will reduce from \$1,031 to \$1,000 per year and from \$4,124 to \$4,000 for initial relocation. The Start-up scholarship will reduce from \$1,097 to \$1,025 for each six months of study.

Date of effect: 1 January 2012 (subject to the passage of legislation)

STUDENTS

Some beneficial changes

Youth Allowance and Abstudy will have a better income test.

Youth Allowance and Austudy will have more Masters courses available.

Dates of effect: 1 July 2012 (income test)
1 January 2014: (masters courses)

YOUTH ALLOWANCE

Independence

The age of independence for Youth Allowance will reduce from 23 to 22 years.

Inner regional students will have access to the workforce criteria for independence (subject to parental means and being required to live away from home for study).

Date of effect: 1 January 2012 (workforce criteria is subject to the passage of legislation)

FAMILY TAX BENEFIT

Currently Family Tax Benefit can be paid up until a young person reaches 25 years. Under changes coming into effect on 1 January 2012 this age will reduce to 22.

Family Tax Benefit Part A will increase for dependent 16 to 19 year olds who are studying full-time.

A young person 16 or 17 who is dependent, living at home and studying full time will not qualify for Youth Allowance.

Date of effect: 1 January 2012

INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

New Agreement with Latvia

A new social security agreement was signed on 7 September 2011 with Latvia and is expected to commence in the second half of 2012.

Other agreements expected to commence in 2012 include with Hungary and the Slovak Republic.

Date of effect: expected in 2012.

JOBSEEKERS

Income maintenance period

Payment in lieu of notice is proposed to be counted for a person's income maintenance period.

This would increase the time that a person who has received payment in lieu of notice would be expected to wait before starting to receive payments after leaving a job.

Date of effect: the day after the Social Security and other legislation amendment Bill 2011 receives royal assent.