



Social security payments for the unemployed, the sick and those in special circumstances, 1942 to 2012: a chronology

Carol Ey
Social Policy Section

Contents

Introduction	1
A brief history of unemployment and sickness benefits in Australia	2
The context for the introduction of benefits: from Federation to 1945	2
Early responses to unemployment growth: 1945 to 1988	2
The active employment strategy: 1988 to 1993.....	3
Working Nation: 1994 to 1996	3
Mutual Obligation commenced: 1997.....	4
Youth Allowance introduced: 1998	4
Welfare to Work reforms: 2006	4
Detailed information.....	4
A brief history of payments for widows in Australia	5
The introduction of Widow Pensions: 1942 to 1947	5
The end of Widow Pensions: 1987 to 2006	6
Detailed information.....	7
A brief history of assistance with rent: 1958 to 2012.....	7
Detailed information.....	7
Note on sources and further reading	7
Appendix A: Trends in recipient numbers	9
Numbers of recipients of payments for the unemployed, the sick and those in special circumstances, from 1943	9



Appendix B: Chronology of payments to the unemployed	11
Unemployment Benefit, 1945 to 1991, Job Search Allowance, 1988 to 1991	11
Newstart Allowance from 1991, Job Search Allowance 1991 to 1996.....	17
Youth Allowance from 1998	24
Sickness Benefit, 1945 to 1991, Sickness Allowance from 1991	27
Special Benefit from 1945.....	34
Mature Age Allowance from 1994 to 2008, Mature Age Partner Allowance 1994 to 1995	36
Partner Allowance from 1994.....	37
Maximum rates of Unemployment Benefit, Job Search Allowance, Newstart Allowance, Sickness Benefit, Sickness Allowance, Youth Training Allowance, Youth Allowance, Special Benefit ^(a) , Mature Age Allowance, Partner Allowance and Widow Allowance, from 1945.....	39
Unemployment Benefit, Sickness Benefit and Special Benefit ^(a) , from 1945 to 1972	39
Maximum rates of Unemployment Benefit, Sickness Benefit and Special Benefit ^(a) , from 1973 to 1978	39
Maximum rates of Unemployment Benefit, Sickness Benefit and Special Benefit ^(a) , from 1978 to 1985	40
Maximum rates of Unemployment Benefit, Sickness Benefit and Special Benefit ^(a) , from 1985 to 1987	40
Maximum rates of Unemployment Benefit, Job Search Allowance, Newstart Allowance, Sickness Benefit, Sickness Allowance, Youth Training Allowance, Special Benefit ^(a) , Mature Age Allowance, Partner Allowance and Widow Allowance, from 1987 to 1998.....	41
Maximum rates of Newstart Allowance, Sickness Allowance, Youth Allowance, Special Benefit ^(a) , Mature Age Allowance, Partner Allowance and Widow Allowance, from 1998.....	42
Income and asset limits for Unemployment Benefit, Job Search Allowance, Newstart Allowance, Sickness Benefit, Sickness Allowance, Youth Training Allowance, Youth Allowance, Mature Age Allowance and Widow Allowance, from 1945	44
Liquid assets test for Newstart Allowance and Youth Allowance, from 1991.....	45
Appendix C: Chronology of payments to widows.....	46
Widow B Pension from 1942, Widow D Pension from 1947 to 1960.....	46
Widow C Pension, 1942 to 1989, Widowed Person Allowance, 1989 to 1995, Bereavement Allowance from 1995	49
Widow Allowance from 1995	51
Maximum rates of widows pensions, from 1942	53



Income and assets limits for Widow B Pension, from 1942	54
Appendix D: Chronology of assistance with rent.....	56
Supplementary Allowance/Assistance 1970 to 1985, Rent Assistance from 1985	56
Maximum rates of Supplementary Allowance/Rent Assistance, from 1970.....	57
List of Acronyms.....	60

Acknowledgments:

This paper updates work undertaken by previous researchers in the Library, particularly Dale Daniels.
The author is also very grateful to Marilyn Harrington for her considerable efforts in editing the paper.



Introduction

This chronology is one of several produced by the Parliamentary Library dealing with the history of social security payments. Other titles in the series are:

- [*Social security payments for the aged, people with disabilities and carers, 1901 to 2010*](#) and
- [*Social security payments for people caring for children, 1912 to 2008: a chronology*](#).

A further chronology on social security payments for students and apprentices is in development.

The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA), the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIISRTE) and their predecessor agencies (including the Department of Social Security (DSS)) administer, or have administered in the past, a number of payments for able-bodied work force aged people. Responsibility for delivery of the payments now rests with the Department of Human Services (DHS) (previously Centrelink). This paper provides a short history of the development of these payments and a chronology of changes to each payment from their introduction to the present day. Trends in the number of recipients of these payments can be found in [Appendix A](#).

The paper is not a definitive treatment of the history of social security in Australia. It is a reference tool for those needing to locate specific changes quickly and place them in their chronological context. It also does not provide information on the availability of, and eligibility for, social security benefits. For this information see the DHS [website](#)¹

The date from which measures have taken effect has been used to mark changes, not the date the legislation was passed. Many changes that appear at the time of updating to be of minor importance and small administrative modifications to payments have not been included.

Rates of payment are generally not given in the chronology text in the appendices, but can be found in the accompanying tables. In the text, imperial currency is used for payments prior to 1966 and decimal currency is used from that date, reflecting the legislation and commentary at the time. In the tables decimal currency is used throughout for comparison purposes.

Payments for sole parents (including those for widows with dependent children) are included in the chronology dealing with payments for people caring for children. Payments for widowed people are included in this document, but payments for students are generally not included, except where these relate to Youth Allowance which also applies to young people who are unemployed and looking for work.

1. Department of Human Services (DHS), 'How can we help you?', DHS website, viewed 29 November 2012, <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/>

A brief history of unemployment and sickness benefits in Australia

The context for the introduction of benefits: from Federation to 1945

Prior to the Depression of the 1930s the only assistance for unemployed people was provided by charitable bodies, with assistance from state governments consisting of food relief funded at ministerial discretion. Government public works programs were the other main source of help for the unemployed. The shortcomings of these measures became apparent during the Depression. They were poorly administered, unable to cope with the numbers involved, destructive of the dignity of those needing assistance and extremely parsimonious.

The Depression experience ensured a favourable reception when in 1943 the Curtin Government announced its decision to introduce unemployment, sickness and special benefits. Contributory unemployment insurance schemes had been developed in the United Kingdom (UK) in the 1920s and in the United States of America (USA) in the late 1930s. In Australia, the insurance approach was considered several times; and in 1938 the National Health and Pensions Insurance Bill was passed following extended debate. This was in part due to opposition from the medical profession to the inclusion of medical insurance but also due to disagreement about the method by which social services should be funded. Implementation of the scheme, which provided cash benefits during sickness and for disablement, old age and widows and orphans, was postponed due to increased emphasis on defence following the Munich crisis. While the Menzies Government approved the preparation of legislation extending the scheme to cover unemployment insurance, this was not proceeded with due to Australia's entry into war with Germany. The scheme had not been implemented by the time the Curtin Government came to power in October 1941, at which time it was effectively abandoned as Labour opposed the contributory approach.²

Legislation introducing a flat rate payment for all unemployed, and for those temporarily incapacitated for work because of sickness or accident, was passed in 1944 and the benefits came into operation in July 1945. Sickness benefits were an entirely new form of assistance, never having been offered by the states. Private provision through friendly societies had been the main means of providing for temporary incapacity.

Early responses to unemployment growth: 1945 to 1988

The unemployment, sickness and special benefits scheme as originally implemented was designed for a labour market where full-time employment for a mainly male work force was the norm; only short periods of unemployment needed to be catered for and benefit levels could be kept low so as to avoid disincentives to work. Until the 1970s few changes were needed to the original legislation. The great increase in the number of beneficiaries and the duration of their receipt of benefits that occurred during the following decades resulted in considerable development of the legislation.

2. For a full discussion of the considerations of an insurance-based scheme see TH Kewley, *Social Security in Australia: 1900–72*, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1973, pp. 140–65.

Initially the benefit system was modified without its basic form being changed in any fundamental way. Under the Fraser Government the emphasis was on tightening eligibility requirements to prevent abuses and increase work incentives. Waiting periods before a benefit could be paid were introduced for school leavers and the voluntarily unemployed in 1976. Proof of identity procedures were tightened in 1977. The type and location of employment that unemployed people could be expected to accept was greatly extended in 1979. This policy direction continued under the Hawke Government.

The active employment strategy: 1988 to 1993

New directions for reform were placed firmly on the agenda in the mid 1980s by the Social Security Review conducted by Professor Bettina Cass.³ For the unemployed, the main area of change involved the extension of the work test, which had applied from the introduction of the benefit in 1944, into an activity test. First introduced for the young unemployed when Job Search Allowance was introduced in 1988, it was extended to all unemployment beneficiaries when Job Search and Newstart Allowances were introduced in 1991. Under the previous work test, an applicant for unemployment benefit 'was required to show that he was capable of undertaking and willing to undertake "suitable" work and had taken reasonable steps to obtain such work.'⁴ The new approach involved greater obligations on the beneficiary to participate in programs to improve 'job readiness' and subsidised employment programs.

Sickness Benefit was also reformed in 1991 with the introduction of Sickness Allowance. Duration on a benefit was restricted in most cases to one year with provision for extension of duration in limited circumstances.

Payments for those under 21 years of age were reformed during this period. Rates of payment were aligned with education-related income support. Parental income and assets were taken into account for the youngest beneficiaries. Payments designed to assist homeless young people were introduced.

Working Nation: 1994 to 1996

The 1994 White Paper entitled *Working Nation* announced further reforms to benefits for the unemployed as part of a larger package of measures to assist the long-term unemployed.⁵ These changes were designed to provide incentives to seek part-time or casual employment through changes to the income test for both beneficiaries and their spouses. Direct assistance was also introduced for spouses of beneficiaries who were not in the labour force.

The White Paper included a further change to youth payments with the introduction of the Youth Training Allowance from January 1995. This change involved the transfer of income support for all

3. B Cass, *Social Security Review issues paper no. 4—income support for the unemployed in Australia: towards a more active system*, Australian Government Publishing Service (AGPS), Canberra, 1988.

4. TH Kewley, op. cit., p. 266.

5. PJ Keating, *Working Nation: policies and programs*, AGPS, Canberra, 1994.

those less than 18 years of age to the then Department of Employment, Education and Training. The aim was closer integration of unemployment and education-related income support for young people.

Mutual Obligation commenced: 1997

In 1997 the 'Work for the Dole' scheme was introduced as the first part of a broader 'Mutual Obligation' approach to the structure of income support and support programs for unemployed people.⁶ Mutual Obligation was based on the concept that welfare assistance provided to the unemployed of working age should involve some return responsibilities for the recipient.⁷ Initially aimed at the young unemployed, the concept was gradually extended to most unemployed people and also to those receiving payments because of their responsibilities for caring for children.

Youth Allowance introduced: 1998

In 1998 income support for young people was reformed with the introduction of a single payment for full-time students and unemployed young people. Parental support requirements were strengthened, rates of payment standardised for all young people and disincentives to study addressed.

Welfare to Work reforms: 2006

In 2006 parents with school-age children who would formerly have been eligible for Parenting Payment and people with disabilities who could do part-time work and would previously have been eligible for Disability Support Pension were paid Newstart Allowance or Youth Allowance with reduced participation requirements compared to other recipients of these payments. These changes were designed to achieve greater workforce involvement for these groups.

Detailed information

A detailed listing of the major changes to the payments available to the unemployed is provided in [Appendix B](#). The payments included are:

- [Unemployment Benefit, 1945 to 1991, Job Search Allowance, 1988 to 1991](#)
- [Newstart Allowance from 1991, Job Search Allowance, 1991 to 1996](#)
- [Youth Allowance from 1998](#)

-
6. P Yeend, *Mutual obligation/work for the dole*, E-brief, Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 2004, viewed 13 November 2012, http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/Publications_Archive/archive/dole
 7. J Howard, 'Answer to Question without Notice: Youth unemployment', [Questioner: L Anthony], House of Representatives, *Debates*, 10 February 1997, p. 446, viewed 2 October 2012, <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22chamber%2Fhansard%2F1997-02-10%2F0044%22>

- [Sickness Benefit, 1945 to 1991, Sickness Allowance from 1991](#)
- [Special Benefit from 1945](#)
- [Mature Age Allowance, 1994 to 2008, Mature Age Partner Allowance, 1994 to 1995](#) and
- [Partner Allowance from 1994](#).

Appendix B also includes details of:

- [the maximum rates payable for these benefits and allowances, and for Widow Allowance, from 1945](#)
- [income and asset test limits for these payments from 1945](#) and
- [liquid assets test limits for Newstart Allowance and Youth Allowance from 1991](#).

A brief history of payments for widows in Australia

The introduction of Widow Pensions: 1942 to 1947

Income support for widows and some sole parents was introduced in 1942 by the Curtin Government. Curtin had included a commitment to introduce pensions for widows in his 1940 election campaign policy speech.⁸ This form of income support had been included in most proposals from all sides of politics to expand the Commonwealth's involvement in income support since age and invalid pensions were introduced in 1909 and 1910 respectively. Unlike widow pensions introduced in the UK in 1925 and the USA in 1939, the Australian widow pension was not a contributory insurance-based payment and was therefore available to all widows who qualified under the means test. The structure of the new payment was drawn from the report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Social Security which had been asked in 1941 by the Menzies Government to inquire into widow pensions.⁹ Consequently the legislation received bipartisan support.

From the beginning the name of the payment was misleading. It was designed to assist women who had lost a partner and could not be expected to engage in employment due to child care responsibilities or age. Not all women in this category were eligible. De facto widows (where they had lived with a man in a *bona fide* domestic basis for at least three years immediately prior to the death of the man), deserted wives, divorced women and women whose husbands were in institutions for the insane were included, but single mothers, wives of prisoners, women deserted by de facto husbands and women who had deserted their husband or agreed to separate were excluded. These exclusions reflected the influence on legislators of contemporary moral standards as

8. J Curtin, *Policy speech*, Australian Labour Party policy document, Election 1940, p. 7, viewed 2 October 2012, http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/library/partypol/1029445/upload_binary/1029445.pdf;fileType=application%2Fpdf#search=%22Curtin%22

9. Joint Committee on Social Security, *First Interim Report: Social Security Planning and Legislation*, Commonwealth Government Printer, Canberra, September 1941.

did the requirement that pensioners be of 'good character' and 'deserving of a pension'. In this context the inclusion of assistance to de facto wives was somewhat controversial with protests from some conservative women's groups about the provision of assistance being condemned as encouraging adultery and undermining the institution of marriage.¹⁰

Three types of Widow Pension were introduced in 1942:

- widows with children were given a class A pension while they had a dependent child
- those without children were given a class B pension until retirement age if they were aged 50 years or older and
- those without children and not old enough for a class B pension were given a class C pension for 26 weeks immediately after the death of their husband.

In 1947 a class D pension was introduced for women whose husbands were imprisoned for six months or more if they had care of a child or were over 50 years of age. This pension was paid under the same conditions as a class B pension.

Widow A Pension (WidA) is covered by the publication [*Social security payments for people caring for children, 1912 to 2008: a chronology*](#).

The end of Widow Pensions: 1987 to 2006

The Hawke Government commenced a complete recasting of widow and sole parent payments in 1987 with the phasing out of Widow B Pension (WidB). Changing perceptions about the role of women and increases in the workforce participation of older women were beginning to make the payment redundant. A phasing-out period of 15 years for new claimants was provided for in the expectation that this would prevent any adverse consequences for older widows. However, the employment situation of older women deteriorated during the recession of the early 1990s. This prompted the announcement in 1994 of a Widow Allowance for women widowed after the age of 50 years with little workforce experience, as a means of reducing the impact of the phasing-out of WidB.

In 1989 the Widow C Pension (WidC) was renamed Widowed Person Allowance and eligibility was extended to widowers as well as widows both de jure and de facto. In 1994 this new payment was renamed Bereavement Allowance.

In 2006 Widow Allowance was closed to new claimants unless they had been born on or before 1 July 1955.

The demise of the various widow payments marked the end of a transition from payments for 'respectable' widows with a few categories of 'less respectable' sole parents hidden under the umbrella term widow pension, to payments based on the objective fact of recent death of a partner.

10. TH Kewley, op. cit., p. 216.

Detailed information

A detailed listing of the major changes to the payments available to widows is provided in [Appendix C](#). The payments included are:

- [Widow B Pension from 1942, Widow D Pension from 1947 to 1960](#)
- [Widow C Pension, 1942 to 1989, Widowed Person Allowance, 1989 to 1995, Bereavement Allowance from 1995](#) and
- [Widow Allowance from 1995](#).

Appendix C also includes details of:

- [the maximum rates payable for widows pensions from 1942](#) and
- [income and asset test limits for Widow B Pension from 1945](#).

Widow Allowance is paid under the same conditions as Newstart Allowance, for which details can be found in Appendix B.

A brief history of assistance with rent: 1958 to 2012

Supplementary Assistance was introduced in 1958 for single pensioners and all classes of widows paying rent and who were almost entirely dependent on the pension. This was a recognition that some groups of pensioners were entirely dependent on their pensions and hence in greater need than others.

In 1970, long-term sickness beneficiaries who paid rent became eligible for Supplementary Allowance, determined on an individual basis but paid up to the maximum rate of, and under similar conditions to, Supplementary Assistance. Supplementary Assistance and Supplementary Allowance were combined and renamed Rent Assistance (RA) in 1985. In 1986, RA was extended to some unemployment recipients with dependent children who rented privately. It has subsequently been extended, subject to income and rent threshold tests, to most income support recipients who are renting privately as well as to low-income Family Tax Benefit recipients who are not in receipt of income support payments.

Detailed information

Details of the major changes to Supplementary Allowance and Rent Assistance are provided in [Appendix D](#), together with [maximum rates payable since 1970](#).

Note on sources and further reading

In addition to the Commonwealth Budget Papers and social security legislation (and the associated Bills Digests), the following publications have been used in the preparation of this paper:

- T Carney and P Hanks, *Social security in Australia*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1994.
- B Daprè, *A compendium of legislative changes in social security 1983–2000*, Occasional Paper, no. 13, Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FACSIA), Canberra, 2006, viewed 5 October 2012, <http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/about-fahcsia/publications-articles/research-publications/occasional-paper-series/number-13-a-compendium-of-legislative-changes-in-social-security-1983-2000>
- Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FACSIA), *A compendium of legislative changes in social security 1908–1982*, Occasional Paper, no. 12, FACSIA, Canberra, 2006, viewed 5 October 2012, <http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/about-fahcsia/publications-articles/research-publications/occasional-paper-series/number-12-a-compendium-of-legislative-changes-in-social-security-1908-1982>
- FaHCSIA, *Guide to social security law: version 1.188 – Released 2 July 2012*, Australian Government, 2012, viewed 5 October 2012, http://guidesacts.fahcsia.gov.au/guides_acts/ssg/ssg-rn.html
- FaHCSIA, *Income support customers: a statistical overview*, Statistical papers series, various years, FaHCSIA, Canberra, 2006–2012, viewed 5 November 2012, <http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/about-fahcsia/publications-articles/research-publications/statistical-paper-series>
- Department of Human Services (DHS), *A guide to Australian Government payments*, DHS (and formerly Centrelink), various issues, viewed 5 November 2012, <http://www.humanservices.gov.au/corporate/publications-and-resources/a-guide-to-australian-government-payments>
- A Herscovitch and D Stanton, 'History of social security in Australia', *Family Matters*, no. 80, 2008, pp. 51–60, viewed 20 November, <http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/pubs/fm2008/fm80/hs.pdf>
- T H Kewley, *Australian social security today: major developments from 1900 to 1978*, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1980.
- T H Kewley, *Social security in Australia 1900–72*, Sydney University Press, Sydney, 1973.

Appendix A: Trends in recipient numbers

The number of recipients of unemployment and related benefits as at June each year since 1943 is shown in the table below. The growth in the recipient numbers up to the mid 1990s largely reflected both economic conditions and an increase in the categories of people eligible to receive benefits. The significant increase in 1994 and 1995 was a result of the inclusion of partnered parents. From then numbers gradually declined until 2009, largely reflecting economic conditions and the closure of several non-activity-tested payments. The proportion of recipients receiving unemployment benefits has increased over recent years as other payments have been closed to new entrants.

Numbers of recipients of payments for the unemployed, the sick and those in special circumstances, from 1943

At 30 June	Unemployment benefits ^(a)	Sickness benefits ^(b)	Special benefits	Other special circumstances benefits ^(c)	Total
1943	-	-	-	22 188	22 188
1944	-	-	-	26 113	26 113
1945	-	-	-	28 880	28 880
1946	6 873	6 920	196	28 890	42 879
1947	6 208	9 483	456	26 053	42 200
1948	1 838	9 940	949	25 299	38 026
1949	1 151	12 000	5 059	25 371	43 581
1950	1 226	12 941	5 244	25 148	44 559
1951	604	7 044	921	24 254	32 823
1952	8 060	6 378	1 148	27 395	42 981
1953	25 914	8 135	1 985	23 064	59 098
1954	6 083	7 802	1 852	22 642	38 379
1955	2 679	7 905	2 045	22 878	35 507
1956	7 003	7 244	1 947	23 436	39 630
1957	18 071	6 845	1 971	24 768	51 655
1958	29 418	8 001	2 149	25 958	65 526
1959	27 528	8 473	2 264	27 410	65 675
1960	16 541	8 569	2 258	28 682	56 050
1961	54 254	8 536	2 356	30 945	96 091
1962	46 324	10 270	2 391	32 252	91 237
1963	38 188	10 876	2 468	33 216	84 748
1964	18 129	10 776	2 577	34 753	66 235
1965	12 656	10 187	2 423	35 685	60 951
1966	19 482	10 004	2 310	36 810	68 606
1967	24 002	9 949	2 136	38 364	74 451
1968	21 275	9 370	2 665	39 170	72 480
1969	15 910	8 185	4 187	39 859	68 141
1970	13 043	8 813	3 804	42 857	68 517
1971	19 411	10 516	4 185	43 253	77 365
1972	38 647	13 382	4 163	42 973	99 165

At 30 June	Unemployment benefits ^(a)	Sickness benefits ^(b)	Special benefits	Other special circumstances benefits ^(c)	Total
1973	37 317	18 520	4 312	47 845	107 994
1974	30 837	21 862	5 099	51 226	109 024
1975	157 948	24 544	5 330	54 274	242 096
1976	183 338	30 533	7 300	58 482	279 653
1977	243 884	32 065	8 757	63 426	348 132
1978	282 174	34 548	11 779	67 564	396 065
1979	312 924	33 340	13 744	72 064	432 072
1980	310 004	40 191	21 121	75 040	446 356
1981	330 834	48 875	19 500	77 824	477 033
1982	535 499	50 350	16 659	79 291	681 799
1983	619 882	62 668	20 525	80 345	783 420
1984	581 720	62 501	18 141	81 869	744 231
1985	559 237	62 030	18 582	81 637	721 486
1986	568 716	64 136	18 136	81 443	732 431
1987	553 653	70 232	19 706	82 244	725 835
1988	478 049	75 189	22 592	86 802	662 632
1989	389 794	79 001	25 204	83 642	493 999
1990	419 785	79 195	27 913	78 947	526 893
1991	676 705	71 399	29 811	74 439	852 354
1992	851 831	44 172	34 792	69 408	1 000 203
1993	913 770	46 579	28 854	64 716	1 053 919
1994	878 278	47 132	25 947	335 255	1 286 612
1995	822 571	47 311	20 884	334 573	1 225 339
1996	846 556	33 215	18 727	189 434	1 087 932
1997	829 903	15 759	14 577	167 281	1 027 520
1998	809 554	16 285	10 236	172 267	1 008 342
1999	713 387	11 181	11 808	167 562	903 938
2000	634 863	10 043	10 971	170 499	826 376
2001	625 546	11 058	12 712	172 258	821 574
2002	645 160	9 540	13 091	188 910	856 701
2003	599 818	8 755	12 228	190 139	810 940
2004	567 758	8 478	11 216	171 125	758 577
2005	533 187	8 367	9 408	137 725	688 687
2006	513 943	7 573	6 841	116 768	645 125
2007	486 491	7 624	6 244	92 148	592 507
2008	464 308	7 437	6 003	79 149	556 897
2009	603 101	6 968	5 809	66 249	682 127
2010	642 352	6 703	6 307	58 724	714 086
2011	613 452	6 705	6 385	47 284	673 826

(a) From 1992 Job Search Allowance and Newstart Allowance, from 1995 Job Search Allowance, Newstart Allowance and Youth Training Allowance, from 1997 Newstart Allowance, from 1999 Newstart Allowance and Youth Allowance (other than full-time students).

(b) From 1992 Sickness Allowance.

(c) From 1942 Widow B Pension, from 1942 to 1989 Widow C Pension, from 1989 to 1994 Widowed Person's Allowance, from 1995 to 2005 Bereavement Allowance, from 1995 Widow Allowance, from 1994 Partner Allowance, from 1994 to 2008 Mature Age Allowance and from 1994 to 1995 Mature Age Partner Allowance.

Appendix B: Chronology of payments to the unemployed

Unemployment Benefit, 1945 to 1991, Job Search Allowance, 1988 to 1991

Milestones	Details
1945 July Unemployment Benefit introduced	<p>Unemployment Benefit (UB) paid to those who were out of work, were capable and willing to undertake suitable work and had taken reasonable steps to obtain work.</p> <p>Direct participation in a strike disqualified a person from receiving UB and voluntary unemployment could result in postponement or cancellation of UB. Payment of benefit could also be made conditional on beneficiary undertaking training, undergoing a medical examination, receiving treatment or doing work as required.</p> <p>Residence in Australia of 12 months immediately prior to application for UB required. Waiting period of seven days from claim before payment of UB commenced.</p> <p>Income test, but not an assets test, applied. Income above certain limits reduced benefit on a pound-for-pound basis. Income of a beneficiary's spouse taken into consideration as was any unearned income of dependent children.</p> <p>Additional benefit of £1 per week payable for a dependent spouse. The first child also qualified for an additional benefit of five shillings per week.</p>
1947 July	<p>Spouse's pension income partially exempted and income of dependent children totally exempted from income test.</p> <p>Provision made for payment of a partial additional benefit for a partially dependent wife.</p> <p>Additional benefit payable for a housekeeper where a beneficiary had dependent children under 16 years of age and received no benefit for a wife.</p> <p>Where a beneficiary, living apart from his spouse, was paying spousal maintenance, additional benefit not to exceed amount of such maintenance.</p> <p>Wives permanently living apart from their husbands eligible for UB.</p> <p>Residency requirements waived where claimants satisfied Director-General of Social Services (Director-General) they intended to reside permanently in Australia.</p>
1950 November	War pensions no longer treated as income under income test.
1960 February	Restrictions on eligibility of Aboriginal people for UB removed.
1966 September	UB payable to qualified ex-servicemen immediately upon termination of Repatriation Sustenance Allowance from Repatriation Department.
1969 September	Adult UB rates payable to unmarried minors with no parents living in Australia
1973 March UB rate linked to pension	<p>UB became payable at same rate as pensions. A standard rate for unmarried beneficiaries and a married rate for married beneficiaries and their spouses introduced. Lower rate of benefits for unmarried juniors abolished.</p> <p>Pension income of a spouse fully exempted under income test.</p>
1974 November	Payment of an additional benefit for a de facto wife of an unemployment or sickness beneficiary could be made where relationship had existed for at least three years.

Milestones	Details
1975 October	Junior rate of benefit for people aged under 18 years re-introduced. Requirement that a de facto relationship exist for three years before married rate payable eliminated. Benefits paid weekly in advance instead of weekly in arrears as had been the practice since 1945.
1976 March	<p>Definition of 'suitable work' modified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • single people over the age of 18 could be expected to change their locality to find a job • work test could be failed by a person on grounds of unacceptable dress or appearance and • skilled workers who had not found an appropriate job within six weeks would be required to accept any unskilled job even if that involved a reduction in wages or status. <p>Those who became unemployed voluntarily had to wait six weeks before eligible for benefit.</p> <p>School leavers ineligible for UB until commencement of new school year.</p> <p>Fortnightly income statements to be lodged in person with Commonwealth Employment Service (CES).</p>
1976 May	Subject to a means test, UB payable to primary producers.
1976 July	UB taxable.
1976 November	UB increases, except for those who were unmarried and aged under 18 years, indexed every six months, the same as for pensions. Benefits payable fortnightly instead of weekly.
1977 November	<p>New claims for UB paid two weeks in arrears.</p> <p>New administrative guidelines for proof of identification for UB.</p> <p>Legislation amended to preclude payment of benefit to school-leavers for six weeks after they ceased full-time secondary education.</p> <p>Alterations made regarding the seven-day waiting period for UB. At the Director-General's discretion, waiting period could begin from date of applicant's unemployment or from seven days prior to application, whichever was the later.</p> <p>UB recipients required to notify Department of Social Security (DSS) immediately upon starting work. Previously DSS had to be notified within seven days of receiving income, not when commencing employment.</p>
1978 November	Automatic indexation of UB removed for beneficiaries without dependants. Indexation of other UB rates changed to an annual adjustment. (The only annual consumer price index (CPI) adjustment occurred in November 1979.)
1979 October Tightening of the work test	<p>Beneficiaries expected to accept casual, short-term temporary or part-time work provided it paid the appropriate award or going rate.</p> <p>UB recipients to be interviewed at least once every three months.</p> <p>Payment of UB not made to a person whose unemployment was due to their involvement in industrial action or the involvement of a union of which they were a member. The spouse of such a person could qualify for benefit at the single rate plus additional benefits for children. This new provision applied only while industrial action</p>

Milestones	Details
	<p>was taking place.</p> <p>Further tightening of procedures for establishing identity of UB applicants.</p> <p>A beneficiary who refused a job where travelling expenses to and from job was less than ten per cent of wages paid considered to have failed work test. Previously maximum was five per cent.</p> <p>Those who refused an offer of suitable work, or who had become voluntarily unemployed without good reason, had benefits postponed for a minimum of six weeks and a maximum of 12 weeks. Previously postponement period had been at Director-General's discretion.</p>
1980 May	Twice-yearly automatic indexation of those benefits still subject to indexation reintroduced.
1980 September	Pay and allowances of Defence Force Reserve members exempted from income test.
1980 November Income test liberalised	Income test liberalised. Income above \$6 per week to \$50 per week reduced UB by 50 cents in the dollar (\$3 to \$40 for those who were single and aged 16 or 17 years). Only income above \$50 per week reduced benefit by \$1 for each \$1 of income.
1982 June	Waiting period for UB modified. If a person registered as unemployed with the CES and made a claim for UB within 14 days of that registration, date of registration taken to be date on which claim made.
1982 August	Rent subsidies provided by a government or a government housing authority exempted from income test.
1982 November	Income tests for all unemployment and sickness benefits (SB) standardised. Benefits reduced by 50 cents for each \$1 of income above a 'free area' of \$10 per week. Benefits reduced by \$1 per week for each \$1 of income above \$60 a week.
1984 March	Income test 'free area' increased to \$20 per week and benefit reduced by \$1 for each \$1 of income above \$70 a week.
1984 May	<p>Single UB beneficiaries with children eligible for Mother's/Guardian's Allowance (MGA).</p> <p>Automatic indexation reintroduced for UB recipients aged 18 years or more without dependants.</p> <p>All UB recipients eligible for Remote Area Allowance (RAA).</p>
1984 July	Income tax rebates introduced for beneficiaries.
1984 November	Benefits increased despite a fall in CPI.
1985 November New rates structure	<p>New rates structure for single people on UB. 'Junior' rate for those aged 16 and 17 years set at \$50.00 per week; 'Intermediate' rate for those aged 18 to 20 years set at \$88.20 per week. These benefits not subject to indexation. 'Adult' rate for those aged 21 years and over set at \$91.45 per week and subject to indexation.</p> <p>Waiting period removed for those transferring from other income support payments to UB.</p>

Milestones	Details
1986 May Rent Assistance payable	Rent Assistance (RA) payable to UB and Special Benefit (SpB) recipients on benefits for over six months, excluding those aged 18 to 24 years living with parents or guardians. Income test free area increased to \$30 per week.
1986 July	Young Homeless Allowance (YHA) introduced. Paid in addition to UB, SB or SpB to homeless young people aged under 18 years without dependants. Young people considered homeless if they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • had no parental home • were not allowed by the parent(s) to live at home or • could not, because of circumstances such as domestic violence, sexual abuse or comparable exceptional circumstances, be expected to live with their parents and • were not receiving continuous support of any kind from either parent • were not receiving income support from another government body and • had been away from home for at least six continuous weeks. YHA set at a rate bringing combined payment up to level of AUSTUDY payable to independent students aged 16 and 17 years. YHA also paid as a supplement to homeless AUSTUDY recipients of same age.
1986 September	Regional UB review teams established to conduct risk-based entitlement reviews and verify efforts by beneficiaries to find work.
1986 November	Indexation of benefits deferred for six weeks. Increases now paid December and June (previously November and May). UB recipients required to lodge income statements personally. Registration with the CES compulsory. UB recipients over 55 years of age in receipt of benefits for more than one year required to lodge income statements every 12 weeks instead of fortnightly.
1987 March	Those in receipt of UB for over two years to be interviewed by DSS and CES to verify entitlements, ensure that rights and obligations were understood and to provide information about community, employment and training services.
1987 July	Waiting period for voluntary job leavers, those dismissed for misconduct and those who failed the work test standardised and made cumulative. Waiting period increased by two weeks for each occurrence (up to 12 weeks for six occurrences over a three-year period). RA no longer income tested separately. Waiting period for UB calculated from date of registration with CES rather than date unemployment commenced. A work intention questionnaire introduced to check on adequacy of job search activities of UB recipients.
1987 September	Waiting period for education leavers under 21 years of age, without dependants, increased from 6 to 13 weeks. UB recipients aged 18 to 20 years reviewed after 12 months on benefit. An activity test was substituted for the work test after one year on benefit.

Milestones	Details
	UB applicants required to provide a certificate from previous employer stating date of, and reason for, their job loss.
1987 December Assets test introduced	Assets test applied to benefits for those aged 25 years and over. Those with assets above pension assets test free area no longer eligible for benefit.
1988 January Job Search Allowance for those under 18 years	<p>Job Search Allowance (JSA) replaced UB for those aged 16 and 17 years. JSA recipients subject to the UB work test and required to pass an activity test after six months on JSA. Work test involved counselling by CES and offer of suitable training or work. JSA recipients required to have payment continuation forms endorsed fortnightly by CES.</p> <p>JSA rate \$50 per week subject to a parental income test. Payment reduced from \$50 per week to a minimum of \$25 per week if parental income above \$16 000 per annum. Income limit increased by \$1200 for first dependent child other than JSA recipient and \$2500 for each additional dependent child. Certain JSA recipients exempt from parental income test, mainly those who were married, had children or were not supported by their parents. Normal income test also applied.</p> <p>Indexation of JSA and UB for those aged 18 to 20 years deferred until January 1989.</p> <p>For AUSTUDY recipients receiving UB between 1 January and the first AUSTUDY payment for a year, amount paid as UB recovered from first AUSTUDY payment.</p>
1988 February	<p>UB benefit for recipients living apart from their spouse indefinitely due to illness payable at single rate.</p> <p>Work effort certificate introduced to be used selectively in conjunction with work intention certificate. UB recipients whose job search efforts were in doubt required to obtain signatures of employers approached about work.</p>
1988 June	Separate maintenance income test introduced. Benefit reduced by 50 cents for each dollar of maintenance income above \$15 per week for one child plus \$5 for each subsequent child.
1989 January	Mobile benefits delivery teams established to provide services to remote areas.
1989 February Newstart Program established	<p>Newstart Program to improve employment prospects of long-term UB recipients established:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • up to 40 000 long-term UB recipients to undergo intensive interviews conducted jointly by DSS and CES staff. Assessment of labour market prospects, referral to training or work opportunities and counselling provided • doubling of labour market program places for target group • increased CES job placement activity for target group and • transition to work incentives provided including payment of an employment entry payment of \$100, waiving of UB waiting period where job did not last, and introduction of a broader vocational activity provision allowing for a wider range of activities to be undertaken by target group without loss of benefit.
1989 July	UB recipients required to seek and accept any part-time, casual or temporary work within their capacity and expected to commute to seek or accept work.
1989 September	UB waiting period extended by up to four weeks if holiday pay received during waiting period.

Milestones	Details
1989 November	<p>The first of three advances in the timing of indexation (second and third advances occurred in April and September 1990), changing indexation timing by moving indexation forward by three months from June and December to September and March.</p> <p>Waiting period of 12 weeks introduced for a UB recipient who changed residence to an area with less employment prospects.</p> <p>Applicants for, and recipients of, benefit required to provide tax file number.</p>
1990 January	<p>UB recipients aged 55 and over, after 12 months on benefit, allowed to participate in CES-approved training courses or voluntary work for up to 13 weeks at a time or for 26 weeks in the year. Also allowed to participate in regular part-time work paying at least 35 per cent of average weekly earnings as an alternative to the requirement to seek full-time work.</p> <p>UB recipients aged 55 and over given access to the Newstart Program.</p> <p>Minimum rate of JSA made subject to indexation on 1 January every year.</p> <p>Independent rate of JSA, equivalent to AUSTUDY independent rate, introduced for JSA recipients not supported by their parents and therefore not subject to parental income test. .</p> <p>Employment entry payment of \$50 paid to JSA recipients taking up full-time work after at least nine months on JSA.</p> <p>YHA waiting period abolished for those not able to live at home because of domestic violence, sexual abuse or comparable exceptional circumstances. Waiting periods for other claimants reduced to two weeks. YHA no longer paid as a separate allowance. Those qualifying for YHA paid at homeless rate of JSA, Sickness Allowance (SA) or SpB.</p>
1990 June	<p>UB rate for single beneficiaries aged 60 or over, with no dependants, and on UB for six months, raised to single age pension rate.</p>
1990 August	<p>Disaster relief payment, equivalent to two weeks of maximum age pension rate, introduced for those beneficiaries experiencing disruption because of a major natural disaster. Backdated to December 1989 to cover Newcastle earthquake.</p>
1990 September	<p>Those beneficiaries aged under 21 years without dependants paid at single rate regardless of marital status. Spouses required to qualify in own right before any payment made for them.</p> <p>Married beneficiaries and spouses permitted to earn additional \$30 per fortnight (pf) each from wages before benefit reduced under income test.</p> <p>An 'at home' rate of \$69.20 per week paid to those beneficiaries who were unmarried, aged 18 to 21 years-old, without dependants and living at a parent's home.</p> <p>Married beneficiaries with a spouse receiving AUSTUDY paid half the combined married rate.</p> <p>UB recipients could be required to attend CES when requested or their benefit would cease.</p> <p>Beneficiaries who were custodial parents required to seek reasonable maintenance from non-custodial parent of their children. Failure to seek maintenance could result in non-payment of additional benefit for the children concerned.</p> <p>Benefits assets test extended to those aged under 25.</p>

Milestones	Details
1991 January	Beneficiaries required to provide spouse's tax file number.
1991 February Liquid assets test introduced	Liquid assets test applied to UB recipients. Claimants with liquid assets (cash and deposits with financial institutions) of \$5000 if single or \$10 000 if married or single with dependants required to serve additional waiting period of four weeks.
1991 March	Cash in hand and money deposited with financial institutions was deemed to be earning a minimum interest rate for purposes of benefit income means test. First \$2000 exempt from this provision.
1991 April	Computerised data matching to detect inconsistent payments made to people by two or more Commonwealth agencies. DSS, Department of Veterans' Affairs, Department of Health, Housing and Community Services, Department of Employment, Education and Training, and Australian Taxation Office involved.

Newstart Allowance from 1991, Job Search Allowance 1991 to 1996

Milestones	Details
1991 July UB replaced by Job Search Allowance and Newstart Allowance	<p>UB replaced by JSA and Newstart Allowance (NSA).</p> <p>JSA for those aged 16 and 17 years unchanged and extended to cover those registered by the CES as unemployed for less than 12 months. Recipients to meet requirements of an activity test similar to previous work test but with greater emphasis on vocational training and labour market program participation.</p> <p>NSA paid to those aged 18 years and over registered with CES as unemployed for longer than 12 months. JSA activity test also applied to NSA recipients. NSA recipients required to enter into a Newstart Activity Agreement with CES covering activities NSA recipient could be required to undertake, such as job search, vocational training, labour market program participation, paid work experience, job search training or training to reduce labour market disadvantage.</p> <p>UB conditions and rates continued in most cases under new payments. Failure to comply with new activity tests or terms of a Newstart Activity Agreement added to list of situations in which a non-payment period could be imposed.</p> <p>Formal Training Allowance paid by Department of Employment, Education and Training abolished for recipients receiving JSA or NSA.</p> <p>Maintenance income test free areas indexed annually in July.</p>
1991 December	Those who entered into agreements with the Commonwealth undertaking to assure support for migrants who were unlikely to be able to support themselves, required to lodge a refundable bond with the Commonwealth Bank. JSA or NSA expenditure on these migrants to be deducted from the bond with any residue refunded when the migrant had been settled in Australia for two years.
1992 January	<p>JSA independent rate eligibility extended to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> those aged 16 or 17 years in substitute care and not receiving state government allowances under 16 year olds aged above minimum school leaving age or over 15 years of age with an exemption from attending school, with an employment history and

Milestones	Details
	<p>not living with, or supported, by a parent and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> those aged 16 and 17 years olds registered with CES as seeking full time work for at least 13 weeks in previous six months.
1992 March	New grants of JSA or NSA limited to half the married rate for a member of a couple whose partner was not receiving DSS income support.
1992 November	<p>Waiting period for school leavers changed. For those aged under 21 years who were not part of a couple and without dependent children, waiting period now 13 weeks or until 15 February, whichever was the earlier. Other education leavers to serve a six-week waiting period.</p> <p>Waiting period waived for those who had undertaken a course of education for longer than six months, and then returned to income support within 12 months of cancellation of income support; and for those who would otherwise qualify for SpB.</p> <p>Part-time and casual work undertaken since leaving school and prior to start of waiting period, taken into account when determining waiting period length.</p>
1993 January	Migrants arriving in Australia after 1 January 1993 ineligible for JSA/NSA until six months after arrival or receipt of permanent residence, whichever was the later.
1993 March	<p>Work test job search reporting requirements for NSA recipients aged 50 to 54 years brought into line with those aged 55 to 64 years. Required to report every 12 weeks instead of fortnightly if not receiving regular private income. If in substantial part-time work, these NSA recipients exempt from usual activity test.</p> <p>Restrictions on amount of voluntary work permitted under work test changed. Up to six weeks full-time voluntary work per year allowed for those aged under 50 years and unemployed for more than six months. (Previously only part-time voluntary work up to 20 hours per week permitted.) JSA recipients aged 16 and 17 years, receiving JSA for three months or more, able to do full-time voluntary work for six weeks per year, an increase of two weeks. JSA recipients aged 50 to 54 years able to do full-time voluntary work for up to 13 weeks per year, the same provision previously applying to those aged 55 years or older.</p> <p>JSA independent rate made available to those who had lived away from home for 18 weeks (previously 26 weeks).</p> <p>JSA/NSA eligibility extended to those aged 15 years with an employment history or registered with the CES for at least 13 weeks.</p>
1993 September	<p>JSA/NSA single recipients entitled to earn additional \$30 pf from wages before payment reduced by income test. Similarly, a couple's earnings entitlement increased from \$30 to \$50 pf each.</p> <p>A person with a partner in prison treated as if they were single.</p> <p>Ordinary waiting period waived for claimants receiving income support within the previous 13 weeks.</p>
1994 January	<p>Fringe benefits valued at over \$1000 per annum taken into consideration under JSA parental income test.</p> <p>A \$200 Education Entry Payment introduced for JSA/NSA recipients under 18 years of age who were registered with CES for at least 12 months and enrolled in a full-time course of study.</p>
1994 March	Earnings credit introduced. Maximum rate JSA/NSA recipients able to accumulate a credit of up to \$500 at rate of \$90 fortnightly for single recipients and \$80 fortnightly

Milestones	Details
	for each member of a couple without payments being reduced under income test. Credits could not be used if earned income greater than cut-off point for payments under income test.
1994 July	<p>Deferment periods due to activity test breaches changed to relate to length of time a person unemployed. Deferment periods for administrative breaches unchanged.</p> <p>A two-week deferment of income support applied for the first activity test breach by those unemployed less than 12 months. Subsequent breaches incurred an additional six-week deferment for each breach. Initial deferment period increased from two to four weeks for those unemployed 12 to 18 months and to six weeks for those unemployed over 18 months. Deferment periods could not commence until recipient notified and received two instalments of JSA or NSA after notification.</p>
1994 September Partner Allowance introduced	Additional amount of JSA/NSA paid to recipients with a dependent spouse replaced by Partner Allowance (PA) paid directly to dependent spouse and at same rate as JSA/NSA married rate.
1995 January Working Nation	As part of Working Nation, JSA for those aged under 18 years replaced by Youth Training Allowance (YTA), administered by Department of Employment, Education and Training and paid by DSS. JSA recipients under 18 years of age on 1 January continued with JSA, but no new grants were made to people in this age group from that date. General YTA eligibility conditions the same as for JSA for people under 18 years of age with exception that AUSTUDY assets test replaced DSS benefit assets test. YTA recipients provided with intensive case management and access to training, education and work experience placements.
1995 March	<p>JSA and NSA recipients eligible for an advance payment of their allowance of \$250 to \$1000 in certain situations, repaid by reduction in allowance over subsequent six to 12 months.</p> <p>Development of self-employment and participation in co-operative enterprises included in activities available for long-term unemployed recipients.</p> <p>Restrictions on amount of voluntary work by a JSA/NSA recipient removed.</p> <p>Simplified re-grant procedures applied for up to 26 weeks after last receipt of payment (previously 13 weeks).</p> <p>Recipients starting casual or part-time work which would be sufficient to preclude payment not cancelled from JSA/NSA system for 12 weeks (previously six weeks).</p>
1995 July	<p>Income test changed. The 'earnings disregard' removed leaving a standard \$60 pf income test free area for all recipients, single and partnered. The 100 per cent withdrawal rate changed to 70 per cent withdrawal rate (50 per cent withdrawal rate on first \$40 earned after free area unchanged).</p> <p>Each member of a couple individually subject to standard income test. Once income of one partner reduced their payment to nil, any additional income reduced partner's payment.</p>
1996 March	<p>JSA and NSA recipients temporarily incapacitated for work because of illness not transferred to, or granted, SA. These recipients remained on, or were granted, the payment they were otherwise eligible for, but were exempt from the activity test while ill.</p> <p>Earnings credit changed so that the credit accrued at a rate equal to the amount of the unused free area in any fortnight. Maximum amount of earnings credit to be used in</p>

Milestones	Details
	any fortnight limited to \$100.
1996 July Extended deeming introduced	<p>Major reform of income test treatment of financial assets—'Extended Deeming'—introduced. When assessing income under the income test, total value of all financial assets added together. A rate of return of five per cent deemed to have been received on first \$30 000 (\$50 000 for a couple) worth of assets and a rate of seven per cent was deemed for asset holdings above these levels. First \$2000 (\$4000 for a couple) exempt from extended deeming. These rates set at levels considered to be easily achievable using safe investments. Minister for Social Security could vary deeming rates as market rates changed.</p> <p>Financial assets included: bank, building society and credit union accounts; cash; term deposits; cheque accounts; friendly society bonds; managed investments; investments in superannuation funds, approved deposit funds and deferred annuities after age pension age; listed shares and securities; loans, debentures and bonds; shares in unlisted public companies; gifted assets above the allowable limits; and gold and other bullion.</p> <p>Financial assets excluded: homes, home contents and other real estate; cars, boats and caravans; antiques and stamp and coin collections; investments in superannuation funds, approved deposit funds and deferred annuities before age pension age; standard life insurance policies; and income streams such as superannuation pensions, allocated pensions, immediate annuities and allocated annuities.</p>
1996 September JSA and NSA amalgamated	<p>JSA and NSA amalgamated as Newstart Allowance.</p> <p>More flexible reporting requirements introduced for certain groups: four-weekly reporting for those recipients under case management, in training or doing voluntary work; 12-weekly reporting for those over fifty years of age; and negotiated reporting arrangements to suit circumstances of those recipients located in remote locations.</p>
1997 January	<p>NSA, YTA and SA minimum payment rates abolished for those under 18 years of age. Full payment rate for these recipients subject to parental means test.</p> <p>Advance payments restricted to amounts of up to \$500 and limited to one advance payment each 12 months.</p> <p>Definition of 'unsuitable paid work' for job seekers modified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack of qualifications, skills or experience no longer made work unsuitable only if employer did not provide training • medical evidence required if work unsuitable because of job seeker's injury, disability or illness and • work unsuitable if required Defence Force or Reserve Force enlistment. <p>Non-payment period incurred increased from 12 to 26 weeks when a person moved to an area of lower employment prospects.</p> <p>A person unemployed as a result of industrial action in breach of an order, direction or injunction, not eligible for an unemployment payment for six weeks after cessation of industrial action.</p>
1997 March	<p>Deferment period as penalty for administrative breaches replaced by rate reduction period, which reduced payment by 16 per cent for 13 weeks.</p> <p>Activity test breaches could be imposed for failure to attend an interview or complete a labour market program, and for non-declaration of income from remunerative work.</p> <p>Earnings credit scheme abolished.</p>

Milestones	Details
	<p>Calculation of preclusion periods due to the receipt of personal injury compensation after 20 March 1997 altered. Compensation amount divided by the amount above which no pension was payable to a single person under the income test. Previously compensation amount divided by 'all persons average weekly earnings'. For compensation received after 20 March 1997, compensation preclusion period applied only to the recipient and not to spouses as previously.</p> <p>Exemption under 'extended deeming' provisions for first \$2000 (\$4000 for a couple) removed.</p> <p>Newly Arrived Residents Waiting Period of 104 weeks for a range of payments introduced for migrants arriving after 4 March 1997. Refugees and their immediate family, and certain spouse visa holders, exempt.</p>
<p>1997 July</p> <p>Work for the Dole Scheme</p>	<p>Health Benefit Card replaced by Health Care Cards for SA recipients and incapacitated-for-work NSA recipients.</p> <p>Activity test arrangements amended to provide for recipients to be directed to participate in the Work for the Dole Scheme (WFTD), with a fortnightly payment of \$20 to participants.</p>
<p>1997 September</p>	<p>Superannuation assets assessed under the income and assets tests for those recipients aged 55 years and over and receiving income support for 39 weeks. .</p> <p>Voluntary work arrangements for those not subject to activity agreements changed. Those aged 50 years or more could satisfy the activity test by undertaking voluntary work for an unlimited number of days per year or by a combination of voluntary and paid work with an approved organisation for at least 40 hours fortnightly. Those aged under 50 years and in receipt of income support for three or more months could satisfy activity test by undertaking full-time voluntary work for six fortnights in first 12 months on income support.</p> <p>Income maintenance period introduced. Leave payments treated as income from date received for the period of leave for which they were calculated. For example, where a termination payment includes paid-out leave entitlements, NSA not payable for the period of the paid-out leave. Eligible termination payments rolled over into an appropriate fund exempt.</p> <p>Liquid assets test changed so that those with liquid assets over \$2500 if single or \$5000 if partnered were subject to waiting periods from one to 13 weeks depending on assets amount.</p>
<p>1998 July</p> <p>Youth Allowance introduced</p> <p>Mutual Obligation</p>	<p>Youth Allowance (YA) became the main income support payment for young people. YA replaced YTA and NSA for those who were aged 15 to 20 years and unemployed.</p> <p>Enhanced Mutual Obligation arrangements introduced. Young unemployed people aged 18 to 24 years receiving payment for six months required to undertake an additional activity in return for receiving payments.</p> <p>High-income seasonal, contract or intermittent workers subject to a non-payment or preclusion period following cessation of employment. Income derived from period of seasonal work divided by average weekly ordinary time earnings (AWOTE). If the period that resulted from that calculation was longer than the period actually worked, the person was precluded from receiving a payment for the remaining period. Partners of these workers also precluded from receiving certain payments during the preclusion period. In the case of a worker with a partner, twice the amount of AWOTE used to calculate preclusion period.</p>

Milestones	Details
1999 July	One-off crisis payment, equivalent to one week of allowance, introduced for people in hardship due to being forced out of their home because of, for example, domestic violence or house fire. The new payment also replaced the prisoner release payment.
1999 September	Community Development Employment Projects Scheme (CDEP) participants eligible for a fortnightly \$20 participation supplement, RA, pharmaceutical allowance and a health care card.
2000 July GST compensation	<p>Allowances rates for all recipients increased by four per cent as part of a package of measures to compensate for the impact of the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). Indexation provisions adjusted so that half of this increase was an advance on whatever rate increase occurred in March 2001, leaving an effective long-term increase of two per cent in the allowance rate.</p> <p>Income and asset test free areas applying to allowances increased by 2.5 per cent as part of compensation package.</p>
2001 April	Overpayments caused by administrative error became recoverable debts.
2001 July	Superannuation assets of those aged between 55 years and age pension age exempt from income and assets tests. Certain activity test breach penalties waived for recipients upon commencement in the Community Support Programme, a practice which already applied to those commencing a Work for the Dole project.
2001 September	Partners of personal injury compensation recipients no longer subject to dollar-for-dollar reduction of their payment. Instead once the compensation recipient's payment was reduced to nil by dollar-for-dollar deductions, the excess was treated as income under the income test for their partner.
2002 July	<p>Activity test breach penalties waived if benefit recipients commenced participation in a rehabilitation program or a range of vocational training or labour market programs.</p> <p>Breach penalties for not attending an interview ceased to be activity test breach penalties and were treated as administrative breach penalties.</p>
2003 September Australians Working Together	<p>Australians Working Together, a 2001–02 budget measure, provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$20.80 fortnightly supplement for those participating in approved language, literacy and numeracy training programs. • Working Credit for those of workforce age on income support. Credits of up to \$48 pf accumulated up to a total of \$1000. Any income earned would reduce amount of credit accumulated each week on a dollar-for-dollar basis. In fortnights where earnings exceeded income test free area, accumulated credit would be reduced before any reduction was made to income support under income test. • NSA recipients aged at least 50 years able to participate in a broader range of activities in order to satisfy participation requirements. Penalties waived if recipients rectified any failure to comply with activity agreement conditions. • Mature Age Allowance (MAA) and PA closed to new entrants. Those unable to apply for MAA or PA eligible to apply for NSA instead. <p>Activity test breach penalties changed— penalty period for a first activity test or administrative breach shortened if recipient complied with activity requirements. Penalty period reduced from 26 weeks to 8 weeks for an activity test breach penalty and from 13 weeks to 8 weeks for an administrative breach penalty. Reduced breach penalties not available if recipient failed to start a job as planned; declined job interview</p>

Milestones	Details
	offer; became voluntarily unemployed; dismissed from employment for misconduct; knowingly or recklessly declared incorrect earnings from employment; or failed to submit a satisfactory jobseeker diary.
2006 July Welfare to Work	<p>As a result of Welfare to Work, a 2005–06 budget measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New claimants for income support with disabilities and with partial capacity to work no longer eligible to apply for Disability Support Pension. Instead, most could apply for NSA and were required to seek suitable paid work of at least 15 hours per week. • New claimants for income support who were principal carers for children no longer eligible to apply for Parenting Payment if youngest child aged six years or older, if partnered, or eight years or older if single. Instead, most could apply for NSA and were required to seek suitable paid work of at least 15 hours per week. Access to child care and reasonable travel times taken into account in determining suitability of work. Principal carers could be exempt from requirement to satisfy activity test if affected by domestic violence, had children with a disability or illness, had a large family, or were foster carers, home or distance educators. • NSA recipients with a partial capacity to work or who were principal carers eligible for Pharmaceutical Allowance and a Pensioner Concession Card. • Very long-term unemployed people with a pattern of work avoidance could be required to undertake full-time Work for the Dole for 50 hours pf. • Recipients aged 55 years or more could satisfy job search requirements by undertaking at least 15 hours per week of voluntary or paid work. Younger recipients all had same job search requirements. • Penalties under compliance regime changed so that an eight-week non-payment period imposed after three participation failures within 12 months. Each participation failure resulted in a non-payment period lasting until compliance occurred. • Income test changed. Income between \$62 and \$250 pf reduced payment by 50 cents for each dollar of income. Income over \$250 pf reduced payment by 60 cents for each dollar of income. • Debts resulting from knowingly incorrectly declaring earnings resulted in a one-off 10 per cent recovery fee rather than a fixed amount penalty.
2007 August Income management	<p>Social security payments could be subject to income management in Northern Territory and Cape York. Income management involved diversion of 50 per cent of recipient's income support into an account that could only be drawn on to pay for priority needs, such as food, clothes and rent.</p>
2007 September	<p>Non-resident parents with care of a child between 14 per cent and 34 per cent of nights per year paid at 'with child' rate.</p>
2008 July	<p>Employment Entry Payment for long-term unemployed recipients moving into full-time work abolished.</p>
2008 December SEAM	<p>School Enrolment and Attendance Measure (SEAM) provisions commenced. Centrelink empowered to suspend for up to 13 weeks and then cancel income support payments if a recipient's child does not comply with school enrolment or attendance requirements.</p>
2009 April	<p>From April 2009 to March 2011, in recognition of Global Financial Crisis (GFC) impact, liquid assets maximum reserve doubled so that those with liquid assets of over \$5000 if</p>

Milestones	Details
	single, or \$10 000 if partnered, were subject to waiting periods of from one to 13 weeks, depending on amount they had.
2009 July	<p>Changes to compliance framework. A job seeker who, without reasonable excuse, failed to attend an activity, job interview or interview with their employment service provider, committed a 'connection failure' and could be penalised equivalent of one work day of their basic rate of payment. Intentional and persistent failure to comply with obligations considered a 'serious failure' resulting in an eight-week period of non-payment.</p> <p>Definition of 'member of a couple' changed to include same-sex couples.</p> <p>From July 2009 to June 2011, temporary Training Supplement payable to job seekers who had not completed Year 12 or equivalent and were undertaking qualifying education or training.</p>
2010 April	Disadvantaged income support recipients able to receive payments weekly rather than fortnightly.
2010 July	Principal carers with school-aged children eligible for participation requirement exemptions in specified circumstances, such as those who experienced domestic violence or cared for four or more children.
2011 March	Temporary doubling of liquid asset maximum reserve ceased.
2011 July	Immediate suspension of payments for job seeker failing to attend a scheduled appointment or activity. Payment reinstated and back paid when job seeker attended rescheduled appointment or resumed required activity. Payment suspended for job seeker failing to attend rescheduled appointment or resume required activity without reasonable excuse until they did so, without back payment.
2012 June	Clean Energy Advance paid to compensate those receiving allowances for expected impact of Carbon Tax.
2012 July	<p>Eligibility age for NSA raised from 21 to 22 years.</p> <p>SEAM extended compelling recipients to attend conferences regarding their child's attendance, and to comply with school attendance plan.</p>

Youth Allowance from 1998

Milestones	Details
<p>1998 July</p> <p>Youth Allowance introduced</p> <p>Enhanced Mutual Obligation arrangements</p>	<p>Youth Allowance (YA) introduced as main income support payment for young people, replacing YTA, NSA and SA for those who were unemployed and aged 15 to 20 years. YA also replaced AUSTUDY for those students aged 16 to 24 years and older students starting a course before turning 25 years of age.</p> <p>Unemployed YA recipients subject to an activity test regime similar to that for NSA. Enhanced Mutual Obligation arrangements introduced for unemployed YA recipients—all young unemployed people receiving payment for six months required to undertake an additional activity in return for receiving payments.</p> <p>Full-time study required for students.</p> <p>Payment rates \$145.40 pf for those aged 16 and 17 years living at home, \$174.80 pf for those aged 18 years or more living at home and \$265.50 pf for those living away from home. Rates indexed annually.</p> <p>Independent status applied if recipients had supported themselves through</p>

Milestones	Details
	<p>employment since leaving school, or were refugees, orphans, homeless, in state care, parents or partnered for over 12 months. Those aged 15 years had to be independent to qualify for YA.</p> <p>Independent recipients received away-from-home rate and those with children received relevant NSA rate. RA also available to independent recipients.</p> <p>Recipients who were not independent were subject to a parental income and assets test, supplemented by Family Actual Means Test which was applied to parents who were self-employed or had significant income from certain sources other than wages.</p> <p>Personal income test applied to all YA recipients. Those who were unemployed were subject to same income test as for NSA. Students were able to receive up to \$230 pf before losing 50 cents for each dollar of private income up to \$310 pf. Income above that amount reduced payment by 70 cents for each dollar of private income. An income bank of \$6000 per annum allowed students to average income and reduce impact of income test on income during high-income periods.</p>
<p>2000 July</p> <p>GST compensation</p>	<p>Allowances rates for all recipients increased by four per cent as part of a package of measures to compensate for the impact of the introduction of the GST. Indexation provisions adjusted so that half of this increase was an advance on whatever rate increase occurred in March 2001, leaving an effective long-term increase of two per cent in the allowance rate. Income and asset test free areas applying to allowances increased by 2.5 per cent.</p>
<p>2001 January</p>	<p>Value of a person's farm or business assets disregarded under family assets test increased from 50 per cent to 75 per cent.</p>
<p>2002 July</p>	<p>Breach penalties for not attending an interview ceased to be activity test breach penalties and treated as administrative breach penalties.</p>
<p>2003 September</p> <p>Australians Working Together</p>	<p>Australians Working Together, a 2001–02 budget measure, provided:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$20.80 fortnightly supplement for those participating in approved language, literacy and numeracy training programs. • A Working Credit for those of workforce age on income support. Credits of up to \$48 pf accumulated up to a total of \$1000. Any income earned would reduce amount of credit accumulated each week on a dollar-for-dollar basis. In fortnights where earnings exceeded income test free area, accumulated credit would be reduced before any reduction was made to income support under income test. <p>Activity test breach penalties changed. Penalty period for a first activity test or administrative breach shortened if recipient complied with activity requirements. Penalty period reduced from 26 weeks to 8 weeks for an activity test breach penalty and from 13 weeks to 8 weeks for an administrative breach penalty. Reduced breach penalties not available if recipient failed to start a job as planned; declined job interview offer; became voluntarily unemployed; dismissed from employment for misconduct; knowingly or recklessly declared incorrect earnings from employment; or failed to submit a satisfactory jobseeker diary.</p>
<p>2005 July</p>	<p>New Apprentices eligible for YA.</p>
<p>2006 July</p> <p>Welfare to Work</p>	<p>As a result of Welfare to Work, a 2005–06 budget measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New claimants for income support with disabilities who had a partial capacity to work were no longer eligible to apply for Disability Support Pension. If unemployed and applying for YA, they were required to seek suitable paid

Milestones	Details
	<p>work of at least 15 hours per week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New claimants for income support who were principal carers for children no longer eligible to apply for Parenting Payment if youngest child aged 6 years or older, if partnered, or 8 years or older if single. If unemployed and applying for YA, they were required to seek suitable paid work of at least 15 hours per week. Access to child care and reasonable travel times taken into account in determining suitability of work. Principal carers could be exempt from requirement to satisfy activity test if affected by domestic violence, had children with a disability or illness, had a large family, or were foster carers, home or distance educators. • YA recipients with a partial capacity to work or who were principal carers eligible for Pharmaceutical Allowance and a Pensioner Concession Card. • Very long-term unemployed people with a pattern of work avoidance could be required to undertake full-time Work for the Dole for 50 hours pf. • Penalties under the compliance regime changed so that an eight-week non-payment period imposed after three participation failures within 12 months. Each participation failure resulted in a non-payment period lasting until compliance occurred. • Income test for jobseekers changed. Income between \$62 and \$250 pf reduced payment by 50 cents for each dollar of income. Income over \$250 per fortnight reduced payment by 60 cents for each dollar of income. • Income test for students and apprentices was changed. Income above \$316 pf reduced payment by 60 cents for each dollar of income. • Debts resulting from knowingly incorrectly declaring earnings resulted in a one-off 10 per cent recovery fee rather than a fixed amount penalty.
2007 August Income management	Allowances could be subject to income management in the Northern Territory and Cape York. Income management involved diversion of 50 per cent of a recipient's income support into an account that could only be drawn on to pay for priority needs, such as food, clothes and rent.
2007 September	Non-resident parents with care of a child between 14 per cent and 34 per cent of nights per year paid at the 'with child' rate.
2008 July	Employment Entry Payment for long-term unemployed recipients moving into full-time work abolished.
2008 December SEAM	SEAM provisions commenced. Centrelink empowered to suspend for up to 13 weeks and then cancel income support payments if a recipient's child does not comply with school enrolment or attendance requirements.
2009 April	From April 2009 to March 2011, in recognition of the impact of the GFC, liquid assets maximum reserve doubled so that those with liquid assets of over \$5000 if single, or \$10 000 if partnered, were subject to waiting periods of from one to 13 weeks, depending on the amount they had.
2009 July	Changes to compliance framework. A job seeker who, without reasonable excuse, failed to attend an activity, job interview or interview with their employment service provider, committed of a 'connection failure' and could be penalised the equivalent of one work day of their basic rate of payment. Intentional and persistent failure to comply with obligations considered a 'serious failure' resulting in an eight-week period of non-payment.

Milestones	Details
	<p>Definition of 'member of a couple' changed to include same-sex couples.</p> <p>Access to YA removed for job seekers who had not completed Year 12 or equivalent and were not in full-time education or training.</p>
2010 April	<p>Parental income test free threshold for dependent recipients aligned with income test free threshold for Family Tax Benefit Part A, representing a substantial increase. More generous taper arrangements introduced where there were two or more dependent YA recipients in a family.</p> <p>Disadvantaged income support recipients able to receive payments weekly rather than fortnightly.</p>
2010 July	<p>Strengthened criteria for independent status for those claiming to be self-supporting through employment.</p> <p>Principal carers with school-aged children eligible for participation requirement exemptions in specified circumstances, such as those who experienced domestic violence or cared for four or more children.</p>
2011 March	<p>Temporary doubling of liquid asset maximum reserve ceased.</p>
2011 July	<p>Immediate suspension of payments for job seeker failing to attend a scheduled appointment or activity. Payment reinstated and back paid when job seeker attended rescheduled appointment or resumed required activity. Payment suspended for job seeker failing to attend rescheduled appointment or resume required activity without reasonable excuse until they did so, without back payment.</p>
2012 June	<p>Clean Energy Advance paid to compensate those receiving allowances for the expected impact of the Carbon Tax.</p>
2012 July	<p>Maximum age for a person not engaged in full-time study to receive YA raised from 20 to 21 years.</p> <p>Taper rate for YA (Other) altered so that reductions in payment of 50 cents in the dollar would only occur on income over \$143 pf (previous threshold \$62).</p> <p>Working Credit limit for YA (Other) increased from \$1000 to \$3500. Recipients who earn less than \$48 in a fortnight earn one point of credit for the difference between their income and \$48.</p> <p>SEAM extended compelling recipients to attend conferences regarding their child's attendance, and to comply with school attendance plan.</p>

Sickness Benefit, 1945 to 1991, Sickness Allowance from 1991

Milestones	Details
1945 July Sickness Benefit introduced	<p>Sickness Benefit (SB) paid to those temporarily incapacitated for work due to sickness or accident and consequently suffering income loss. Medical certificate, proof of loss of income and 12 months' residence in Australia immediately prior to benefit application required.</p> <p>Waiting period of seven days before SB payment commenced. Payment could be made conditional on beneficiary undertaking training, undergoing a medical examination, receiving treatment or undertaking work as required.</p> <p>Income test, but not an assets test, applied. Income above certain limits reduced</p>

Milestones	Details
	<p>benefit by £1 for each £1 of income. Income of a beneficiary's spouse taken into consideration as was any unearned income of dependent children. Such income affected only the additional allowances for dependents in the case of SB.</p> <p>Rate of SB could not exceed income lost by beneficiary as result of their sickness. Sick pay from friendly societies partially exempt. SB recoverable from future compensation or damages awards.</p>
<p>1947 July</p>	<p>Provision made for payment of a partial additional benefit for a partially dependent wife.</p> <p>Additional benefit payable for a housekeeper where a beneficiary had dependent children under 16 years of age and received no benefit for a wife.</p> <p>Where a beneficiary, living apart from his spouse, was paying spousal maintenance, additional benefit was not to exceed the amount of such maintenance.</p> <p>Wives permanently living apart from their husbands eligible for benefit.</p> <p>Where SB claimed within six weeks of incapacity commencing, no loss of benefit to occur due to the delay on claiming.</p> <p>Residency requirements waived where the claimant satisfied the Director-General they intended to reside permanently in Australia.</p> <p>Spouse's pension income partially exempted and income of dependent children totally exempted from income test.</p>
<p>1950 November</p>	<p>Period during which a person could claim SB without loss of arrears extended from six weeks to 13 weeks after date on which incapacity occurred. War pensions exempted from income test.</p>
<p>1952 September</p>	<p>Amounts received from registered hospital benefit organisations, up to amount of hospital fees paid, exempted from income test.</p>
<p>1953 October</p>	<p>Amounts received from registered medical benefit organisations, up to amount of fees paid, exempted from income test.</p>
<p>1958 September</p>	<p>Benefits received from registered hospital and medical benefits organisations and friendly societies wholly exempted from income test.</p>
<p>1960 September</p>	<p>Restrictions on eligibility of Aboriginal people removed.</p>
<p>1966 September</p>	<p>SB payable in arrears to a person discharged from a mental hospital. SB could be paid for a maximum of 12 weeks of hospitalisation period if claim lodged within 13 weeks of discharge.</p>
<p>1969 September</p>	<p>Adult benefit rates payable to unmarried minors with no parents living in Australia.</p>
<p>1970 September Supplementary Allowance payable</p>	<p>Higher benefit rate, equivalent to standard age and invalid pension rate, introduced for those receiving SB for more than six weeks. Long-term sickness beneficiaries became eligible for a supplementary allowance individually determined but maximum linked to Supplementary Assistance (later renamed Rent Assistance (RA)).</p>
<p>1973 March SB rate linked to pension</p>	<p>SB payable at the same rate as pensions. Standard rate for single beneficiaries and a married rate for married beneficiaries and their spouses introduced. Lower benefit rate for single juniors and higher long-term SB rate abolished. Entitlement to supplementary allowance for long-term sickness beneficiaries retained. Spouse's pension income fully exempted from income test.</p>

Milestones	Details
1974 November	Payment of an additional benefit for a de facto wife of an unemployment or sickness beneficiary could be made where the relationship had existed for at least three years.
1975 May	SB paid weekly in advance instead of weekly in arrears as had been the practice from 1945.
1975 October	Junior SB rate for those aged under 18 years re-introduced. Requirement that a de facto relationship exist for three years before married rate payable eliminated.
1976 June	SB taxable.
1976 November	SB increases, except for those who were unmarried and aged under 18 years, indexed every six months as were pensions. Benefits payable fortnightly.
1977 November	A married woman no longer disqualified from receiving SB if it was reasonably possible for her husband to maintain her. Combined income of beneficiary and spouse taken into account in assessing SB rate.
1978 November	SB indexation changed to an annual adjustment. (The only annual CPI adjustment occurred in November 1979.)
1980 May	Twice-yearly automatic indexation of SB re-introduced.
1980 September	Pay and allowances of Defence Force Reserve members exempted from income test.
1980 November	Commonwealth fringe benefits (concession cards) available to SB recipients subject to same income test as age pensioners and supporting parent beneficiaries. SB extended to mental hospital patients. Income test liberalised. Income above \$6 per week to \$50 per week reduced benefit by 50 cents in the dollar (\$3 to \$40 for those who were single and aged 16 or 17 years). Only income above \$50 per week reduced benefit by \$1 for each \$1 of income.
1984 March	Income test free area increased to \$20 per week and benefit reduced by \$1 per week for each \$1 of income above \$70 a week.
1984 May	Single SB recipients with children eligible for MGA. SB recipients eligible for RAA.
1984 July	Income tax rebates introduced for beneficiaries
1984 November	Benefits increased despite a fall in the CPI.
1985 November	Waiting period removed for those transferring from other income support payments to SB.
1986 May	Income test free area increased to \$30 per week.
1986 July	Receipt of a lump sum compensation payment precluded payment of SB for a period determined by formula.
1986 November	Indexation of benefits deferred for six weeks. Increases now paid December and June (previously November and May).
1987 June	SB not indexed.

Milestones	Details
1987 July	RA no longer separately income tested.
1987 October	Regular medical and entitlement reviews for SB recipients introduced.
1987 December Assets test introduced	Assets test applied to benefits for those aged 25 years and over. Those with assets above pension assets test free area were no longer eligible for benefit. New grants of SB paid at equivalent rates for UB and RA entitlement the same as for UB.
1988 February	SB benefit for recipients living apart from their spouse indefinitely due to illness payable at single rate.
1988 June	Separate maintenance income test introduced. Benefit reduced by 50 cents for each dollar of maintenance income above \$15 per week for one child plus \$5 per week for each subsequent child.
1988 December	Standard medical certificate was introduced for determining SB eligibility. Information about the nature of the illness and its effect on capacity to work required.
1989 January	Mobile benefits delivery teams established to provide services to remote areas.
1989 September	SB waiting period extended for up to four weeks if holiday pay received during waiting period.
1989 November	The first of three advances in the timing of indexation (second and third advances occurred in April and September 1990), changing the timing of indexation by moving indexation forward by three months from June and December to September and March. Applicants for, and recipients of, benefit required to provide tax file number.
1990 January	Independent rate of SB, equivalent to AUSTUDY independent rate, introduced for SP recipients aged 16 and 17 years not supported by parents and therefore not subject parental income test.
1990 June	SB rate raised to single pension rate for those who were single, aged 60 years and over, with no dependants, and on benefits for six months.
1990 August	Disaster relief payment, equivalent to two weeks of maximum age pension rate, introduced for those beneficiaries experiencing disruption because of a major natural disaster. Backdated to December 1989 to cover Newcastle earthquake.
1990 September	Those beneficiaries aged under 21 years without dependants paid at single rate regardless of marital status. Spouses required to qualify in own right before any payment made for them. Married beneficiaries and spouses permitted to earn additional \$30 pf each from wages before benefit reduced under income test. An 'at home' rate of \$69.20 per week paid to those beneficiaries who were unmarried, aged 18 to 21 years, without dependants and living at a parent's home. Married beneficiaries with a spouse receiving AUSTUDY paid half the combined married rate. Deferment period for people ceasing education extended to SB recipients. Beneficiaries who were custodial parents required to seek reasonable maintenance from non-custodial parent of their children. Failure to seek maintenance could result in

Milestones	Details
	non-payment of additional benefit for the children concerned. Benefits assets test extended to those aged under 25 years.
1990 November	Lodgement of compensation claim for work-related injury or illness a pre-condition for SB eligibility.
1991	Beneficiaries required to provide spouse's tax file number.
1991 February Liquid assets test introduced	Liquid assets test applied to SB recipients. Claimants with liquid assets (cash and deposits with financial institutions) of \$5000 if single or \$10 000 if married or single with dependants, required to serve additional waiting period of four weeks.
1991 March	Cash in hand and money deposited with financial institutions deemed to be earning a minimum interest rate for purposes of benefit income test. First \$2000 exempt from this provision.
1991 April	Computerised data matching to detect inconsistent payments made to people by two or more Commonwealth agencies. DSS, Department of Veterans' Affairs, Department of Health, Housing and Community Services, Department of Employment, Education and Training and Australian Taxation Office involved.
1991 July	Maintenance income test free areas indexed annually.
1991 November SB replaced by Sickness Allowance	SB replaced by Sickness Allowance (SA). SA payable to those temporarily incapacitated for work because of sickness or accident. SA payable for a period of up to 13 weeks at which time new medical and other evidence was required for continuation of payment. Payment beyond one year and up to three years only possible for those who had a second or subsequent incapacity or when existing incapacity became markedly worse. Deferment periods could be imposed on recipients who refused a request to complete a questionnaire, contact a DSS officer, attend an interview or attend a medical examination.
1992 January	SA independent rate eligibility extended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> those aged 16 or 17 years in substitute care and not receiving state government allowances under 16 year olds aged above minimum school leaving age or over 15 years of age with an exemption from attending school, with an employment history and not living with, or supported, by a parent and those aged 16 and 17 years olds registered with the CES as seeking full time work for at least 13 weeks in previous six months.
1992 March	New SA grants limited to half the married rate for a member of a couple whose partner not receiving DSS income support.
1992 November	Waiting period for school leavers changed. For those aged under 21 years who were not part of a couple and without dependent children, waiting period now 13 weeks or until 15 February, whichever was the earlier. Other education leavers to serve a six-week waiting period. Waiting period waived for those who had undertaken a course of education for longer than six months, and then returned to income support within 12 months of the cancellation of their income support; and for those who would otherwise qualify for SpB. Part-time and casual work undertaken since leaving school and prior to the start of the

Milestones	Details
	waiting period, taken into account when determining waiting period length.
1993 January	Migrants arriving in Australia after 1 January 1993 ineligible for SA until six months after arrival or receipt of permanent residence, whichever was later.
1993 March	SA independent rate available to those aged under 18 years who had lived away from home for 18 weeks (previously 26 weeks). SA eligibility extended to those aged 15 years with an employment history or registered with the CES for at least 13 weeks.
1993 September	SA single recipients entitled to earn additional \$30 pf from wages before payment reduced by income test. Similarly, a couple's earnings entitlement increased from \$30 to \$50 pf each. A person with a partner in prison treated as if they were single. Ordinary waiting period waived for claimants receiving income support within the previous 13 weeks.
1994 March	Earnings credit introduced. Maximum rate SB recipients entitled to accumulate a credit of up to \$500 at the rate of \$90 pf for single recipients and \$80 pf for each member of a couple without payments being reduced under the income test. Credits could not be used if earned income greater than cut-off point for payments under the income test.
1994 September Partner Allowance introduced	Additional amount of SA paid to recipients with a dependent spouse replaced by Partner Allowance (PA) paid directly to dependent spouse and at same rate as SA married rate.
1995 July Working Nation	As part of Working Nation, income test changed. The 'earnings disregard' removed leaving a standard \$60 pf income test free area for all recipients, single and partnered. The 100 per cent withdrawal rate changed to 70 per cent withdrawal rate (50 per cent withdrawal rate on first \$40 earned after free area unchanged). Each member of a couple individually subject to the standard income test. Once the income of one partner reduced their payment to nil, any additional income reduced partner's payment.
1996 March	Those who were temporarily incapacitated for work because of illness not transferred to, or granted, SA. These recipients remained on, or were granted, the payment they were otherwise eligible for, but were exempt from activity test while ill.
1996 July Extended Deeming introduced	Major reform of income test treatment of financial assets—'Extended Deeming'—introduced. When assessing income under the income test, total value of all financial assets added together. A rate of return of five per cent deemed to have been received on first \$30 000 (\$50 000 for a couple) worth of assets and a rate of seven per cent was deemed for asset holdings above these levels. First \$2000 (\$4000 for a couple) exempt from extended deeming. These rates set at levels considered to be easily achievable using safe investments. Minister for Social Security could vary deeming rates as market rates changed. Financial assets included: bank, building society and credit union accounts; cash; term deposits; cheque accounts; friendly society bonds; managed investments; investments in superannuation funds, approved deposit funds and deferred annuities after age pension age; listed shares and securities; loans, debentures and bonds; shares in unlisted public companies; gifted assets above the allowable limits; and gold and other bullion. Financial assets excluded: homes, home contents and other real estate; cars, boats and

Milestones	Details
	caravans; antiques and stamp and coin collections; investments in superannuation funds, approved deposit funds and deferred annuities before age pension age; standard life insurance policies; and income streams such as superannuation pensions, allocated pensions, immediate annuities and allocated annuities.
1997 January	SA minimum payment rate abolished for those aged under 18 years. Full payment rate for these recipients subject to parental means test. Advance payments restricted to amounts of up to \$500 and limited to one advance payment each 12 months.
1997 March	Calculation of preclusion periods due to the receipt of personal injury compensation after 20 March 1997 altered. Compensation amount divided by the amount above which no pension was payable to a single person under the income test. Previously compensation amount divided by 'all persons average weekly earnings'. For compensation received after 20 March 1997, compensation preclusion period applied only to the recipient and not to spouses as previously. Exemption under 'extended deeming' provisions for first \$2000 of a pensioner's financial assets (\$4000 for a pensioner couple) removed. Newly Arrived Residents Waiting Period of 104 weeks for a range of payments introduced for migrants arriving after 4 March 1997. Refugees and their immediate family, and certain spouse visa holders, exempt.
1997 July	Health Benefit Card replaced by Health Care Cards for SA recipients and incapacitated-for-work NSA recipients.
1997 September	Superannuation assets assessed under income and assets tests for those recipients aged 55 years and over and receiving income support for 39 weeks.
1998 July Youth Allowance introduced	YA became the main income support payment for young people. YA replaced SA for those who were aged 15 to 20 years and unemployed.
2000 July GST compensation	Allowances rates for all recipients increased by four per cent as part of a package of measures to compensate for the impact of the introduction of the GST. Indexation provisions adjusted so that half of this increase was an advance on whatever rate increase occurred in March 2001, leaving an effective long-term increase of two per cent in the allowance rate. Income and asset test free areas applying to allowances increased by 2.5 per cent as part of compensation package.
2001 April	Overpayments caused by administrative error became recoverable debts.
2001 July	Superannuation assets of those aged between 55 years and age pension age exempt from income and assets tests.
2001 September	Partners of compensation recipients no longer subject to dollar-for-dollar reduction of their payment. Instead once the compensation recipient's payment was reduced to nil by dollar-for-dollar deductions, the excess was treated as income under the income test for their partner.
2003 September Australians Working	Australians Working Together, a 2001–02 budget measure, provided a Working Credit for those of workforce age on income support. Credits of up to \$48 pf accumulated up to a total of \$1000. Any income earned would reduce amount of credit accumulated each week on a dollar-for-dollar basis. In fortnights where earnings exceeded income

Milestones	Details
Together	test free area, accumulated credit would be reduced before any reduction was made to income support under income test.
2006 September	Seasonal worker preclusion period extended to cover those applying for SA.
2007 August Income management	Allowances could be subject to income management in the Northern Territory and Cape York. Income management involved diversion of 50 per cent of a recipient's income support into an account that could only be drawn on to pay for priority needs, such as food, clothes and rent.
2007 September	Non-resident parents with care of a child between 14 per cent and 34 per cent of nights per year paid at the 'with child' rate.
2008 December SEAM	SEAM provisions commenced. Centrelink empowered to suspend for up to 13 weeks and then cancel income support payments where a recipient's child does not comply with school enrolment or attendance requirements.
2009 April	From April 2009 to March 2011, in recognition of the impact of the GFC, liquid assets maximum reserve doubled so that those with liquid assets of over \$5000 if single, or \$10 000 if partnered, were subject to waiting periods of from one to 13 weeks, depending on the amount they had.
2009 July	Definition of 'member of a couple' changed to include same-sex couples.
2010 April	Disadvantaged income support recipients able to receive payments weekly rather than fortnightly.
2011 March	Temporary doubling of liquid asset maximum reserve ceased.
2012 June	Clean Energy Advance paid to compensate those receiving allowances for the expected impact of the Carbon Tax. SEAM extended compelling recipients to attend conferences regarding their child's attendance, and to comply with school attendance plan.

Special Benefit from 1945

Milestones	Details
1945 July Special Benefit introduced	Special Benefit (SpB) designed to provide for those ineligible for other pensions and benefits. Granted at Director-General's discretion to a person who because of age, physical or mental disability, domestic circumstances or any other reason, was unable to provide for themselves and dependants. SpB rate determined by Director-General, but not exceeding UB or SB rate, whichever most appropriate to beneficiary's situation. Commencement date and payment period of payment also at Director-General's discretion. Payment could be made conditional on beneficiary undertaking training, undergoing a medical examination, receiving treatment or doing work as required.
1947 July	SpB recipients exempt from requirement to undertake training or medical or rehabilitation treatment.
1960 February	Restrictions on eligibility of Aboriginal people removed.

Milestones	Details
1975 May	SpB payable to newly-released prisoners to bridge one-week UB and SB waiting period.
1976 July	SpB became taxable.
1986 May Rent Assistance payable	RA payable to SpB recipients on benefits for over six months, excluding those aged 18 to 24 years living with parents or guardians.
1988 August	A more stringent test of hardship, which took greater account of a person's liquid assets, applied to SpB applicants. Reviews of SpB recipients, especially long-term recipients, conducted on a regular basis.
1988 September	Migrants entering Australia with an Assurance of Support from another person to be supported by that person for up to 10 years. SpB payments to such migrants created a debt recoverable from the assesor.
1988 November	Revised SpB guidelines to avoid payments in unintended circumstances.
1989 January	Initial SpB payment to ex-prisoners doubled.
1989 November	Applicants for, and recipients of, benefit required to provide tax file number.
1990 August	SpB eligibility extended to holders of four-year temporary entry permits. Disaster relief payment, equivalent to two weeks of maximum age pension rate, introduced for those beneficiaries experiencing disruption because of a major natural disaster. Backdated to December 1989 to cover Newcastle earthquake.
1991 January	SpB applicants and recipients required to provide spouse's tax file number.
1991 April	Computerised data matching to detect inconsistent payments made to people by two or more Commonwealth agencies. DSS, Department of Veterans' Affairs, Department of Health, Housing and Community Services, Department of Employment, Education and Training and Australian Taxation Office involved. People who held conditional two-year residence permits on the basis of a relationship with an Australian resident which had been applied for after 15 April 1991 eligible for SpB at discretion of Secretary of DSS.
1991 December	People who entered agreements with the Commonwealth undertaking to assure support for migrants who were unlikely to be able to support themselves were required to lodge a refundable bond with the Commonwealth Bank. SpB expenditure on these migrants to be deducted from the bond with any residue refunded when the migrant had been settled in Australia for two years.
1992 August	The 1992–93 Budget announced that from March 1993, 20 000 reviews of SpB recipients would be conducted to determine whether they should be receiving other DSS pensions or benefits.
1993 March	SpB claimants not expected to qualify for more than a 13-week period subject to reviews before payment continued beyond 13 weeks. These claimants restricted to a maximum duration on SpB of 52 weeks with a further 13 week-extension at Secretary's discretion.

Milestones	Details
1997 March	Newly Arrived Residents Waiting Period of 104 weeks for a range of payments introduced for migrants arriving after 4 March 1997. Refugees and their immediate family, and certain spouse visa holders, exempt. However, SpB payable to those serving the waiting period if had suffered a substantial change in situation because of circumstances beyond their control.
2000 July GST compensation	Allowances rates for all recipients increased by four per cent as part of a package of measures to compensate for the impact of the introduction of the GST. Indexation provisions adjusted so that half of this increase was an advance on whatever rate increase occurred in March 2001, leaving an effective long-term increase of two per cent in the allowance rate.
2003 January	Certain classes of newly arrived residents of work force age applying for SpB subject to an activity test. Exemptions from this requirement similar to those applying to NSA.
2007 August Income management	Allowances could be subject to income management in the Northern Territory and Cape York. Income management involved diversion of 50 per cent of a recipient's income support into an account that could only be drawn on to pay for priority needs, such as food, clothes and rent.
2007 September	Non-resident parents with care of a child between 14 per cent and 34 per cent of nights per year were paid at the 'with child' rate.
2008 December SEAM	SEAM provisions commenced. Centrelink empowered to suspend for up to 13 weeks and then cancel income support payments where a recipient's child does not comply with school enrolment or attendance requirements. SpB recipients of age pension age received economic security strategy payments of \$1400 for singles and \$2100 for couples—part of the Economic Security Strategy to boost the economy after the GFC.
2009 July	Definition of 'member of a couple' changed to include same-sex couples.
2010 April	Disadvantaged income support recipients able to receive payments weekly rather than fortnightly.
2010 July	Principal carers with school aged children eligible for participation requirement exemptions in specified circumstances, such as those who experienced domestic violence or cared for four or more children.
2012 January	Provisional Partner Visa holders applying for SpB no longer exempt from the requirement to demonstrate a substantial change in their circumstances beyond their control.
2012 June	Clean Energy Advance paid to compensate those receiving allowances for the expected impact of the Carbon Tax. SEAM extended compelling recipients to attend conferences regarding their child's attendance, and to comply with school attendance plan.

Mature Age Allowance from 1994 to 2008, Mature Age Partner Allowance 1994 to 1995

Milestones	Details
1994 March Mature Age Allowance	Mature Age Allowance (MAA) was introduced. To qualify a person had to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 60 years of age or over, but under age pension age

Milestones	Details
introduced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unemployed and registered with the CES for at least 12 months in receipt of income support for at least the previous 12 months and able to satisfy age pension residency requirements. <p>A partner of those who qualified for MAA could qualify for a Mature Age Partner Allowance (MAPA). MAA recipients not required to satisfy an activity test or remain registered with the CES. MAA and MAPA paid at Age Pension rates and subject to Age Pension income and assets tests. Pensioner concessions, earnings credits and pensioner tax rebates also available.</p> <p>MAA and MAPA subject to a sunset clause preventing the lodging of new claims after 30 June 1996.</p>
1995 July MAPA closed	No new MAPA grants. Partners of MAA recipients eligible for PA.
1996 July	<p>Changes to MAA:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sunset clause removed requirement for 12 months CES registration removed MAA subject to allowance income and assets tests rather than pension income and assets tests applicants required to have been on JSA/NSA for nine months or on a non-activity tested payment, and have had no recent work experience (not employed for more than 20 hours per week for a total of 13 weeks in the previous 12 months) and current MAA recipients at the time of these changes continued on earlier conditions. <p>MAA recipients eligible to receive an advance payment of their allowance, from \$250 to \$1000, in certain situations. Allowance reduced over subsequent 6 to 12 months to allow repayment of advance payment.</p>
1997 January	Advance payments restricted to amounts up to \$500 and limited to one advance a year.
2000 July GST compensation	Allowances rates for all recipients increased by four per cent as part of a package of measures to compensate for the impact of the introduction of the GST. Indexation provisions adjusted so that half of this increase was an advance on whatever rate increase occurred in March 2001, leaving an effective long-term increase of two per cent in the allowance rate.
2003 MAA closed	No new MAA grants. Those unable to apply for MAA eligible to apply for NSA instead. MAA to be phased out by 2008.

Partner Allowance from 1994

Milestones	Details
1994 September Partner Allowance	Partner Allowance (PA) introduced, replacing additional amount of JSA/NSA or SA paid to recipients with a dependent spouse. PA paid directly to dependent spouse under same rates and conditions as married rate of JSA/NSA or SA and subject to same

Milestones	Details
introduced	income and asset tests.
1995 July	<p>Parenting Allowance (PgA) introduced for partners of JSA/NSA recipients caring for children aged under 16 years, replacing PA for these people. PgA paid at same rate and under same income and assets tests as JSA/NSA married rate. Also absorbed Home Child Care Allowance (HCCA) which became a tax free minimum payment of \$61 pf. This minimum payment reduced by income of PgA recipient only and not that of their partner.</p> <p>Partner Allowance eligibility restricted to dependent spouses aged over 40 years with little or no recent labour market experience. Other spouses ineligible for PgA or PA required to apply for JSA/NSA in their own right.</p> <p>Concession cards extended to certain PA recipients on same basis as other benefit recipients.</p>
1997 March	PA eligibility extended to partners of those receiving living allowances under the Austudy, Student Financial Supplement and ABSTUDY schemes
2000 July GST compensation	Allowances rates for all recipients increased by four per cent as part of a package of measures to compensate for the impact of the introduction of the GST. Indexation provisions adjusted so that half of this increase was an advance on whatever rate increase occurred in March 2001, leaving an effective long-term increase of two per cent in the allowance rate.
2003 September PA closed	No new PA grants. Those unable to apply for PA eligible to apply for NSA. PA to be phased out by 2020.
2007 August Income management	Allowances could be subject to income management in the Northern Territory and Cape York. Income management involved diversion of 50 per cent of a recipient's income support into an account that could only be drawn on to pay for priority needs, such as food, clothes and rent.
2009 July	Definition of 'member of a couple' changed to include same-sex couples.
2010 April	Disadvantaged income support recipients able to receive payments weekly rather than fortnightly.
2012 June	Clean Energy Advance paid to compensate those receiving allowances for the expected impact of the Carbon Tax.

Maximum rates of Unemployment Benefit, Job Search Allowance, Newstart Allowance, Sickness Benefit, Sickness Allowance, Youth Training Allowance, Youth Allowance, Special Benefit^(a), Mature Age Allowance, Partner Allowance and Widow Allowance, from 1945

Unemployment Benefit, Sickness Benefit and Special Benefit^(a), from 1945 to 1972

Date of effect	Aged 21+ or partnered	Aged 16–17	Aged 18–20	Dependent spouse	SB 6 weeks and over	
					(b)	Other
\$ per week ^(c)						
01.07.45	2.50	1.50	2.00	2.00		
25.09.52	4.10	2.10	4.00	4.00		
17.10.57	6.50	3.50	4.75	4.75		
27.09.61	7.50	3.50	4.75	5.25		
01.03.62	8.25	3.50	4.75	6.00		
27.09.69	10.00	4.50	6.00	7.00		
28.09.70	10.00	4.50	6.00	7.00	15.50	10.00
01.04.71	10.00	4.50	6.00	7.00	16.00	10.50
29.09.71	10.00	4.50	6.00	8.00	17.25	11.25
25.02.72	17.00	7.50	11.00	8.00	17.25	11.25
24.04.72	17.00	7.50	11.00	8.00	18.25	12.00
27.09.72	17.00	7.50	11.00	8.00	20.00	13.00

Maximum rates of Unemployment Benefit, Sickness Benefit and Special Benefit^(a), from 1973 to 1978

	With dependent spouse	Single, aged 16–17	Single, aged 18+
\$ per week			
16.03.73	37.50	21.50	21.50
26.09.73	40.50	23.00	23.00
22.03.74	45.50	26.00	26.00
31.07.74	51.50	31.00	31.00
19.05.75	60.00	36.00	36.00
01.11.75	64.50	36.00	38.75
03.05.76	68.50	36.00	41.25
01.11.76	72.50	36.00	43.50
02.05.77	78.50	36.00	47.10
01.11.77	82.20	36.00	49.30
01.05.78	85.80	36.00	51.45

Maximum rates of Unemployment Benefit, Sickness Benefit and Special Benefit^(a), from 1978 to 1985

	With dependent spouse	SB single, aged 18+; UB with children	UB/SB single, aged 16–17	UB single, aged 18+
\$ per week				
01.11.78	88.70	53.20	36.00	51.45
01.11.79	96.50	57.90	36.00	51.45
01.05.80	101.70	61.05	36.00	51.45
01.11.80	106.80	64.10	36.00	53.45
07.05.81	111.10	66.65	36.00	53.45
05.11.81	116.20	69.70	36.00	58.10
06.05.82	123.60	74.15	36.00	58.10
01.11.82	128.80	77.25	40.00	64.40
01.05.83	137.30	82.35	40.00	68.65
01.11.83	143.20	85.90	45.00	73.60
01.05.84	149.10	89.40	45.00	78.60
01.11.84	153.30	91.90	^(d) 45.00	81.10
01.05.85	157.30	94.30	^(d) 45.00	85.20

Maximum rates of Unemployment Benefit, Sickness Benefit and Special Benefit^(a), from 1985 to 1987

	With dependent spouse	SB single, aged 18+; or UB/SB with dependants	Single, no dependants		
			UB/SB aged 16–17	UB aged 18–20	UB aged 21+
\$ per week					
01.11.85	163.30	97.90	50.00	88.20	91.45
01.05.86	170.30	102.10	50.00	88.20	95.40
01.07.86	170.30	102.10	^(e) 50.00	88.20	95.40
15.12.86	177.10	106.20	^(e) 50.00	88.20	99.20
01.01.87	177.10	106.20	^(e) 50.00	91.20	99.20
13.06.87	187.00	112.15	^(e) 50.00	91.20	104.75

Maximum rates of Unemployment Benefit, Job Search Allowance, Newstart Allowance, Sickness Benefit, Sickness Allowance, Youth Training Allowance, Special Benefit^(a), Mature Age Allowance, Partner Allowance and Widow Allowance, from 1987 to 1998

			Single, no dependants				
	With dependent spouse	Single with dependants	Under 18			Aged 18–20	Aged 21+
			Maximum ^(f)	Minimum ^(f)	Independent		
\$ per week							
13.12.87	193.50	116.20	^(e) 50.00	25.00	-	91.20	108.40
13.06.88	200.10	120.05	^(e) 50.00	25.00	-	91.20	112.10
13.12.88	207.10	124.25	^(e) 50.00	25.00	-	91.20	116.00
01.01.89	207.10	124.25	^(e) 53.55	25.00	-	97.70	116.00
13.06.89	215.40	129.20	^(e) 53.55	25.00	-	97.70	120.65
15.11.89	222.70	133.60	^(e) 53.55	25.00	-	97.70	124.75
01.01.90	222.70	133.60	57.60	26.90	95.10	105.15	124.75
18.04.90	235.40	141.20	57.60	26.90	95.10	105.15	130.00
20.09.90	^(g) 243.20	145.85	57.60	26.90	95.10	^(h) 105.15	134.30
01.01.91	243.20	145.85	62.05	28.95	95.10	113.25	134.30
28.03.91	251.50	150.80	62.05	28.95	102.40	113.25	134.30
20.09.91	251.50	150.80	62.05	28.95	102.40	113.25	138.85
01.01.92	251.50	150.80	64.15	29.95	105.90	117.10	138.85
20.03.92	255.30	153.05	64.15	29.95	105.90	117.10	140.95
01.01.93	255.30	153.05	64.90	30.30	107.15	118.50	140.95
28.01.93	260.30	156.05	64.90	30.30	107.15	118.50	140.95
20.03.93	260.30	156.05	64.90	30.30	107.15	118.50	141.35
20.09.93	263.70	158.10	64.90	30.30	107.15	118.50	143.20
01.01.94	263.70	158.10	66.15	30.90	109.20	120.75	143.20
20.03.94	265.30	159.05	66.15	30.90	109.20	120.75	147.05
20.09.94	⁽ⁱ⁾ 134.10	160.80	66.15	30.90	109.20	120.75	148.65
01.01.95	134.10	160.80	^(j) 67.15	^(j) 31.45	^(j) 111.05	122.80	148.65
20.03.95	136.00	163.05	67.25	31.45	111.05	122.80	150.75
20.09.95	140.10	167.95	67.25	31.45	111.05	122.80	155.25
01.01.96	140.10	167.95	70.30	32.87	116.05	128.35	155.25
20.03.96	142.90	171.30	70.30	32.87	116.05	128.35	158.35
20.09.96	144.45	173.20	70.30	32.87	116.05	128.35	160.10
01.01.97	144.45	173.20	72.50	^(k)	119.65	132.35	160.10
20.03.97	145.05	173.90	72.50		119.65	132.35	160.75
01.01.98	145.05	173.90	72.70		120.00	132.75	160.75

Maximum rates of Newstart Allowance, Sickness Allowance, Youth Allowance, Special Benefit^(a), Mature Age Allowance, Partner Allowance and Widow Allowance, from 1998

	Partnered, 21+	Single 21+, with dependants	Youth Allowance (aged under 21 ^(b))			Single 21+, no dependants
			At home, aged 16–17	At home, aged 18+	Away from home	
\$ per fortnight						
01.07.98	290.10	347.80	145.40	174.80	265.50	321.50
20.09.98	291.80	349.90	145.40	174.80	265.50	323.40
01.01.99	291.80	349.90	146.40	176.00	267.40	323.40
20.03.99	293.80	352.30	146.40	176.00	267.40	325.70
20.09.99	294.70	353.40	146.40	176.00	267.40	326.70
01.01.00	294.70	353.40	148.00	177.90	270.30	326.70
20.03.00	299.10	358.70	148.00	177.90	270.30	331.60
01.07.00	311.10	373.00	153.90	185.00	281.10	344.90
20.09.00	316.40	379.30	153.90	185.00	281.10	350.80
01.01.01	316.40	379.30	158.80	190.90	290.10	350.80
20.03.01	322.80	386.90	158.80	190.90	290.10	357.80
20.09.01	328.90	394.30	158.80	190.90	290.10	364.60
01.01.02	328.90	394.30	165.10	198.60	301.70	364.60
20.03.02	332.80	399.00	165.10	198.60	301.70	369.00
20.09.02	338.10	405.40	165.10	198.60	301.70	374.90
01.01.03	338.10	405.40	169.70	204.20	310.70	374.90
20.03.03	342.80	411.10	169.70	204.20	310.10	380.10
20.09.03	347.30	416.40	169.70	204.20	310.10	385.00
01.01.04	347.30	416.40	174.30	209.70	318.50	385.00
20.03.04	351.10	421.00	174.30	209.70	318.50	389.20
20.09.04	356.00	426.90	174.30	207.70	318.50	394.60
01.01.05	356.00	426.90	178.70	214.90	326.50	394.60
20.03.05	360.30	432.00	178.70	214.90	326.50	399.30
20.09.05	365.00	437.60	178.70	214.90	326.50	404.50
01.01.06	365.00	437.60	183.20	220.30	334.70	404.50
20.03.06	370.50	444.20	183.20	220.30	334.70	410.60
20.09.06	379.80	455.30	183.20	220.30	334.70	420.90
01.01.07	379.80	455.30	190.50	229.10	348.10	420.90
20.03.07	382.80	458.90	190.50	229.10	348.10	424.30
20.09.07	387.80	464.90	190.50	229.10	348.10	429.80
01.01.08	387.80	464.90	194.50	233.90	355.40	429.80
20.03.08	394.40	472.80	194.50	233.90	355.40	437.10
20.09.08	405.40	486.00	194.50	233.90	355.40	449.30
01.01.09	405.40	486.00	203.30	244.40	371.40	449.30
20.03.09	409.00	490.40	203.30	244.40	371.40	453.30
20.09.09	411.50	493.30	203.30	244.40	371.40	456.00
01.01.10	411.50	493.30	206.30	248.10	377.00	456.00
20.03.10	417.70	500.70	206.30	248.10	377.00	462.80

	Partnered, 21+	Single 21+, with dependants	Youth Allowance (aged under 21 ⁽¹⁾)			Single 21+, no dependants
			At home, aged 16–17	At home, aged 18+	Away from home	
\$ per fortnight						
20.09.10	424.00	508.20	206.30	248.10	377.00	469.70
01.01.11	424.00	508.20	212.70	255.80	388.70	469.70
20.03.11	428.70	513.80	212.70	255.80	388.70	474.90
20.09.11	439.40	526.60	212.70	255.80	388.70	486.80
01.01.12	439.40	526.60	220.40	265.00	402.70	486.80
20.03.12	442.00	529.80	220.40	265.00	402.70	489.70
20.09.12	447.70	533.00	220.40	265.00	402.70	492.60

(a) SpB payable at a rate not exceeding rate of UB/JSA/NSA/YA or SB/ SA that would have been paid had beneficiary qualified for one of these benefits.

(b) Rates prior to 1966 converted to dollars for consistency.

(c) Adults or married minors and unmarried minors with no parent in Australia.

(d) Single unemployment beneficiaries aged 16 to 17 years with dependants paid single 18 years and over with dependants rate. Those aged 16 to 17 years receiving benefit for 6 months or more received \$50 per week.

(e) YHA introduced from July 1986. An additional \$23.28 paid to eligible people, rising to \$26.00 in 1988 and \$27.85 in 1989.

(f) Maximum rate subject to parental income (and from September 1990, assets) test. Minimum rate applied where parental income or assets above the relevant limit.

(g) From this date married rate paid to couples aged under 21 years only when they had dependent children.

(h) An at-home rate of JSA of \$69.20 introduced for those aged 18 to 20 years. The rate was \$74.55 in 1991, \$77.10 in 1992, \$78.05 in 1993, \$79.55 in 1994, \$80.90 in 1995, \$84.55 in 1996, \$87.15 in 1997 and \$87.40 in 1998.

(i) Payments for each partner in a couple introduced. PA paid to spouses not in the workforce.

(j) YTA replaced JSA for under 18 year olds.

(k) Minimum YTA rate abolished in 1997.

(l) Under 24 for students.

Income and asset limits for Unemployment Benefit, Job Search Allowance, Newstart Allowance, Sickness Benefit, Sickness Allowance, Youth Training Allowance, Youth Allowance, Mature Age Allowance and Widow Allowance, from 1945

Date of effect	Income before benefit reduced under income test		Assets allowed before no benefit payable			
			Homeowner		Non-homeowner	
			Couple	Single	Couple	Single
	(\$ per week) ^(a)		(value \$)			
	Single, aged 21+ or partnered	Single, aged 16–20				
01.07.45	2.00	^(b) 1.50				
17.10.57	4.00	2.00				
27.09.69	6.00	3.00				
01.11.80	^(c) 6.00	^(d) 3.00				
	All recipients					
01.11.82		10.00				
01.03.84		20.00				
01.05.86		30.00				
	(\$ per fortnight)					
13.12.87		60.00	118 500	83 250	178 500	143 250
23.06.88		60.00	127 000	89 250	191 000	153 250
22.06.89		60.00	137 000	96 000	205 500	164 500
21.06.90		60.00	147 500	103 500	221 500	177 500
20.09.90		^(e) 60.00	147 500	103 500	221 500	177 500
01.06.91		^(e) 60.00	157 500	110 750	137 000	190 250
01.07.92		^(e) 60.00	160 000	112 500	240 500	193 000
01.07.93		^(e) 60.00	160 500	112 750	241 000	193 250
20.09.93		^(f) 60.00	160 500	112 750	241 000	193 250
01.07.94		^(f) 60.00	163 500	115 000	245 500	197 000
01.07.95		60.00	167 500	118 000	251 500	202 000
01.07.96		60.00	176 000	124 000	264 500	212 500
01.07.97		60.00	178 500	125 750	268 500	215 750
01.07.98		60.00	178 500	125 750	268 500	215 750
01.07.99		60.00	181 500	127 750	273 000	219 250
01.07.00		62.00	189 500	133 250	285 000	228 750
01.07.01		62.00	200 500	141 000	301 500	242 000
01.07.02		62.00	206 500	145 250	311 000	249 750
01.07.03		62.00	212 500	149 500	320 500	257 500
01.07.04		62.00	217 500	153 000	328 500	263 500
01.07.05		62.00	223 000	157 000	336 500	270 500
	(\$ per fortnight)		(value \$)			
01.07.06		62.00	229 000	161 500	346 000	278 500
01.07.07		62.00	236 500	166 750	357 500	287 750
01.07.08		62.00	243 500	171 750	368 000	296 250

Date of effect	Income before benefit reduced under income test		Assets allowed before no benefit payable			
			Homeowner		Non-homeowner	
			Couple	Single	Couple	Single
01.07.09		62.00	252 500	178 000	381 500	307 000
01.07.10		62.00	258 000	181 750	389 500	313 250
01.07.11		62.00	265 000	186 750	400 000	321 750
01.07.12		62.00	273 000	192 500	412 500	332 000

(a) Income limits prior to 1966 converted to dollars for consistency.

(b) 50 cents for 16-year-olds and \$1.00 for 17-year-olds.

(c) Also for those aged 18 to 20 years.

(d) Only for those aged under 18 years.

(e) Partnered rate beneficiaries could earn an additional \$30 pf each from wages or salaries.

(f) Single rate beneficiaries could earn an additional \$30 pf from wages or salaries. Partnered rate beneficiaries could earn an additional \$50 each pf from wages or salaries.

Liquid assets test for Newstart Allowance and Youth Allowance, from 1991

Date of effect	Maximum reserve amount (\$)	
	Single	Couple or single with dependants
01.02.91	5 000	10 000
20.09.97	2 500	5 000
01.04.09	5 000	10 000
31.03.11	2 500	5 000

Appendix C: Chronology of payments to widows

Widow B Pension from 1942, Widow D Pension from 1947 to 1960

Milestones	Details
1942 June Widow B Pension introduced	<p>As part of a scheme of widows' pensions, Widow B Pension (WidB) paid to widows who were aged 50 years over and were without dependent children. Included de facto widows who had been living with deceased partner for at least three years prior to his death and had been maintained by him. Eligibility also given to deserted wives who had been deserted for at least six months, divorced women who had not remarried and women whose husbands were in hospitals for the insane. Widow A Pension (WidA) (included in publication on payments to those with children) paid to those with a dependent child under 16, while Widow C Pension (WidC) paid to widows under 50 with no children for a period of 26 weeks.</p> <p>Claimants required to be resident in Australia and have resided in Australia continuously for five years immediately prior to application. Aliens and indigenous people of Australia, Africa, the Pacific and New Zealand ineligible. Exclusion did not apply to Aboriginal people who were exempt from state laws 'relating to the control of Aboriginal natives' or who lived in a state where such exemptions did not exist and who were eligible on grounds of 'character, intelligence and development'.</p> <p>Means test applied to WidB. Possession of property above £50 in value resulted in reduction of annual rate of pension by £1 for every £10 in excess of £50. Widows with property valued above £400 ineligible for WidB. Homes, furniture and personal effects excluded from property value calculation. Pension also reduced by an amount equivalent to any income in excess of £32.10s per annum.</p> <p>WidB paid four-weekly in arrears and rate subject to quarterly adjustment according to movements in Retail Price Index.</p>
1942 July	WidB exempted from income tax.
1944 April	Quarterly rates adjustment abolished.
1947 July Widow D Pension introduced	<p>WidB paid fortnightly.</p> <p>Women whose husbands were imprisoned for six or more months and had a dependent child or were over 50 years of age eligible for a Widow D Pension (WidD) which was paid under the same conditions as WidB.</p> <p>New War Widow's Pension recipients ineligible for WidB. Those already receiving both pensions subject to transitional arrangements.</p>
1950 August	Pensioner Medical Service providing free general practitioner services and medicines introduced.
1952 September	Residency requirement reduced to one year where the couple living permanently in Australia at time of husband's death.
1956 October	WidB payable to widows who were at least 45 years of age and had lost eligibility for a WidA because youngest child no longer under 16 years of age.
1958 October Supplementary Assistance payable	Supplementary Assistance of 10 shillings per week available to widows paying rent.

1960 February WidD abolished	WidD abolished and recipients aged 50 years and over became eligible for WidB. Most restrictions on eligibility of Aboriginal people removed.
1964 October	Pensioner telephone rental concessions, reducing annual rental costs by one-third, introduced.
1966 September	Remaining provisions preventing nomadic Aboriginals receiving a pension repealed. Aliens eligible for pensions.
1968 September	Residency requirement for WidB eligibility removed where widow and her partner had been permanent residents at time of husband's death. Vocational training scheme for WidB pensioners introduced.
1969 September	Women widowed outside Australia eligible for pension on returning to Australia if had lived in Australia for 10 years continuously at any time.
1971 April	Pension rates increased. Full increase restricted to full-rate pensioners. Those receiving a pension within 50 cents of full rate received half the increase and all others received no increase.
1971 October	Pension rates increased on same basis as those in April, except that in addition half the increase went to those receiving pensions within \$1.00 of full rate.
1972 April	Pension rates increased. Those who had not received full increases in 1971 given additional increases to bring them into line with those who had.
1973 July	WidB paid to women of age pension age taxable.
1974 October	Vocational training scheme for widows incorporated into National Employment and Training system.
1975 July	Pensioner Medical Service superseded by eligibility for a range of medical services under Medibank.
1975 October	Widows in de facto relationships ineligible for WidB.
1976 July	WidB subject to income tax.
1976 November	Automatic six-monthly rate increases in May and November, in line with movements in CPI, introduced for basic pension rate.
1978 November	Automatic rate increases made annually in November.
1980 May	Automatic rate increases once again made every six-months in May and November.
1986 December	Rate increases occurred in December and June rather than May and November as had previously been the case.
1987 January WidB phased out	WidB to be largely phased out over following 15 years. New WidB grants restricted to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> those receiving WidB immediately before 1 July 1987 those who turned 45 years of age by 1 July 1987, and who received or subsequently received Special Benefit (SpB) or WidA and those aged 50 years and over at 1 July 1987 and who were or subsequently became widows.

	Dual eligibility for pensions and Commonwealth education payments ceased. Pensioners studying full-time eligible for an educational supplement of \$15 per week.
1987 November	Earnings credit system introduced. Pensioners could save unused portions of income test free area to a limit of \$1000. When income exceeded free area credit reduced until depleted. Normal income test then applied again.
1988 January	Fringe benefit (concession card) entitlement could be retained for three months after income exceeded income test limit by no more than 25 per cent.
1989 November	Indexation timing for WidB brought forward in several stages to March and September, with process was completed in September 1990.
1991 January	WidB recipients required to provide tax file number.
1992 January	Austudy supplement of \$60 pf for pensioners studying full-time extended to those studying part-time.
1992 July	Telephone allowance of \$51.80 per household per year replaced telephone rental voucher scheme.
1993 January	Education entry payment of \$200 introduced for WidB recipients eligible for education supplement.
1993 April	Eligibility for fringe benefits (concession cards) extended to all part-rate pensioners.
1996 July	WidB recipients able to receive advance payment of allowance, from \$250 to \$1000, in certain situations. Allowance then reduced over subsequent six to 12 months to for repayment of advance payment.
1997 January WidB closed	No new WidB grants after 20 March. WidB recipients automatically transferred to Age Pension on reaching age pension age provided they and their partners were Australian residents at time WidB recipient widowed. Advance payments restricted to amounts up to \$500 and limited to one each 12 months.
1997 September	Rate of pension to be maintained at greater than or equal to 25 per cent of Male Total Average Weekly Earnings (MTAWE). If regular CPI indexation results in a lower rate, pension increased to this benchmark.
2000 July GST compensation	Pension rate increased as part of a package of measures to compensate for impact of GST introduction. A pension supplement equivalent to four per cent of maximum rate at July 2000 paid to all pensioners. Indexation provisions adjusted so that half of four per cent increase was an advance on whatever rate increase occurred in March 2001. Increased rate provided as a supplement so that it would not be included when pension rate was adjusted in line with benchmark of 25 per cent of MTAWE. This ensured that maximum rate of pension plus supplement would always be more than 25 per cent of MTAWE.
2007 August Income management	Allowances could be subject to income management in Northern Territory and Cape York. Income management involved diversion of 50 per cent of a recipient's income support into an account that could only be drawn on to pay for priority needs, such as food, clothes and rent.
2008 December	Recipients received economic security strategy payments of \$1400—part of the Economic Security Strategy to boost the economy after the GFC.
2009 July	Definition of 'member of a couple' changed to include same-sex couples.

2009 September Secure and sustainable pension reform	Maximum rate increased by \$30 per week. Pensioner and Beneficiary Living Cost Index used to adjust pension rates in September and March each year, when it produces a larger increase than CPI or MTAW. E.
2010 March	The 25 per cent of MTAW benchmark used to ensure pension rates kept pace with earnings growth adjusted to take account of September 2009 increase in pension rate. That increase had pushed rate well above existing benchmark. A new benchmark was set for combined Age Pension couple rate at 41.67 per cent of MTAW. Single rate benchmarked at 66.33 per cent of couple rate (effectively 27.7 per cent of MTAW).
2010 April	Disadvantaged income support recipients able to receive payments weekly rather than fortnightly.
2012 June	Clean Energy Advance paid to compensate pensioners for expected impact of Carbon Tax.

Widow C Pension, 1942 to 1989, Widowed Person Allowance, 1989 to 1995, Bereavement Allowance from 1995

Milestones	Details
1942 June	<p>As part of a broader scheme of widows' pensions, a weekly temporary allowance of £1.5s. introduced for widows aged under 50 years without dependent children and paid during first 26 weeks after husband's death. De facto widows who had lived with deceased partner for at least three years prior to his death also eligible.</p> <p>Claimants required to be resident in Australia and have resided in Australia continuously for five years immediately prior to application. Aliens and indigenous people of Australia, Africa, the Pacific and New Zealand ineligible. Exclusion did not apply to Aboriginal people who were exempt from state laws 'relating to the control of Aboriginal natives' or who lived in a state where such exemptions did not exist and who were eligible on grounds of 'character, intelligence and development'.</p> <p>A hardship test applied. Widows with liquid assets above £50 (after payment of funeral expenses) ineligible. Allowance paid four-weekly in arrears and rate adjusted quarterly according to movements in Retail Price Index.</p>
1942 July	Temporary Allowance exempted from income tax.
1944 April	Quarterly rates adjustment abolished.
1947 July	Temporary Allowance renamed Widow C Pension (WidC) and paid fortnightly.
1950 August	Pensioner Medical Service scheme providing free general practitioner services and medicines introduced.
1952 September	WidC recipients pregnant to deceased husbands eligible for WidC until they gave birth. Residency requirement reduced to one year where the couple were living permanently in Australia at time of husband's death.
1958 October	Supplementary Assistance of 10 shillings per week available to widows paying rent.

Milestones	Details
1960 February	Most restrictions on eligibility of Aboriginal people removed.
1968 September	Residency requirement removed where widow and her husband had been permanent residents at time of husband's death.
1969 September	Women widowed outside Australia eligible for pension on returning to Australia if had lived in Australia for ten years continuously at any time.
1975 October	Widows in de facto relationships ineligible for WidC.
1976 July	WidC subject to income tax.
1976 November	Automatic six-monthly rate increases in May and November, in line with movements in CPI, introduced for basic pension rate.
1978 November	Automatic rate increases made annually in November.
1980 May	Automatic rate increases once again made every six months in May and November.
1986 December	Rate increases occurred in December and June rather than May and November as had previously been the case.
1989 March WidC replaced by Widowed Person's Allowance	WidC replaced by Widowed Person's Allowance (WPA). Widowed people, male and female, eligible for WPA for 14 weeks after spouse's death. Widows pregnant at time of spouse's death eligible for WPA until child's birth. De facto widows also eligible. No other pension, benefit or allowance could be paid concurrently. Pension assets and income tests applied.
1993 April	Eligibility for fringe benefits (concession cards) extended to all part-rate pensioners.
1995 January WPA renamed Bereavement Allowance	Widowed Person's Allowance renamed Bereavement Allowance (BA). Refugees not required to live in Australia for a set period to qualify for BA.
2000 July GST compensation	Pension rate increased as part of a package of measures to compensate for impact of GST introduction. A pension supplement equivalent to four per cent of maximum rate at July 2000 paid to all pensioners. Indexation provisions adjusted so that half of four per cent increase was an advance on whatever rate increase occurred in March 2001. Increased rate provided as a supplement so that it would not be included when pension rate was adjusted in line with benchmark of 25 per cent of Male Total Average Weekly Earnings (MTAWE). This ensured that maximum rate of pension plus supplement would always be more than 25 per cent of MTAWE.
2007 August Income management	Allowances could be subject to income management in Northern Territory and Cape York. Income management involved diversion of 50 per cent of a recipient's income support into an account that could only be drawn on to pay for priority needs, such as food, clothes and rent.
2008 December	Recipients received economic security strategy payments of \$1400—part of the Economic Security Strategy to boost the economy after the GFC.

Milestones	Details
2009 July	Definition of 'member of a couple' changed to include same-sex couples.
2009 September Secure and sustainable pension reform	Maximum rate increased by \$30 per week. Pensioner and Beneficiary Living Cost Index used to adjust pension rates in September and March each year, when it produces a larger increase than CPI.
2010	The 25 per cent of average weekly earnings benchmark used to ensure that single pension rates kept pace with earnings growth was adjusted to take account of the September 2009 increase in the pension rate. That increase had pushed the single rate well above the existing benchmark. A new benchmark was set for the combined Age Pension couple rate at 41.67 per cent of MTAWE. Single rate benchmarked at 66.33 per cent of couple rate (effectively 27.7 per cent of MTAWE).
2010 April	Disadvantaged income support recipients able to receive payments weekly rather than fortnightly.
2012 January	Those who qualified for Parenting Payment (Partnered) also eligible for BA on partner's death.
2012 April	Clean Energy Advance paid to compensate pensioners for the expected impact of Carbon Tax.

Widow Allowance from 1995

Milestones	Details
1995 January Widow Allowance introduced	Widow Allowance (WA) paid to women who were no longer partnered, or who became separated, divorced or widowed after turning 50 years of age and who had little or no recent workforce experience. WA paid under same rates and conditions and income and assets tests as Job Search Allowance (JSA) and Newstart Allowance (NSA). WA not activity tested and no job searching required. Recipients eligible for certain labour market assistance, Employment Entry Payment and Education Entry Payment.
1997 March	Eligibility extended to women aged 50 years or more who had been widowed after turning 40 years of age.
2000 July GST compensation	Allowances rates increased as part of a package of measures to compensate for impact of GST introduction. An increase of four per cent paid to all recipients. Indexation provisions adjusted so that half of four per cent increase was an advance on whatever rate increase occurred in March 2001. This left an effective long-term increase of two per cent in allowance rate.
2005 July WA phased out	WA being phased out from 1 July 2005, with new grants from this date only made to women born on or before 1 July 1955.
2007 August Income management	Allowances could be subject to income management in Northern Territory and Cape York. Income management involved diversion of 50 per cent of a recipient's income support into an account that could only be drawn on to pay for priority needs, such as food, clothes and rent.
2008 July	Abolition of Employment Entry Payment for long-term unemployed recipients moving into full-time work.

Milestones	Details
2008 December	Recipients received economic security strategy payments of \$1400—part of the Economic Security Strategy to boost the economy after the GFC.
2009 July	Definition of ‘member of a couple’ changed to include same-sex couples.
2010 April	Disadvantaged income support recipients able to receive payments weekly rather than fortnightly.
2012 June	Clean Energy Advance paid to compensate those receiving allowances for expected impact of Carbon Tax.

Maximum rates of widows pensions, from 1942

Date of effect	Rate (\$ per week) ^(a)	Date of effect	Rate (\$ per week) ^(a)	Date of effect	Rate (\$ per week) ^(a)
27.07.42	2.50	12.05.77	47.10	20.03.96	171.30
17.11.42	2.55	10.11.77	49.30	20.09.96	173.20
09.02.43	2.60	11.05.78	51.45	20.03.97	173.90
04.05.43	2.65	09.11.78	53.20	20.03.98	177.30
21.09.43	2.70	08.11.79	57.90	20.09.98	178.65
16.10.45	^(b) 2.70	08.05.80	61.05	20.03.99	180.70
08.07.47	^(c) 3.20	06.11.80	64.10	20.09.99	183.25
25.10.48	^(d) 3.70	07.05.81	66.65	20.03.00	186.00
07.11.50	^(e) 4.20	05.11.81	69.70	20.07.00	193.45
06.11.51	5.00	06.05.82	74.15	20.09.00	197.05
07.10.52	5.50	04.11.82	77.25	20.03.01	201.00
05.11.53	5.75	05.05.83	82.35	20.09.01	205.25
01.11.55	6.75	03.11.83	85.90	20.03.02	210.90
29.10.57	7.50	03.05.84	89.40	20.09.02	214.70
13.10.59	8.25	01.11.84	91.90	20.03.03	220.15
11.10.60	8.75	02.05.85	94.30	20.09.03	226.40
10.10.61	9.25	14.11.85	97.90	20.03.04	232.10
08.10.63	10.25	01.05.86	102.10	20.09.04	235.35
06.10.64	10.75	25.12.86	106.20	20.03.05	238.15
04.10.66	11.75	25.06.87	112.15	20.09.05	244.45
01.10.68	12.50	24.12.87	116.10	20.03.06	249.85
30.09.69	13.25	23.06.88	120.05	20.09.06	256.05
29.09.70	13.75	22.12.88	124.25	20.03.07	262.55
13.04.71	14.25	22.06.89	129.20	20.09.07	268.85
12.10.71	15.25	23.11.89	133.60	20.03.08	273.40
25.04.72	16.00	26.04.90	141.20	20.09.08	281.05
10.10.72	17.25	27.09.90	145.85	20.03.09	284.90
05.12.72	21.50	28.03.91	150.80	20.09.09	335.95
09.10.73	23.00	26.03.92	153.05	20.03.10	350.55
26.03.74	26.00	28.01.93	156.05	20.09.10	358.05
13.08.74	31.00	19.09.93	158.10	20.03.11	364.65
06.05.75	36.00	20.03.94	159.05	20.09.11	374.40
13.11.75	38.75	20.09.94	160.70	20.03.12	377.75
13.05.76	41.25	20.03.95	163.05	20.09.12	386.30
11.11.76	43.50	20.09.95	167.95	-	-

(a) Rates prior to 1966 converted to dollars for consistency.

(b) \$3.25 for class C.

(c) \$3.75 for class C and \$3.20 for class D.

(d) \$4.25 for class C and \$3.70 for class D.

(e) \$4.75 for class C and \$4.20 for class D.

Income and assets limits for Widow B Pension, from 1942

Date of effect	Income before pension reduced under income test (\$ pa) ^(a)	Property/Asset test (\$) ^(a)	
		Assets allowed before no pension payable	Assets allowed before pension reduced under assets test
27.07.42	65	800	100
13.08.46	104	1 300	100
26.10.48	156	1 500	200
06.11.51	156	2 000	200
05.11.53	208	2 500	300
19.10.54	364	3 500	400
28.10.58	364	4 500	400
	Means as assessed^(b)		
14.03.61	364		400
19.10.66	364		400
02.05.67	520		400
30.09.69	520		400
10.10.72	1 040		400
	Income before pension reduced under income test^(c)		
25.11.76	1 040		
04.11.82	1 560		
		Assets allowed before pension reduced under assets test^(d)	
		Homeowner	Non-homeowner
21.03.85	1 560	70 000	120 000
01.05.86	1 560	75 750	129 750
25.06.87	1 560	83 250	143 250
09.07.87	2 080	83 250	143 250
23.06.88	2 080	89 250	153 250
22.06.89	2 080	96 000	164 500
21.06.90	2 080	103 500	177 500
01.07.91	2 184	110 750	190 250
01.07.92	2 236	112 500	193 000
01.07.93	2 288	112 750	193 250
01.07.94	2 340	115 000	197 000

Date of effect	Income before pension reduced under income test (\$ pa) ^(a)	Property/Asset test (\$) ^(a)	
		Homeowner	Non-homeowner
01.07.95	2 444	118 000	202 000
01.07.96	2 548	124 000	212 500
01.07.97	2 600	125 750	215 750
01.07.98	2 600	125 750	215 750
01.07.99	2 652	127 750	219 250
01.07.00	2 756	133 250	228 750
01.07.01	2 912	141 000	242 000
01.07.02	3 016	145 250	249 750
01.07.03	3 120	149 500	257 500
01.07.04	3 172	153 000	263 500
01.07.05	3 224	157 000	270 500
01.07.06	3 328	161 500	278 500
01.07.07	3 432	166 750	287 750
01.07.08	3 588	171 750	296 250
01.07.09	3 692	178 000	307 000
01.07.10	3 796	181 750	313 250
01.07.11	3 900	186 750	321 750
01.07.12	3 952	192 500	332 000

(a) Income and asset limits prior to 1966 converted to dollars for consistency.

(b) Merged means test introduced. Maximum pension reduced by amount 'means as assessed' (income plus property component) exceeded limit.

(c) Income-only test introduced.

(d) Assets test introduced.

Appendix D: Chronology of assistance with rent

Supplementary Allowance/Assistance 1970 to 1985, Rent Assistance from 1985

Milestones	Details
1970 September	Long-term sickness beneficiaries, paying rent and entirely or substantially dependent on their benefit, eligible to receive Supplementary Allowance of up to \$2 per week.
1974 November	Amount of Supplementary Allowance restricted to amount of rent actually paid.
1982 February	Maximum rate of Supplementary Allowance either \$8 per week or one half of the amount by which rent was more than \$10 per week, whichever was the lower. Tenants of government housing authorities now ineligible.
1982 December	Supplementary Allowance eligibility extended to those who had transferred from Unemployment Benefit (SB) to Sickness Benefit (SB) or who, but for their illness or incapacity, would have qualified for UB.
1985 September	Supplementary Assistance renamed Rent Assistance (RA).
1986 May	RA of \$10 per week extended to UB recipients who had been on benefit for six or more months and were renting privately, and who were married with dependent children, aged 25 or over, or were aged 18 to 24 years and not living with parents or guardians.
1986 December	Rent threshold above which RA payable increased to \$15 per week.
1987 July	Separate income test on RA abolished. Payment became additional to maximum rate of pension or benefit and subject to normal income tests.
1987 December	RA standardised across all benefits, with the more liberal SB rent assistance provisions no longer applying. Payment extended to Family Allowance Supplement recipients.
1989 June	A \$5 per week payment added to RA for those with children. Waiting time for ex-prisoners reduced by length of time they had spent in prison. Rent threshold above which RA payable raised to \$20 per week. Those paying board and lodgings had only two-thirds of payment counted as rent.
1989 December	Maximum RA rate standardised for all pensions, benefits and the Family Allowance supplement.
1990 June	Higher RA rate introduced for those with three or more children.
1991 March	Rent threshold above which RA paid increased to \$25 per week. RA rates indexed twice-yearly indexation in line with CPI movements.
1992 March	RA waiting period removed for recipients of JSA, NSA, SA or SpB who had no dependants and who were aged 18 to 60 years. RA eligibility extended to those aged under 18 years who received independent/homeless rate of JSA, SA or SpB, and who had been receiving income support for at least 18 weeks.

1993 January	RA for those with children paid as an add-on to Additional Family Payment.
1993 March	Rent threshold above which RA payable indexed and set at levels varying according to family situation. Thresholds: single with no children, \$60 pf; single with children, \$80 pf; couples without children, \$100 pf; and couples with children, \$120 pf. Above the new thresholds RA paid at 75 cents for each dollar of rent paid up to the maximum RA amount.
1994 March	Waiting period of 18 weeks abolished for those aged under 18 years who were JSA/SA recipients.
1996 March	Maximum RA rates increased by \$5 pf for families with children. Minimum amount of rent that had to be paid to receive RA increased by \$5. RA rates frozen for those receiving RA under various savings provisions resulting from previous changes in RA conditions until general RA rates caught up to their higher saved rate.
1997 July	From July those who were single without dependent children and who shared accommodation only eligible for two-thirds of the maximum RA rate.
1998 January	Those who lived in public housing but not the primary tenant ineligible for RA. Exemptions applied if primary tenant unsubsidised or if state housing authority notified of sub-tenant's presence and their income had been taken into account in setting the household rent.
2000 July GST compensation	RA rates increased as part of a package of measures to compensate for GST introduction.

Maximum rates of Supplementary Allowance/Rent Assistance, from 1970

Date of effect	No dependent children		With dependent children	
			1 or 2	3 or more
\$ per week				
28.09.70	2.00			
27.09.72	4.00			
01.11.74	5.00			
01.02.82	8.00			
01.11.82	10.00			
01.11.84	15.00			
01.05.86	^(a) 15.00			
13.12.87	^(b) 10.00		^(b) 15.00	^(b) 15.00
13.06.89	10.00		20.00	20.00
13.12.89	20.00		25.00	25.00
13.06.90	25.00		30.00	35.00
20.09.90	30.00		35.00	40.00
20.03.91	31.00		36.20	41.35
20.03.92	31.45		36.75	41.95

Date of effect	No dependent children		With dependent children	
			1 or 2	3 or more
20.09.92	31.50		36.80	42.00
	Partnered	Single		
\$ per fortnight				
20.03.93	63.20	67.20	73.80	84.20
20.09.93	64.00	68.00	74.80	85.20
20.03.94	64.40	68.40	75.20	85.80
20.09.94	65.20	69.20	76.00	86.80
20.03.95	66.20	70.20	77.00	88.00
20.09.95	68.20	72.40	79.40	90.60
20.03.96	69.60	73.80	86.00	97.40
20.09.96	70.40	74.60	87.00	98.40
20.03.97	70.60	74.80	87.00	98.80
20.09.98	71.00	75.20	87.00	98.80
20.03.99	71.40	75.80	87.00	98.80
20.09.99	71.60	76.00	88.00	99.40
20.03.00	72.60	77.20	88.60	100.00
01.07.00	79.80	85.00	88.80	100.40
20.09.00	81.20	86.40	90.20	102.00
20.03.01	82.80	88.00	99.26	112.14
20.09.01	84.40	89.60	100.94	114.10
20.03.02	85.40	90.60	103.04	116.48
20.09.02	86.80	92.00	105.00	118.72
20.03.03	88.00	93.20	106.26	120.12
20.09.03	89.20	94.40	107.94	122.08
20.03.04	90.20	95.40	109.48	123.76
20.09.04	91.40	96.80	110.88	125.30
20.03.05	92.40	98.00	112.14	126.70
20.09.05	93.60	99.20	113.68	128.52
20.03.06	95.00	100.60	118.30	133.70
20.09.06	97.40	103.20	121.24	137.06
20.03.07	98.20	104.00	122.22	138.18
20.09.07	99.40	105.40	123.76	140.00
20.03.08	101.00	107.20	125.86	142.38
20.09.08	103.80	110.20	129.36	146.30
20.03.09	104.80	111.20	130.48	147.56
20.09.09	105.40	111.80	131.32	148.40
20.03.10	107.00	113.40	133.28	150.64
20.09.10	108.60	115.20	135.24	152.88

Date of effect	No dependent children		With dependent children	
			1 or 2	3 or more
20.03.11	109.80	116.40	136.78	154.56
20.09.11	112.60	119.40	140.14	158.48
20.03.12	113.20	120.20	140.98	159.46
20.09.12	113.80	121.00	141.82	160.44

(a) RA of \$10.00 per week introduced for some UB/SpB recipients.

(b) RA for all beneficiaries paid under same rates and conditions.

List of Acronyms

AWOTE	Average Weekly Ordinary Time Earnings
BA	Bereavement Allowance
CDEP	Community Development Employment Projects Scheme
CES	Commonwealth Employment Service
CPI	Consumer Price Index
DSS	Department of Social Security
GFC	Global Financial Crisis
GST	Goods and Services Tax
HCCA	Home Child Care Allowance
JSA	Job Search Allowance
MAA	Mature Age Allowance
MAPA	Mature Age Partner Allowance
MTAWE	Male Total Average Weekly Earnings
MGA	Mother's/Guardian's Allowance
NSA	Newstart Allowance
PA	Partner Allowance
pf	per fortnight
PgA	Parenting Allowance
RA	Rent Assistance
RAA	Remote Area Allowance
SA	Sickness Allowance
SB	Sickness Benefit
SEAM	School Enrolment and Attendance Measure
SpB	Special Benefit
UB	Unemployment Benefit
WA	Widow Allowance
WFTD	Work for the Dole Scheme
WidA	Widow A Pension
WidB	Widow B Pension
WidC	Widow C Pension
WidD	Widow D Pension
WPA	Widowed Person Allowance
YA	Youth Allowance
YHA	Young Homeless Allowance
YTA	Youth Training Allowance

Commonwealth of Australia



Creative Commons

With the exception of the Commonwealth Coat of Arms, and to the extent that copyright subsists in a third party, this publication, its logo and front page design are licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Australia](#) licence.

In essence, you are free to copy and communicate this work in its current form for all non-commercial purposes, as long as you attribute the work to the author and abide by the other licence terms. The work cannot be adapted or modified in any way. Content from this publication should be attributed in the following way: Author(s), Title of publication, Series Name and No, Publisher, Date.

To the extent that copyright subsists in third party quotes it remains with the original owner and permission may be required to reuse the material.

Inquiries regarding the licence and any use of the publication are welcome to webmanager@aph.gov.au.

This work has been prepared to support the work of the Australian Parliament using information available at the time of production. The views expressed do not reflect an official position of the Parliamentary Library, nor do they constitute professional legal opinion.

Feedback is welcome and may be provided to: web.library@aph.gov.au. Any concerns or complaints should be directed to the Parliamentary Librarian. Parliamentary Library staff are available to discuss the contents of publications with Senators and Members and their staff. To access this service, clients may contact the author or the Library's Central Entry Point for referral.