



Waiting period for welfare payments for new migrants

Waiting times for new migrants to access certain Australian welfare payments have changed.

Most migrants granted permanent residency from 1 January 2019 must wait the relevant amount of time before they can access certain welfare payments and concession cards.

Potential migrants should make sure they have enough money to support themselves when they come to Australia on a permanent visa.

Some migrants may not need to wait before accessing welfare payments and concession cards. This includes those on certain types of visas and those who have had a substantial change of circumstance.

A four year waiting period applies to:

- Newstart Allowance
- Youth Allowance
- Austudy
- Parenting Payment
- Mobility Allowance
- Sickness Allowance
- Bereavement Allowance
- Special Benefit
- Pensioner Education Supplement
- Farm Household Allowance
- Low Income Health Care Card
- Commonwealth Seniors Health Card.

A two year waiting period applies to:

- Parental Leave Pay
- Dad and Partner Pay
- Carer Payment.

A one year waiting period applies to:

- Carer Allowance
- Family Tax Benefit Part A.

There is no waiting period for Family Tax Benefit Part B. This means that new permanent migrant families where only one person earns an income, including single parent families, can access this support immediately if they are eligible.

Who is affected?

The new rules apply to skilled and family migrants granted a permanent visa on or after 1 January 2019.

Migrants who have a baby born between 1 January 2019 and 30 June 2019 can still access Parental Leave Pay and Dad and Partner Pay for that baby, subject to meeting eligibility requirements for the payment.

Those granted a permanent visa before 1 January 2019 are subject to the old rules. They can access Family Tax Benefit Part A, Parental Leave Pay, Dad and Partner Pay and Carer Allowance immediately, if they are eligible. They will have to wait two years for most other payments.

In addition, people on certain visa types are also subject to the old rules, even if the visa is granted from 1 January 2019. Depending on their visa type, these visa holders can access Family Tax Benefit Part A, Parental Leave Pay, Dad and Partner Pay and Carer Allowance immediately if they are eligible but will have to wait two years for certain other payments. These visas include:

- New Zealand citizens on a Special Category Visa (subclass 444)
- Orphan Relative visas (subclasses 117 and 837)
- Remaining Relative visas (subclasses 115 and 835).

Exemptions from the waiting period

Some migrants do not need to wait before accessing some or all payments where eligible or they can have their waiting period shortened. This is called an exemption.

Humanitarian entrants and their families have an exemption from the waiting periods for all payments.

Migrants who become a lone parent after being granted a permanent visa may be able to get an exemption for payments such as Parenting Payment or Newstart Allowance. Other migrants who experience a substantial change of circumstances during their waiting period, and are in financial hardship, may be able to get an exemption for Special Benefit. People granted one of these exemptions can access Family Tax Benefit if they have dependent children.

People can contact the Department of Human Services to find out if they are eligible for an exemption from the waiting period.

Other support

New migrants can access other government services during the waiting period, such as health services like Medicare. They may also be eligible for help paying for childcare.

More information

Visit www.humanservices.gov.au/newresidentswaiting

For more information in your language:

- call the Department of Human Services Multilingual Phone Service on 131 202
- go to www.humanservices.gov.au/yourlanguage.