



**Australian Government**

**Department of Families, Community Services  
and Indigenous Affairs**

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**OCCASIONAL PAPER NO. 12**

A compendium of legislative changes  
in social security 1908–1982

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All care has been taken to ensure that the material is both clear and comprehensive. Readers are invited to draw attention to anything they consider to be in need of clarification.

The opinions, comments and/or analysis expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not represent the view of the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs or the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, and cannot be taken in any way as expressions of Government policy.

#### **2004 Administrative Arrangements Changes**

In October 2004 responsibility for some income support payments (including Newstart Allowance, Parenting Payment, Partner Allowance, Youth Allowance (Other) and Disability Support Pension) was transferred to the Australian Government Department of Employment and Workplace Relations and responsibility for Youth Allowance (Students) and Austudy Payment was transferred to the Australian Government Department of Education, Science and Training.

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## Explanatory notes

- 1 This publication has been reprinted to accompany a new publication, *A compendium of legislative changes in social security 1983–2000*.
- 2 This compendium provides in a single document a listing of legislative changes in social security from the passage of the first Commonwealth legislation in 1908 to the end of 1982. Changes in administrative procedures are generally not covered.
- 3 The material is not presented in precise legal terms. To assist readers who may be interested in further detail the legislation implementing the changes itemised in the text is cited at the conclusion of the relevant part. The date of assent means the date on which the Royal Assent was given to the Act by the Governor-General. The date of commencement means the date on which the Act came into operation. Proclaimed commencement means the date on which the Governor-General proclaimed Royal Assent to the relevant part of the Act in the Commonwealth Gazette. The date of first payment of new rates is not necessarily the same as the date of commencement but is generally the first payday on or after the date of commencement.
- 4 The compendium covers in general only those pensions, benefits and allowances administered by the Department of Social Security or its predecessors. Thus, for example, service pension and tuberculosis allowance are covered only insofar as they impinge on social security payments. Funeral benefits are covered in the age and invalid pension section. Fringe benefits are also mentioned in that section, but are not comprehensively covered because they are not generally the primary responsibility of this department.
- 5 Certain terminology used in this publication may be considered inappropriate and/or offensive by readers. However, the language used is an accurate reflection of the terminology employed by the legislation upon which this document reports. Readers are asked to note that revising such language to suit current standards would compromise the historical nature of this document.
- 6 Wife's allowance/pension is covered in the age and invalid pension section.
- 7 The major changes to the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service and its associated allowances are detailed in the age and invalid pension section, although unemployment and sickness beneficiaries are also eligible. Changes to the service which are of particular relevance to unemployment and sickness beneficiaries are outlined in the unemployment and sickness benefit section. Mobility allowance is also covered in the age and invalid pension section.
- 8 References to rates of pensions, benefits, etc for years prior to the introduction of decimal currency in 1966 are made in pounds, shillings and pence. The conversion rate is:

£1	(one pound)	=	\$2	(two dollars)
10s	(ten shillings)	=	\$1	(one dollar)
1s	(one shilling)	=	10c	(ten cents)
6d	(six pence)	=	5c	(five cents)

See page vii for table showing movements in the retail price index from 1909 to 1982.

- 9 Changes in pension rates arising from automatic adjustment procedures are shown in the tables but not in the text, which refers only to legislative changes. The tables should not be used without reference to the text.
- 10 Changes to means and income tests are described in the text. Information on permissible and exempt income and property is shown in the tables.
- 11 Pension rates and income limits are usually shown in the legislation as annual amounts, but rates have been converted to weekly amounts in the compendium, unless otherwise stated.
- 12 In 1982 titles of the Act and of statutory offices were changed to incorporate the words ‘social security’ instead of ‘social services’.
- 13 Where the masculine gender is used in the text it should generally be taken to include females unless the contrary is specifically stated or the context requires otherwise.

**Retail price index numbers: State capital cities combined, 1909 to 1982  
(calendar years - base: Year 1911 = 100)**

YEAR	INDEX NUMBER	YEAR	INDEX NUMBER
1909	95	1946	190
1910	97	1947	198
1911	100	1948	218
1912	110	1949	240
1913	110	1950	262
1914 (a)	114	1951	313
1915 (a)	130	1952	367
1916 (a)	132	1953	383
1917 (a)	141	1954	386
1918 (a)	150	1955	394
1919 (a)	170	1956	419
1920 (a)	193	1957	429
1921 (a)	168	1958	435
1922 (a)	162	1959	443
1923	166	1960	459
1924	164	1961	471
1925	165	1962	469
1926	168	1963	472
1927	166	1964	483
1928	167	1965	502
1929	171	1966	517
1930	162	1967	534
1931	145	1968	548
1932	138	1969	564
1933	133	1970	586
1934	136	1971	621
1935	138	1972	658
1936	141	1973	720
1937	145	1974	829
1938	149	1975	954
1939	153	1976	1083
1940	159	1977	1216
1941	167	1978	1313
1942	181	1979	1432
1943	188	1980	1578
1944	187	1981	1731
1945	187	1982	1923

(a) November

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics *Year Book Australia 1982* (1981 and 1982 figures added).

'An index of retail price movements from 1901 onwards has been derived by linking together the following indexes: from 1901 to 1914, the 'A' Series Retail Price Index; from 1914 to 1946-47, the 'C' Series Retail Price Index; from 1946-47 to 1948-49, a composite of Consumer Price Index Housing Group (partly estimated) and 'C' Series Index excluding Rent; and from 1948-49 onwards, the Consumer Price Index. The continuous series derived in this way is shown in the table below. As the indexes differ greatly in scope, the resulting series is only a broad indication of long-term trends in retail prices.' (p. 121).





## Age and invalid pension

In 1900 New South Wales and Victoria enacted legislation for old-age pension schemes. Queensland followed in 1908. At the time of Federation, the Commonwealth was allotted responsibility for age and invalid pensions and pensions payable by the Commonwealth Government were introduced with the passage of the *Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act* in 1908. Old-age pensions, as they were then called, were first paid from 1 July 1909 and invalid pensions from 15 December 1910 (Table 1). These provisions superseded the states' legislation.

The main provisions concerning old-age pension and invalid pension were as outlined below.

### Old-age pension: Initial provisions

Persons who attained the age of 65 years or who, being permanently incapacitated for work, attained the age of 60 years were qualified to receive old-age pension while in Australia. Women were to become eligible for pension at 60 years of age on proclamation by the Governor-General.

Persons who were disqualified from receiving old-age pension included:

- (a) 'aliens'
- (b) naturalised residents who had not been naturalised for the period of three years next preceding the date of their pension claims
- (c) 'Asiatics' (except those born in Australia), and 'Aboriginal natives' of Australia, Africa, the Islands of the Pacific, or New Zealand.

A woman was not disqualified from receiving a pension in consequence of having married a person described in (a), (b) or (c).

No person could receive an old-age pension unless:

- (a) he was residing in Australia on the date when he made his claim for pension
- (b) he had on that date so resided continuously for at least 25 years.  
Continuous residence in Australia was deemed not to be interrupted by occasional absences not exceeding in the aggregate one-tenth of the total period of residence. A person, whether claimant or pensioner, was deemed not to be absent from Australia during any period of absence from Australia if he proved that during that period his home was in Australia and, in the case of a married male, that his wife and family, or his wife (if he had no family), or his family (if his wife was dead), resided in Australia and were maintained by him
- (c) he was of good character
- (d) if a husband, he had not for 12 months or upwards during five years immediately preceding that date, without just cause, deserted his wife, or without just cause failed to provide her with adequate means of maintenance, or neglected to maintain any of his children being under the age of 14 years; or, if a wife, she had not for 12 months during five years immediately preceding such date, without just cause, deserted her husband, or deserted any of her children being under the age of 14 years

- (e) his income did not exceed certain limits (see below)
- (f) the net capital value of his accumulated property, whether in or out of Australia, did not exceed £310 (Table 2). (Accumulated property comprised all real and personal property owned by the person less any charges or encumbrances existing on the property.)
- (g) he had not directly or indirectly deprived himself of property or income in order to qualify for or obtain a pension
- (h) he had not at any time within six months been refused a pension certificate, except for the reason that he was disqualified on account of his age or for reasons which were not in existence at the time of the further application.

Where a pensioner was considered unfit to be entrusted with a pension, it could be suspended or paid to a designated person or organisation for the pensioner's benefit.

If a successful claimant for a pension was an inmate of a benevolent asylum or other charitable institution, the pension became payable as from a date not more than 28 days prior to the pensioner being discharged from or leaving the asylum or institution, but no payment on account of pension was to be made to him so long as he was an inmate of the asylum or institution. Although no provision was made in the Act for payment of the pension or maintenance to the asylum or institution while the pensioner was an inmate, payment of maintenance to the asylum or institution was in fact made on an 'act of grace' basis.

If the pensioner became an inmate of an asylum for the insane or a hospital, his pension was suspended, but when the pensioner was discharged from any such asylum or hospital, payment of his pension was resumed, and he was entitled to payment, in respect of the period during which his pension was so suspended, of a sum representing not more than four weeks instalments of the pension, where the suspension had been of at least that duration.

## Invalid pension: Initial provisions

Persons aged 16 years or more, permanently incapacitated for work, by reason of an accident or by reason of being an invalid, and not in receipt of old-age pension, were, while in Australia, qualified to receive invalid pension. An examination of the claimant by a duly qualified medical practitioner was required.

Persons who were disqualified from receiving invalid pension included:

- (a) 'aliens'
- (b) 'Asiatics' (except those born in Australia), and 'Aboriginal natives' of Australia, Africa, the Islands of the Pacific, or New Zealand.

A woman was not disqualified from receiving a pension in consequence of having married a person described in (a) or (b).

No person could receive an invalid pension unless:

- (a) he was residing in Australia on the date when he made his claim for pension
- (b) he had on that date resided in Australia continuously for at least five years. Continuous residence in Australia was deemed not interrupted by occasional

absences not exceeding in the aggregate one-tenth of the total period of residence. A person, whether claimant or pensioner, was deemed not to be absent from Australia during any period of absence from Australia if he proved that during that period his home was in Australia and, in the case of a married male, that his wife and family, or his wife (if he had no family), or his family (if his wife was dead), resided in Australia and were maintained by him

- (c) he had become permanently incapacitated while in Australia
- (d) the accident or invalidity was not self-induced, nor in any way brought about with a view to obtaining a pension
- (e) he had no claim against any employer, company, or other person, or body, compellable under private contract or public enactment to adequately maintain or compensate him on account of accident or invalid state of health
- (f) his income or property did not exceed the limits prescribed in the case of applicants for old-age pension (see below)
- (g) he had not directly or indirectly deprived himself of income or property in order to qualify for a pension
- (h) his relatives—namely, father, mother, husband, wife, or children—did not, either severally or collectively, adequately maintain him.

The same provisions applied to invalid pensioners as applied to old-age pensioners in respect of fitness to be entrusted with a pension, or admission to an asylum or benevolent asylum.

## Rate of pension and means test for old-age and invalid pensions

The rate of pension payable was an amount which the Commissioner of Pensions determined as reasonable and sufficient, and was subject to review. The maximum rate of pension was £26 per annum (10 shillings per week) (Table 1) and was reduced by the amount of non-pension income above £26 per annum (10 shillings per week) (Table 2). The pensioner's total income, including pension, could not exceed £52 per annum (£1 per week). (The amount of income a pensioner was allowed before the pension was reduced is referred to in this compendium as permissible income.)

Income for pension purposes included any moneys, valuable consideration or profits earned, derived or received by any person for his own use or benefit by any means from any source whatever, whether in or out of the Commonwealth (including personal earnings) but did not include benefits from friendly societies registered by the Commonwealth or state, payments during illness, infirmity or old age from any trade union, provident society, or other society or association.

In the computation of income, where a pensioner received board and/or lodging, the actual or estimated value or cost of such board and/or lodging not exceeding 5 shillings per week was included as income (Table 10).

The income of each of a pensioner couple was deemed to be half of the total income of both.

Where a single pensioner had property, including a home in which the pensioner was permanently resident and which produced no income, the pension payable was reduced by £1 for every complete £10 by which the net capital value of the property (including the home) exceeded £100. Where the property did not include a home in which the pensioner resided or the home produced income, the pension was reduced by £1 for every complete £10 by which the net capital value exceeded £50 (Table 2). The pension for each of a married pensioner couple who were not living apart was reduced at the same rate as for single pensioners but by the excess above half the amount allowed for single pensioners, that is, £50 and £25.

The net capital value of a pensioner's property comprised the capital value of all real and personal property owned by the pensioner less any lawful charges existing on the property.

The net capital value of the property of each of a married pensioner couple was deemed to be half the combined net capital value of the property of both.

The value of property a pensioner was allowed before pension was reduced is referred to in this compendium as exempt property, and the value of property beyond which pension ceased to be payable is referred to as the upper limit of property (Table 2).

*Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1908* (No 17 of 1908)

Assent: 10 June 1908

Commenced: 15 April 1909

Proclaimed commencement: 15 April 1909 (payment of old-age pension, except for women aged 60 to 64 years)  
18 November 1910 (old-age pension for women aged 60 to 64 years) (see 1910)  
19 November 1910 (invalid pension) (see 1910)

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## Changes in provisions

1909 Claimants who had not been naturalised for three years but who were eligible for old-age pension on all other grounds, and who had been naturalised by 30 June 1910, were to be regarded as eligible.

The residence requirements were changed to require only 20 years' continuous residence for old-age pension, and with regard to both old-age and invalid pensions absences in a territory of the Commonwealth of Australia (or British territory that became such a territory) were deemed not to have interrupted continuous residence.

*Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1909* (No 3 of 1909)

Assent: 13 August 1909

Deemed commencement: 15 April 1909

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The definition of income for old-age and invalid pensions was amended to exclude an allowance under the *Miners Accident Relief Act 1900* of the State of New South Wales.

*Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act No 2 1909* (No 21 of 1909)

Assent: 13 December 1909.

Deemed commencement: 15 April 1909

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- 1910 The sections of the Act concerned with payment of invalid pension and payment of old-age pension to women who had reached 60 but not 65 years came into operation.
- Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1908* (No 17 of 1908)  
 Assent: 10 June 1908  
 Commenced: 15 April 1909  
 Proclaimed commencement: 18 November 1910 (age pension for women)  
 19 November 1910 (invalid pension)
- 
- 1912 The capital value of a pensioner's home was excluded in assessing the value of a pensioner's property. (The higher level of exempt property for home owners was therefore removed.) (Table 2)
- Naturalised residents were no longer required to wait three years after naturalisation for eligibility for old-age pension.
- Gifts or allowances from children or grandchildren were no longer regarded as income.
- Permanently blind persons aged 16 years and under age pension age became eligible for invalid pension regardless of capacity to work, but were deemed to be receiving wages equal to the amount which could have been earned by reasonable effort. (This enabled some blind persons to receive invalid pension even if they were earning and was designed to encourage those who could work to do so.)
- Persons afflicted with a congenital defect and rendered permanently incapacitated or blind thereby were regarded as having become incapacitated or blind while in Australia if brought to Australia before attaining the age of three years.
- Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1912* (No 27 of 1912)  
 Assent: 24 December 1912  
 Commenced: 24 December 1912
- 
- 1916 Persons who became inmates of benevolent asylums and were pensioners on admission or who were eligible for a pension at the time of admission became eligible for a small institutional pension of 2 shillings per week (this being the difference between the 'act of grace' payment to the benevolent asylum for the pensioner's maintenance and the maximum weekly rate of pension).
- The maximum rate of pension was increased (Table 1).
- The actual or estimated value of free board and/or lodging deemed to be income for means test purposes was increased (Table 10).
- Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1916* (No 32 of 1916)  
 Assent: 30 September 1916  
 Proclaimed commencement: 2 October 1916
-

- 1917 War pension payable to dependants of deceased or incapacitated soldiers were exempted from income under the means test for old-age and invalid pensions.

Contributions made by children towards the maintenance of an invalid parent were excluded in assessing eligibility for invalid pension.

*Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1917* (No 22 of 1917)

Assent: 13 September 1917

Proclaimed commencement: 27 September 1917

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- 1920 The maximum rate of pension was increased (Table 1).

The amount of board and/or lodging to be included in income was increased (Table 10).

*Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1919* (No 22 of 1919)

Assent: 28 October 1919

Commenced: 1 January 1920

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- 1921 A married blind pensioner was permitted to receive pension of an amount (not exceeding the maximum rate of pension) which would allow the joint income of the couple, together with the pension, to equal an amount not exceeding a stipulated sum of £4.5.0 per week or the basic wage for the portion of the Commonwealth where the pensioner lived.

*Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1920* (No 53 of 1920)

Assent: 2 December 1920

Proclaimed commencement: 13 January 1921

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- 1923 Institutional pension of 3 shillings per week became payable to all persons in benevolent asylums if they were otherwise eligible for a pension including those who became eligible after admission (Table 7). Institutional pension was also payable after 28 days to pensioners who remained in an asylum or public hospital for more than 28 days (maintenance payments to the hospitals also started after 28 days). (On discharge from a public hospital, a pensioner received an amount equal to the pension that would otherwise have been paid during the first 28 days of a hospital stay.)

Invalid pension became payable to persons not born in Australia who were incapacitated by a congenital defect or by blindness, if they had resided in Australia continuously for a period of 20 years.

The upper limit of property was increased (Table 2). Permissible income was increased (Table 2).

The maximum rate of pension was increased (Table 1).

The value of free board and/or lodging deemed to be income for means test purposes was increased (Table 10).

*Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1923* (No 15 of 1923)

Assent: 1 September 1923

Proclaimed commencement: 13 September 1923

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- 1925 The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7).  
*Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1925* (No 27 of 1925)  
 Assent: 26 September 1925  
 Commenced: 8 October 1925
- 
- 1926 Invalid and old-age pensions became payable to Indians born in British India.  
*Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1926* (No 44 of 1926)  
 Assent: 16 August 1926  
 Proclaimed commencement: 7 October 1926
- 
- 1928 War pension for incapacitated soldiers became exempt income for old-age pension purposes.  
 Institutional pension was increased (Table 7).  
*Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1928* (No 31 of 1928)  
 Assent: 14 September 1928  
 Proclaimed commencement: 4 October 1928
- 
- 1931 War pensions payable to dependants of deceased or incapacitated soldiers, or incapacitated soldiers, were no longer excluded from income for old-age and invalid pension purposes.  
 The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were reduced (Tables 1 and 7).  
*Financial Emergency Act 1931* (No 10 of 1931)  
 Assent: 17 July 1931  
 Commenced: 17 July 1931  
 Proclaimed commencement: 20 July 1931 (invalid and old-age pensions)
- 
- Pensioners with deposits in the Government Savings Bank of New South Wales became entitled to have the amount of these deposits excluded from the net capital value of their property by assigning the deposits to the Minister of State who administered the *Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act*. When the assignment ended, the amount repayable to the pensioner was the amount assigned less additional pension paid as a result of the assignment.  
*Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1931* (No 46 of 1931)  
 Assent: 2 November 1931  
 Proclaimed commencement: 12 November 1931
- 
- 1932 A person became ineligible for either old-age or invalid pension if his relatives—namely, husband, wife, father, mother, or children aged 21 years of age or over—could adequately maintain him. Relatives could be called upon to give evidence as to their ability to support the claimant for pension. Relatives who were required to make compulsory payments did so to the Commonwealth.  
 A person who transferred property of more than £100 for no consideration within the five years preceding the date of his pension claim became ineligible for pension, unless it could be proved that it was a reasonable gift in the circumstances at the time.



A pensioner or claimant was obliged to supply the Commissioner with full particulars relating to the real property owned or in which he had any estate or interest, and relating to his relatives (husband, wife, father, mother or children). A pensioner was also required to notify in writing of any acquisition of property or receipt of income which affected the amount of pension.

From 12 October 1932 if a pensioner received property not including a home, of value greater than £400 (the upper limit of property) then the amount of pension received since that date became reimbursable to the Commonwealth to the extent that the value of the property exceeded £400. The amount reimbursable was reduced by any amount contributed by relatives to maintain the pensioner.

A pensioner was required, subject to severe penalties and refusal or cancellation of pension for non-compliance, to undertake not to transfer or mortgage any real property or any estate or interest therein, without prior consent of the Commissioner. Any such transfer or mortgage would be void and have no effect.

From 12 October 1932 the amount of pension received by a pensioner after that date became reimbursable from the estate of the pensioner subject to certain exceptions, such as on the death of one of a married pensioner couple or when a home was transferred to an aged near relative in necessitous circumstances. The amount reimbursable was reduced by any amount contributed by relatives to maintain the pensioner.

Where a home was destroyed by fire, insurance moneys received would not affect pension if used within a certain period to build another home for the pensioner.

The maximum rate of pension payable before application of the means test was reduced to 15 shillings per week unless the pensioner's other income including gifts and allowances from near relatives was less than 2 shillings and sixpence per week, in which case the maximum pension became the sum of 15 shillings and the amount by which the pensioner's other income fell short of 2 shillings and sixpence per week (Table 1). In applying the means test, payments by way of gifts and allowances from the husband, wife, father, mother or children were excluded.

Institutional pension was reduced (Table 7).

*Financial Emergency Act 1932* (No 35 of 1932)

Assent: 3 October 1932

Proclaimed commencement: 12 October 1932

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The Commonwealth was empowered to accept a transfer from a pensioner or claimant of any property not subject to encumbrance, or of any interest of the pensioner or claimant under a will. The value of the property or interest was not taken into account in determining the amount of pension.

*Financial Relief Act 1932* (No 64 of 1932)

Assent: 5 December 1932

Deemed commencement: 12 October 1932 (pension provisions)

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The changes of provisions noted for 1931 and 1932 were part of the financial emergency measures taken during the depression of the 1930s. None of these measures were completely implemented. Most were later amended to remove anomalies or liberalise the nature of the provisions. In April 1935 the property provisions of these emergency measures were repealed with three exceptions. These exceptions were: (i) the notification by the pensioner if received income or acquired property was sufficient to affect the rate of pension; (ii) where a home was destroyed by fire then insurance moneys received should not affect pension if within a certain period they were used to build another home; (iii) the Commonwealth remained able to accept transfer of unencumbered property from a pensioner. The provisions making persons ineligible for old-age or invalid pension if adequately maintained by near relatives also remained.

*Financial Relief Act 1933* (No 17 of 1933)

Assent: 26 October 1933

Proclaimed commencement: 27 October 1933

*Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1933* (No 56 of 1933)

Assent: 12 December 1933

Commenced: 12 December 1933

*Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1935* (No 1 of 1935)

Assent: 4 April 1935

Commenced: 4 April 1935

- 
- 1933 Sustenance or food relief provided by a state or by a Commonwealth territory was excluded from income for pension purposes.

The maximum rate of pension became subject to annual review based on the movement in the retail price index number for food and groceries but was limited to the range of 17 shillings and sixpence to £1 per week.

The maximum rate of pension was increased and again became the same for all pensioners (Table 1).

Institutional pension was increased (Table 7).

*Financial Relief Act 1933* (No 17 of 1933)

Assent: 26 October 1933

Proclaimed commencement: 27 October 1933

Deemed commencement: 16 March 1933 (provision relating to sustenance or food relief)

- 
- 1934 The provision under which relatives could be required to make compulsory payments to the Commonwealth towards a pensioner's maintenance was repealed.

- 1935 Relatives (husband, wife, father, mother, or children aged 21 years or over) were no longer required to contribute to the support of the pensioner.

*Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1935* (No 1 of 1935)

Assent: 4 April 1935

Commenced: 4 April 1935

Deemed commencement: 21 June 1934 (compulsory payments)

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- 1936 Service pensions were introduced for male veterans aged 60 years or more who had served in a ‘theatre of war’ or were permanently unemployable, and female veterans aged 55 years or more who had served or had embarked for service abroad or were permanently unemployable, or those suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis even when the service was not in a theatre of war. No person except a veteran suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis could receive both a service pension and an invalid or old-age pension. The pension was subject to a means and income test.

*Australian Soldiers’ Repatriation Act 1935* (No 58 of 1935)

Assent: 6 December 1935

Commenced: 1 January 1936

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- 1937 Adjustments based on the retail price index were discontinued.  
The maximum rate of pension was increased (Table 1) and the allowable income of a blind pensioner and spouse was increased.

Institutional pension was increased (Table 7).

*Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1937* (No 11 of 1937)

Assent: 2 September 1937

Commenced: 2 September 1937

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- 1940 The rate of pension became subject to automatic quarterly review based on movements in the retail price index (‘C’ Series). The legislation provided for automatic adjustment if the retail price index number moved upwards by a prescribed minimum.

The maximum rate of pension was increased (Table 1). The allowable income of a blind pensioner and spouse was increased.

Institutional pension was increased and became adjustable by half of the amount by which the maximum rate of pension per annum was increased or reduced (Table 7).

*Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1940* (No 97 of 1940)

Assent: 17 December 1940

Commenced: 17 December 1940

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- 1941 In April 1941 the Department of Social Services began to function as a separate organisation, having been established on 26 April 1939 in accordance with section 64 of the Commonwealth of Australia Constitution. The administration of the *Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act* was taken over by the Department of Social Services from the Department of the Treasury.

The provisions of 1920 (commenced 1921) which set a maximum level for combined pension and income in respect of blind pensioners were repealed and replaced by a provision which set a limit on permissible income instead. The limit was set at the existing effective amount of permissible income, £3.7.6 per week.

A provision was added to the legislation specifying that a person would be deemed permanently incapacitated for work and thus eligible for invalid pension if his degree of capacity for work did not exceed 15 per cent.

All 'Asiatics' who were British subjects became eligible for old-age or invalid pension (previously only those who were born in Australia and Indians born in British India were eligible).

Granting of invalid pension became subject to assessment for vocational or rehabilitation training, and invalid pension was paid to persons while undertaking such training, as they were deemed for pension purposes to be incapacitated for work.

The property exemption for a married pensioner was raised to that of a single pensioner, £50, instead of being half that amount (Table 2).

The Commissioner of Pensions was empowered to disregard for pension purposes the value of an interest in certain property which could not have been realised except at a considerable loss.

The Commissioner, for special reasons in particular cases, did not need to halve the joint property of a married pensioner couple to assess the net capital value of the accumulated property of each.

The maximum rate of pension was increased (Table 1). Institutional pension was increased (Table 7).

*Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1941* (No 48 of 1941)

Assent: 25 November 1941

Commenced: 11 December 1941

- 1942 Pensioners' deposits in the Government Savings Bank of NewSouth Wales ceased to be assignable to the Minister of State administering the *Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act*, so that the amount of these deposits was no longer excluded from the net capital value of their property.

Voluntary support by relatives of itself no longer rendered persons ineligible for age pension and did so for invalids only if the support was from parents.

The permissible income for a blind pensioner was set at an amount equivalent to the then existing Federal basic wage, £4.10.0 per week, and became adjustable in accordance with that wage.

Pension was no longer suspended when a pensioner entered hospital and the provisions requiring maintenance payments to be made to the hospital where a pensioner was in hospital for more than 28 days were repealed. Payment for hospital services became a private matter between the hospital and the pensioner patient. There was no change in policy in relation to inmates of hospitals for the insane or benevolent homes.

'Aboriginal natives' of Australia became eligible for age or invalid pension if they were exempt from the provisions of a state or territory law 'relating to the control of 'Aboriginal natives' or who lived in a state or territory which did not provide for such exemption but who were eligible on the grounds of character, standard of intelligence and development. Pacific Islanders known as 'Kanakas' also became eligible.

The maximum rate of pension was increased retrospective to 2 April 1942 (Table 1).

Institutional pension was increased, retrospective to 2 April 1942 (Table 7).

*Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1942* (No 3 of 1942)

Assent: 18 May 1942

Commenced: 9 July 1942

18 May 1942 (pension payments)

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From 1 July 1941 invalid and old-age pensions were exempted from income tax.

*Income Tax Assessment Act (No 2) 1942* (No 50 of 1942)

Assent: 6 October 1942

Commenced: 6 October 1942

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- 1943 Funeral benefit of up to £10 became payable for the funeral expenses of a deceased old-age or invalid pensioner except where funeral expenses were paid by a contributory funeral benefit fund (other than a friendly society).

A wife's allowance became payable, subject to the means test, to the wife of an invalid pensioner or of an old-age pensioner who was permanently incapacitated for work, where the wife was the legal wife of the pensioner, was living with him and did not receive an old-age, invalid or service pension. The provision under which permanently incapacitated males who had reached 60 but not 65 years of age received age rather than invalid pension was deleted. The wife was not required to satisfy any tests regarding age, character, nationality or length of residence. Wife's allowance was not payable where the husband was in a benevolent asylum or in a hospital for the insane. The maximum rate of wife's allowance was set at 15 shillings per week (Table 3).

A child's allowance became payable free of means test to the wife of an invalid pensioner or of an old-age pensioner who was permanently incapacitated for work, for the first or unendowed child under 16 years. (Child endowment was payable only for second and subsequent children of all families.) The wife was required to be the legal wife of the pensioner, living with her husband, have the custody, care and control of one or more children and be in receipt of wife's allowance or eligible for wife's allowance except for the operation of the means test, or herself an invalid pensioner. An invalid pensioner (or permanently incapacitated old-age pensioner) who was a widower, or living apart from his wife, also became eligible to receive the allowance if he had custody of the children. Child's allowance was not payable to a person receiving a service pension or where the wife or pensioner husband was an inmate of a benevolent asylum or hospital for the insane. The rate of child's allowance was set at 5 shillings per week (Table 6).

*Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1943* (No 14 of 1943)

Assent: 29 March 1943

Commenced: 1 April 1943

8 July 1943 (wife's allowance and child's allowance)

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On 1 September 1943 an agreement with New Zealand for limited reciprocity of old-age and invalid pensions came into force. The more restrictive conditions of the pension laws of each country applied, whether as to residence or otherwise, and the rate of pension was not to exceed the maximum rate of pension payable in the country with the lower maximum rate.

*Invalid and Old-age Pensions (Reciprocity with New Zealand) Act 1943*  
(No 36 of 1943)

Assent: 3 July 1943

Proclaimed commencement: 1 September 1943

- 1944 Pensioners who were imprisoned became subject to suspension of pension rather than cancellation. Any instalment falling due during imprisonment might be forfeited. Where there was a dependent wife or child any such suspended or forfeited pension or portion thereof could be paid to the wife or child or some other approved person for their benefit.

The permissible income for a blind pensioner was set at a fixed amount of £5 per week, the link with the basic wage being removed.

The cost of living adjustment for old-age and invalid pension was discontinued.

The standard maximum rate of pension was fixed at £1.7.0 per week, the amount which had actually been payable following cost of living adjustment in August 1943 (Table 1).

Institutional pension was increased (Table 7).

*Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1944* (No 16 of 1944)

Assent: 6 April 1944

Commenced: 6 April 1944

17 February 1944 (permissible income for blind pensioners)

- 1945 The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7).

*Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1945* (No 7 of 1945)

Assent: 27 June 1945

Commenced: 27 June 1945

- 1946 The following items were exempted in assessing the value of accumulated property, in addition to the existing provision for the exemption of the value of a pensioner's home:

- the value of any furniture and personal effects
- the surrender value of any life insurance policy up to a limit of £200
- the capital value of any life interest or annuity
- the value of contingent interest
- the present value of any reversionary interests up to a total value of £500
- the value of any property to which the pensioner or spouse was entitled from the estate of a deceased person but which had not yet been received.

Claimants for invalid pension who were adequately maintained by their parents were no longer disqualified for pension unless they were under 21 years of age.

Permissible income for pensioners other than the blind, and for recipients of wife's allowance, was increased to £1 per week; and to £5.7.6 per week for blind pensioners. The upper limit of property for pension and wife's allowance was raised to £650; the existing scale of deduction from pension was retained in respect of property valued at up to £400 (£1 for every £10 of property in excess of £50); thereafter the rate of reduction became £2 per annum for every complete £10 between £400 and £650 (Table 2).

*Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act 1946* (No 26 of 1946)

Assent: 13 August 1946

Commenced: 13 August 1946

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1947 The old-age pension was re-named 'age pension'.

Specific racial disqualifications (other than those relating to Aboriginal Australians) were removed.

The residence requirements were broadened to include as periods of residence absences attributable to a war or absences during which the person remained a resident for taxation purposes.

Eligibility for invalid pension was widened by the provision that a claimant was regarded as being invalided in Australia if incapacity or blindness occurred during temporary absence or, where incapacity or blindness (in addition to congenital incapacity or blindness) occurred before his arrival in Australia, if he was brought into Australia before he was three years old or had resided in Australia continuously for 20 years.

Wife's allowance became payable to 'dependent females'. A dependent female was a woman who had lived with a man as his wife on a permanent and bona fide domestic basis, although not legally married to him, for not less than three years.

Wife's or child's allowance became payable where a husband was in a benevolent asylum provided the wife was at least 50 years of age or had the custody, care and control of a child under 16 years.

Child's allowance became payable to a single invalid pensioner of either sex who had the custody, care and control of a child under 16 years.

Certain government health benefits were excluded from the definition of income for means test purposes, but the previous exemptions of payments from provident societies or other societies or associations were discontinued. Payments from friendly societies and trade unions remained exempt.

In determining a pensioner's assessable income, a deduction of up to 10 shillings per week became allowable for each dependent child under 16 years; the amount of the deduction was reducible by any amount received in respect of the child, including child endowment and child's allowance (Table 2). (In this compendium the deduction is referred to as the income disregard in respect of children.)

Funeral benefit (up to £10) became payable where any amount paid by a contributory funeral benefit fund (other than a friendly society) did not fully cover the cost of the funeral. Funeral benefit also became payable in respect of a claimant for pension who would have qualified except for his death.

The maximum rates of pension and of wife's allowance were increased (Tables 1 and 3).

Permissible income for blind pensioners was increased to £5.7.6 per week.

The maximum amount of pension payable to a pensioner inmate of an approved benevolent institution was increased (Table 7), any balance of the pension being payable to the institution authorities for the pensioner's maintenance.

*Social Services Consolidation Act 1947* (No 26 of 1947)

Assent: 11 June 1947

Commenced: 1 July 1947

- 1948 A specific limitation was placed on the total amount which a pensioner could receive by way of war or service pension plus civil pension (that is age, invalid or widow's pension). Where that limit was exceeded, the civil pension was reduced by the amount of the excess; the war pension was not affected. The ceiling rates were: £3.2.6 per week for an unmarried person or widower; £6.2.0 per week for a married couple, both of whom were pensioners (or the husband a pensioner and his wife receiving a wife's allowance); £5 per week for other married couples; £3.12.6 per week for a class A widow or £3.17.6 where no income was received for the first child; £3.2.6 per week for class B, C and D widows.

The maximum rate of pension was increased (Table 1).

Permissible income for pensioners was increased (Table 2). Permissible income for blind pensioners was increased to £5.17.6 per week.

The levels of exempt property and the upper limit of property were increased (Table 2).

Institutional pension was increased (Table 7).

*Social Services Consolidation Act 1948* (No 38 of 1948)

Assent: 19 October 1948

Commenced: 19 October 1948

Eligibility for invalid pension was extended to a person who became permanently incapacitated for work or permanently blind while resident outside Australia, if he had completed an aggregate of 20 years' residence in Australia at any time, whether before or after the permanent incapacity or blindness.

The Director-General of Social Services was empowered to provide full-scale facilities for the treatment and vocational training of invalid pensioners and claimants for invalid pensions, and of recipients of and claimants for unemployment and sickness benefit who might otherwise become unemployable, thus extending the 1941 requirement that



granting of invalid pension be subject to assessment for vocational or rehabilitation training. Pension or benefit continued during treatment but was replaced by a rehabilitation allowance at an equivalent rate during training. Training allowance and living-away-from-home allowance were also payable.

Maintenance payments for pensioners in benevolent institutions were not payable to institutions covered under the *Hospital Benefits Act 1945–1947*.

*Social Services Consolidation Act (No 2) 1948* (No 69 of 1948)

Assent: 10 December 1948

Commenced: 10 December 1948

13 July 1950 (tuberculosis provisions) (see 1950)

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- 1949 On 15 April 1949 a revised reciprocal agreement was made with New Zealand superseding the 1943 agreement. The new agreement made reciprocal provisions for a wider range of benefits but only for pensioners who became permanent residents of the country concerned. Temporary pensioner residents were to be paid on an agency basis by the host country. Residence or permanent incapacity in New Zealand was deemed to be residence or permanent incapacity in Australia for the purposes of the reciprocal agreement. A reciprocal grant of pension could not be made unless the person would have been eligible for pension in the country of origin.

*Social Services (Reciprocity with New Zealand) Regulations Statutory Rules 1949*, No 42 Gazetted: 30 June 1949 Commenced: 1 July 1949

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From 1 July 1949 the Invalid and *Old-age Pensions (Reciprocity with New Zealand) Act 1943* was repealed. Savings provisions were contained in the *Social Services Act*.

The maximum rates of wife's allowance and child's allowance were increased (Tables 3 and 6).

*Social Services Consolidation Act 1949* (No 16 of 1949)

Assent: 29 June 1949

Commenced: 1 July 1949 (reciprocity section)

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- 1950 From 13 July 1950 the rate of tuberculosis allowance (which was first introduced in 1945 and administered by the Department of Health) was raised considerably and became a substitute for any age, invalid or widow's pension or unemployment, sickness or special benefit, rather than a supplement as before. The allowance was subject to an income test but the capital value of property owned was disregarded. The rate of allowance for a single person was £3.12.6 per week (£2.12.6 per week while undergoing treatment free of charge in an approved institution) and £6.10.0 per week for a married couple, plus 9 shillings per week for each dependent child under 16. Permissible income was £2 per week for a single person or double that for a married couple.

*Tuberculosis Act 1948* (No 46 of 1948)

Assent: 25 November 1948

Proclaimed commencement (Section 9): 13 July 1950



*Social Services Consolidation Act (No 2) 1948* (No 69 of 1948)

Assent: 10 December 1948

Commenced: 10 December 1948

13 July 1950 (tuberculosis provisions)

A Pensioner Medical Service scheme of free general practitioner medical services and medicines prescribed in the course of those services came into operation for pensioners—age, invalid, widow or service pensioners, and persons receiving tuberculosis allowance—and their dependants. Dependants included the wife of the pensioner; a woman living with the pensioner on a permanent and bona fide domestic basis, although not legally married to him, for not less than three years; and a child under the age of 16 years in the custody, care and control of the pensioner or the pensioner's spouse.

## National Health (Medical Services to Pensioners) Regulations

Statutory Rules 1950, No 50

Gazetted: 25 August 1950

Commenced: 25 August 1950

Permissible income for blind pensioners was increased to £8 per week.

The limit of the surrender value of a life insurance policy exempted in the computation of the value of accumulated property was raised from £200 to £500.

The ceiling limits on the total amount a pensioner could receive by way of war or service pension plus civil pension were raised to £3.10.0 per week for a single person; £6.10.0 per week in the case of a married couple both receiving a civil pension (including wife's allowance); and £5.7.6 per week for a married couple only one of whom was a pensioner.

The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7).

*Social Services Consolidation Act (No 2) 1950* (No 26 of 1950)

Assent: 27 November 1950

Commenced: 27 November 1950

- 1951 The Pensioner Medical Service scheme was extended to include the supply of all medicines prescribed by medical practitioners to pensioners and their dependants.

## National Health (Medicines for Pensioners) Regulations

Statutory Rules 1951, No 63

Gazetted: 29 June 1951

Commenced: 2 July 1951

The income disregard in respect of children was no longer reduced by child endowment and child's allowance; the maximum amount of the disregard was reduced from 10 shillings to 5 shillings per week (Table 2).

The Director-General of Social Services had the discretionary power to disregard the value of the whole, or part, of a pensioner's property where it was considered that special circumstances justified the action (an

example: where a pensioner had let his home and was unable to regain possession of it). Such a provision had existed in the case of widow's pension since 1942.

The level of the exemption under the property test of the current value of a reversionary interest in an estate was raised from £500 to £750.

In the computation of the value of accumulated property the surrender value of life insurance policies which could be disregarded was raised to £750.

The upper limit of property was raised (Table 2).

The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7).

Wife's allowance was increased (Table 3). Child's allowance was increased (Table 6).

Permissible income for blind pensioners was increased to £10 per week.

The ceiling limits on the total amount a pensioner could receive by way of war or service pension plus civil pension were raised to £4 per week for a single person; £7.5.0 per week for a married couple both receiving a civil pension (including wife's allowance); and £5.17.6 per week for a married couple only one of whom was a pensioner.

Funeral benefit of £10 could be paid in respect of the death of a person who was receiving or was a claimant for a tuberculosis allowance at the time of his death but who would have been eligible for an age or invalid pension if he had not been receiving or claiming the tuberculosis allowance.

People aged 16 and under 21 years who would have been eligible for invalid pension except that their parents were able to maintain them adequately, were granted the benefits of the rehabilitation scheme introduced in 1948.

*Social Services Consolidation Act 1951* (No 22 of 1951)

Assent: 31 October 1951

Commenced: 31 October 1951

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- 1952 Blind persons became eligible for part of the pension (£3 per week) free of means test while the balance of pension continued to be subject to the means test applicable to blind persons.

Persons aged 16 and under 21 years became eligible for invalid pension irrespective of whether adequate maintenance could be provided by parents.

In the definition of income, the exclusion of benefits received under the *Hospital Benefits Act* was extended to cover benefit payments received from registered hospital benefit organisations up to the amount of the hospital fees payable over and above Commonwealth hospital benefits.

Pensions continued to be payable to pensioners who left Australia to reside in an external territory of the Commonwealth of Australia (previously pensions were cancelled).

The concession in respect of occasional absences which were regarded as residence for the purposes of the age pension provisions was liberalised. Where a claimant had been a resident of Australia (although not continuously) for a total period exceeding 18 years he would be deemed to have been resident in Australia during occasional absences amounting in the aggregate to two years plus a period of six months for every year of residence in excess of 18 years.

The requirement for the granting of invalid pension that the claimant was residing in Australia when lodging the claim and had been continuously so resident for not less than five years, was liberalised: a claimant was deemed to have been resident in Australia during occasional absences not exceeding, in the aggregate, a period equal to one-tenth of the total of periods of residence and occasional absences.

The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7).

The ceiling limits on the total amount a pensioner could receive by way of war or service pension plus age or invalid pension were raised to £4.7.6 per week for an unmarried person; £8 per week for a married couple both receiving a civil pension; £7.17.6 per week for a married couple where the husband was receiving a civil pension and the wife a wife's allowance; and £6.5.0 per week for a married couple only one of whom was receiving a pension.

The rate of wife's allowance was increased (Table 3).

The income disregard in respect of children was increased (Table 2).

*Social Services Consolidation Act 1952* (No 41 of 1952)

Assent: 25 September 1952

Commenced: 25 September 1952

- 1953 Reversionary interests in estates were completely excluded from the definition of property for pension means test purposes.

Benefits from registered organisations under the medical benefits scheme for pharmaceutical, sickness or hospital benefits or for medical or dental services (including Commonwealth benefits) up to a limit of the total fees payable were excluded from the definition of income.

Blind persons with a child under 16 years and receiving only the means-test-free component of pension became eligible for child's allowance (Table 6).

The 1952 formula for treating occasional absences as residence was extended to allow the period credited under the formula to be taken into account with any other period or periods of residence, so as to give the claimant the longest possible period of continuous residence. Previously credits under the formula could be used to cover complete absences but not part of an absence.

A child who was born out of Australia during the temporary absence of his mother and was permanently incapacitated or permanently blind on arrival in Australia, was defined as having become permanently incapacitated or permanently blind in Australia.

The term ‘benevolent home’ was substituted for ‘benevolent asylum’ in the *Social Services Act*.

The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7).

The amount of property which a pensioner could possess without his pension being affected, and the limit of property value above which no pension was granted, were raised (Table 2). The scale of reduction of pension was altered to £1 per annum for every complete £10 between £150 and £450 and then £2 per annum for every complete £11 up to £1250. The reductions applied also to wife’s allowance.

Permissible income for a single pensioner was increased to £2 per week (Table 2); for a married pensioner whose spouse was not an age, invalid or service pensioner to £2.10.0 per week; and for wife’s allowance to £2.10.0 per week.

Where only one of a married couple was a pensioner, special provision was made to allow the sharing of the income of the couple for pension purposes. The couple could now have an income of £5 per week between them without reduction of pension, but if joint income exceeded that amount the rate of pension (and wife’s allowance, if any) was reduced by half the excess income. However they could not receive by way of income more than the maximum amount of income and pension of a married pensioner couple—that is £11 per week.

The limits on the total amount a pensioner could receive by way of war or service pension plus age or invalid pension were raised to £4.17.6 per week for an unmarried person; £8.17.6 per week for a married couple both receiving an age, invalid or service pension, or the husband receiving an age or invalid pension and the wife a wife’s allowance; and £7.10.0 per week for a married pensioner whose spouse was not receiving a pension or wife’s allowance.

In determining the cost of a funeral for the purposes of a claim for funeral benefit, any amount received from a contributory funeral benefit fund of a trade union was disregarded, in the same way as a similar payment from a friendly society.

*Social Services Consolidation Act 1953* (No 51 of 1.953)

Assent: 26 October 1953

Commenced: 26 October 1953

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1954 A reciprocal agreement with the United Kingdom came into force.

Persons residing in Australia who were in receipt of retirement or old-age pensions from the United Kingdom Ministry of National Insurance were generally entitled, subject to the means test and other conditions apart from residence (the residential requirements for Australian pensions were waived), to the United Kingdom pension supplemented by an Australian pension to bring the total payable up to the current rate for other Australian residents. The amount of the Australian supplement was less for wives who were not insured in the United Kingdom scheme in their own right, but who depended upon rights accruing from their husbands’ insurance or for persons who were not in full insurance status.

The same principles applied to persons who left the United Kingdom to reside in Australia before reaching pension age. If they were contributors to the United Kingdom National Insurance Scheme or the contributory old-age pensions scheme at the time of their departure, on reaching pension age they received a partial United Kingdom pension which, together with the Australian supplement, brought the total amount up to the full Australian pension rate if in full insurance status. In other circumstances an appropriate amount calculated on a pro rata basis was paid.

A person who was receiving a sickness benefit (United Kingdom) for an incapacity of a permanent nature was eligible on becoming permanently resident in Australia to receive an invalid pension, subject to the means test and other conditions apart from residence, at a rate not exceeding the Australian equivalent of the United Kingdom sickness benefit to which he would have been entitled had he remained in the United Kingdom.

A person who on leaving the United Kingdom was in full insurance status for sickness benefit of the indefinite class (a benefit comparable to Australian invalid pension) and who became permanently incapacitated or blind after taking up permanent residence in Australia, became immediately eligible for an invalid pension at the normal rate, subject to the means test and other conditions apart from residence.

Australian residents who were or became permanently resident in the United Kingdom were in general given insurance credits based on residence in Australia between the age of 16 years and pensionable age. Benefits were free of means test except for persons who were above or within five years of pension age (men 65, women 60) where the pension could not exceed the rate of age pension for which the person would have been qualified in Australia.

An Australian age pensioner leaving Australia to reside permanently in the United Kingdom was paid a United Kingdom retirement pension at the United Kingdom rate or the Australian rate under the means test, whichever was the lower.

Social Services (Reciprocity with United Kingdom) Regulations  
Statutory Rules 1954, No 8  
Gazetted: 28 January 1954  
Deemed commencement: 7 January 1954

The means test on age and invalid pension for permanently blind persons was removed.

A pensioner's income from property became exempt from the means test. This included rents, dividends and interest from investments.

Fortnightly pension instalments were adjusted to the nearest shilling.

Permissible income was increased (Table 2).

The amount of exempt property and the upper limit of property were raised (Table 2).

The scale for progressive reduction of age or invalid pension under the property means test was liberalised. The new scale became a taper of £1 per year for every complete £10 of property above £200 up to a limit of £1750.

The ceiling limits on the total amount a pensioner could receive by way of war or service pension plus age or invalid pension were raised to £5.12.6 per week for an unmarried pensioner; £9.12.6 per week for a married couple both receiving an age, invalid or service pension (including wife's allowance); and £8.5.0 per week for a married pensioner whose spouse was not receiving a pension or wife's allowance.

*Social Services Act 1954* (No 30 of 1954)

Assent: 6 October 1954

Commenced: 6 October 1954

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- 1955 The scheme introduced in 1948 for the treatment and vocational training of pensioners and beneficiaries was given the title of The Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service. Rehabilitation training was extended to persons aged 14 and 15 liable to become invalid pensioners, and to persons receiving tuberculosis allowances. Treatment and training could also be provided for 'private cases' on payment of costs. The rates of training and living-away-from-home allowances were increased. The allowance for books, equipment, appliances and tools of trade was raised to £40. Loans could be granted to persons who completed treatment or training to engage in suitable vocations at home.

*Social Services Act 1955* (No 15 of 1955)

Assent: 4 June 1955

Commenced: 4 June 1955

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The ceiling limit on the amount which persons could receive by way of age or invalid pension plus war pension was removed and war pension ranked only as income under the means test, thus allowing war pensioners to receive a civil pension at a higher rate than previously; but in the case of blind war pensioners ceiling limits were retained for single and married veterans. Any other income received by blind war pensioners did not affect age or invalid pension.

The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7).

*Social Services Act (No 2) 1955* (No 38 of 1955)

Assent: 19 October 1955

Commenced: 19 October 1955

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From 1 November 1955 a special means test applied limiting participation in the Pensioner Medical Service to those who would have been eligible for the maximum rate of pension under the income test in force at 31 December 1953. Thus pensioners with income of more than £2 per week, or £5 per week in the case of a married couple where only one was a pensioner, could not receive the benefits of the Pensioner Medical Service. Persons receiving tuberculosis allowance were not income-tested and pensioners already enrolled in the Service retained their entitlements.

*National Health Act 1955* (No 68 of 1955)

Assent: 4 November 1955

Commenced: 4 November 1955

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- 1956 The rate of pension for invalid pensioners and age pensioners who were permanently blind or permanently incapacitated for work was increased by 10 shillings per week, subject to the existing means test, for each child under the age of 16 years after the first who was in the pensioner's custody, care and control. For a married pensioner couple only the husband was eligible for the additional pension (Table 6).

The following repatriation allowances were excluded from the definition of income for pension purposes: decoration allowance, recreation transport allowance, and an allowance paid towards the cost, maintenance or running expenses of a motor vehicle provided by the Repatriation Department for a seriously incapacitated ex-member of the Defence Force.

*Social Services Act 1956* (No 67 of 1956)

Assent: 5 October 1956

Commenced: 5 October 1956

- 1957 The limit placed on the amount a blind war pensioner could receive by way of war pension plus invalid pension was lifted to permit the pensioner to receive the additional pension for children after the first. The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7).

*Social Services Act 1957* (No 46 of 1957)

Assent: 17 October 1957

Commenced: 17 October 1957

- 1958 A new reciprocal agreement with the United Kingdom came into operation. The revised provisions included:

Residence in the United Kingdom replaced national insurance status as the basis of eligibility for grant of pension in Australia - that is 20 years' continuous residence for age pension, five years for invalid pension.

'Pro rata' assessments for married women and other persons who were not fully insured were eliminated. All residentially qualified persons could have their United Kingdom pensions supplemented, subject to the means test, by an Australian pension to bring the total to the Australian rate.

Invalid pensioners and their wives and children became entitled to continue receiving pension while temporarily in the United Kingdom, like age and widow pensioners.

Permanent incapacity or blindness occurring in the United Kingdom was deemed to have occurred in Australia.

Australians permanently living in the United Kingdom were eligible for full United Kingdom retirement pension irrespective of the rate of age pension they were receiving in Australia.

*Social Services (Reciprocity with United Kingdom) Regulations*

Statutory Rules 1958, No 30

Gazetted: 24 April 1958

Deemed commencement: 1 April 1958



Supplementary assistance was introduced to assist those pensioners who were almost entirely dependent on their pension. It was payable at the rate of 10 shillings per week to single pensioners, and to married pensioners where only one of the spouses was receiving a pension or allowance. It was available only to those who paid rent or board and lodging, whose income was not more than 10 shillings per week, and whose property under the means test was not sufficient to affect the rate of pension (Table 1).

The exemption of periodical payments or benefits by way of gifts or allowances from the definition of income for pension purposes was extended to include gifts or allowances from a brother or sister of a pensioner as well as from a father, mother or daughter.

Amounts received for medical, hospital or dental treatment from organisations registered under the *National Health Act* were completely exempted from the definition of income under the means test instead of being exempted only up to the total amount of fees payable.

The upper limit of property value beyond which no pension was granted was raised. The previous scale of deductions was retained but extended to the new upper limit (Table 2).

*Social Services Act 1958* (No 44 of 1958)

Assent: 29 September 1958

Proclaimed commencement: 15 October 1958

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- 1959 Clothing allowance payable by the Repatriation Department was exempted from the definition of income for age and invalid pension purposes.

The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7).

The definition of income for pension purposes was amended to specify that benefit payments from friendly societies and trade unions which were exempt for the purposes of the income test did not include payment of annuities.

- 1960 Pensioners and beneficiaries and persons supplying confidential information to the department in its investigation of claims for pension or benefit were given added protection through an amendment to the Act enabling a plea of privilege to be made in respect of all the documents in the departmental file.

Restrictions on Aboriginals eligibility for pension were removed and Aboriginals, other than those who were ‘nomadic or primitive’, became eligible on the same basis as other members of the community.

*Social Services Act 1959* (No 57 of 1959)

Assent: 30 September 1959

Commenced: 30 September 1959

Proclaimed commencement: 2 February 1960 (amendments relating to Aboriginals, and production of documents in Court)

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The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7).

- 1961 The merged means test was instituted for age and invalid pensions and wife's allowance. It replaced the separate tests on income and property which applied previously. Under the merged means test a property component equivalent to £1 for each complete £10 of the value of a pensioner's property above £200 was added to the annual rate of income to determine a sum known as 'means as assessed' (Table 2). Means as assessed could consist entirely of income or entirely of the property component or of various combinations of both. The rate of pension payable was calculated by deducting from the appropriate maximum annual rate of pension the amount by which means as assessed exceeded £182 (Table 2).

If a pensioner had no income he could receive a full pension if the value of his property did not exceed £2020, and beyond that pension at a reducing rate until the property value reached an upper limit of £4620. If a pensioner had no assessable property, he could receive a full pension if his income did not exceed £182, and beyond that pension at a reducing rate until his income reached an upper limit of £442 per annum.

*Social Services Act 1960* (No 45 of 1960)

Assent: 27 September 1960

Commenced: 27 September 1960

Proclaimed commencement: 1 March 1961 (means test provisions)

The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7).

The maximum rates of wife's allowance and child's allowance were increased (Tables 3 and 6).

*Social Services Act 1961* (No 45 of 1961)

Assent: 27 September 1961

Commenced: 27 September 1961

- 1962 A person could qualify for age pension on residence grounds if he had completed 10 years' continuous residence in Australia at any time. If continuous residence was less than 10 years but more than five years, the period of continuous residence otherwise required was reduced by the aggregate of the periods of residence in Australia in excess of 10 years.

A person's permanent incapacity for work or blindness which occurred outside Australia was considered as having occurred in Australia if continuous residence in Australia exceeded 10 years at any time. This period of continuous residence was reduced by the amount of total residence in Australia in excess of 10 years, provided there was a period of continuous residence of at least five years.

*Social Services Act 1962* (No 1 of 1962)

Assent: 1 March 1962

Commenced: 1 March 1962

A woman permanently resident in Australia was considered for age pension purposes as being resident in Australia for any periods of her marriage during which she was absent from Britain and in which her husband paid, or was credited with, contributions to the British scheme.

Where absence from Australia was for the primary purpose of temporary residence in Britain, payment of Australian pension and wife's and child's allowances could be continued during such temporary residence and for the periods of the journeys between the two countries.

Invalids who migrated from Britain and had no insurance status (eg permanently incapacitated or blind from birth) became eligible for an invalid pension (together with wife's and child's allowances) at a rate not exceeding that of the British sickness benefit applicable to the family.

Social Services (Reciprocity with United Kingdom) Regulations  
Statutory Rules 1962, No 85  
Gazetted: 27 September 1962  
Commenced: 1 October 1962

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- 1963 Eligibility for child's allowance and additional pension for children was extended to include children who were receiving full-time education at a school, college or university and who were wholly or substantially dependent on the pensioner and not in receipt of an invalid pension, up to the end of the calendar year in which they turned 18. The income disregard in respect of children was also extended to cover these students.

Wife's allowance was increased to £3 per week (Table 3) to bring it into line with the rate of additional benefit payable in respect of the dependent wife of an unemployment or sickness beneficiary.

Additional pension payable for each child after the first was increased to 15 shillings per week (Table 6). This brought all rates of additional payments for children of pensioners and beneficiaries, including child's allowance, to a uniform level. It also increased the limit of income which a pensioner might have before pension ceased by 5 shillings per week for each child after the first.

Age and invalid pension became payable at a standard rate for an unmarried person and a married rate for a married person. The standard rate was payable to a single, widowed or divorced person or a married person whose spouse was not in receipt of an age, invalid or service pension, a wife's allowance, an unemployment, sickness or special benefit or a tuberculosis allowance. The standard rate was £5.15.0 per week and the married rate was £5.5.0 per week (Table 1). The portion of standard rate of pension payable to a pensioner in a benevolent home became £2 per week; the portion of the married rate was £1.17.0 per week (Table 7).

*Social Services Act 1963* (No 46 of 1963)

Assent: 25 September 1963

Commenced: 25 September 1963

Proclaimed commencement: 7 November 1963 (standard rate of pension and higher additional pension for children)

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- 1964 The standard and married rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7).

*Social Services Act (No 2) 1964* (No 63 of 1964)

Assent: 23 September 1964

Commenced: 23 September 1964

Telephone rental concessions for pensioners were introduced. A reduction of one-third of the annual rental for a telephone became available to an age, invalid or widow pensioner (and certain others including permanently blind persons) who lived alone, or with another eligible person or persons, or with another person whose income did not exceed a specified amount.

Statutory Rules 1965, No 14, amending Regulation 29 of the Telephone Regulations of the *Post and Telegraph Act 1901–1961*

Gazetted: 4 February 1965

Deemed commencement: 1 October 1964

- 1965 Eligibility for the standard rate of pension was extended to a married pensioner whose wife received a wife's allowance.

Eligibility for a wife's allowance was extended to the wife of any age pensioner as well as an invalid pensioner or permanently incapacitated or permanently blind age pensioner, where she had one or more children under the age of 16 years.

Eligibility for child's allowance and additional pension for children was extended to all age pensioners in addition to invalid pensioners.

Guardian's allowance was introduced to provide for an unmarried age or invalid pensioner with one or more children under 16 years an allowance similar to the mother's allowance payable to a Class A widow pensioner. An unmarried person included a widowed or divorced person. Guardian's allowance, like mother's allowance, was subject to the means test and was payable at £2 per week (Table 6).

The upper age limit for payments for a student child of a pensioner was raised to the day on which the student turned 21 years. This brought the age of students for pension purposes into line with that which applied for child endowment purposes. The income disregard in respect of children was also extended to cover these students.

The rate of supplementary assistance was increased from 10 shillings to £1 per week (Table 1). A means test was introduced under which the maximum rate of supplementary assistance was reduced by the amount of means as assessed in excess of £26. Means as assessed for supplementary assistance purposes had the same meaning as for pension purposes. Eligibility for supplementary assistance was extended to an age or invalid pensioner whose wife received a wife's allowance; and to unmarried inmates of benevolent homes (Table 7).

Funeral benefit of up to £20 became payable to an age, invalid, or widow pensioner or a woman receiving a wife's allowance who was responsible

for the funeral costs of an age, invalid or widow pensioner, a non-pensioner spouse or a dependent child. Payments to non-pensioners remained at a maximum of £10.

The amount of sustenance allowance payable by the Repatriation Commission became exempt from income for means test purposes.

*Social Services Act 1965* (No 57 of 1965)

Assent: 1 October 1965

Commenced: 1 October 1965

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- 1966 Pensioners were no longer subject to the special means test for the Pensioner Medical Service; all pensioners and their dependants who satisfied the pensions means test for payment of a full or part pension became eligible for the Pensioner Medical Service.

*National Health Act 1965* (No 100 of 1965)

Assent: 13 December 1965

Commenced: 13 December 1965

1 January 1966 (PMS provisions)

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The provision disqualifying ‘aliens’ from receiving an age or invalid pension was repealed.

The provision disqualifying Aboriginals who were considered to be living a ‘nomadic or primitive’ life from receiving a pension was repealed.

The income disregard in respect of children was increased (Table 2).

A pensioner on discharge from a mental hospital became entitled to payment of pension for up to 12 weeks of the period of hospitalisation. A pensioner who was absent from a mental hospital for a continuous period of more than six days could have his pension restored for the period of his absence; if absent for four weeks or more payment of arrears of pension for up to 12 weeks of the period of hospitalisation could be made.

The maximum standard and married rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7).

*Social Services Act 1966* (No 41 of 1966)

Assent: 30 September 1966

Commenced: 30 September 1966

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- 1967 Sheltered employment allowance was introduced. It was payable to a disabled person engaged in sheltered employment at an approved workshop if he were qualified to receive an invalid pension or would be likely to become qualified if not engaged in sheltered employment. The allowance plus related payments, eg wife’s or child’s allowance, and the person’s earnings were paid by the workshop as one composite payment. The maximum rate of the allowance was the same as for invalid pension but the means test allowed for more liberal treatment of workshop earnings by disregarding \$1 of every \$2 of these earnings beyond \$10 per week for an unmarried person, and beyond \$17 and up to \$25 for a married person. The allowance ceased after earnings reached \$36 and \$47 a week respectively.

Under the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service artificial replacements, aids and appliances were made more readily available to rehabilitees at home or at work. Provision was made for recovery of costs of treatment or training according to the person's ability to pay, other than in cases of eligibility for free rehabilitation.

The limit of \$80 allowed for books, equipment, appliances or tools of trade was increased to allow for \$80 to be expended in any period of 12 months.

The amount of means as assessed which permitted the payment of a full pension was increased (Table 2).

*Social Services Act 1967* (No 10 of 1967)

Assent: 21 April 1967

Commenced: 21 April 1967

Proclaimed commencement: 30 June 1967 (sheltered employment allowance)

- 1968 A married age or invalid pensioner became eligible for standard rate of pension instead of married rate when the pensioner's spouse was in receipt of an unemployment or sickness benefit. These pensioners also became eligible for supplementary assistance.

On the death of one member of a married pensioner couple, the surviving pensioner spouse became eligible to receive, for up to six fortnightly instalments, the equivalent of the two pensions that would have been paid if the spouse had not died. For the purpose of payment, the term 'pensioner' in relation to the deceased meant a person who was, immediately prior to death, in receipt of an age, invalid or service pension, a wife's allowance, a rehabilitation allowance or a sheltered employment allowance. It also included a person who was, immediately prior to her husband's death, in receipt of a wife's allowance or who would have been in receipt of a wife's allowance but for the receipt by her husband of a sheltered employment or rehabilitation allowance.

The means-test-free child's allowance for the first child was abolished and replaced by additional pension at the same rate, thus placing pension for the first child on the same basis as for other children in the family (Table 6).

The maximum standard and married rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7).

Wife's allowance was increased (Table 3).

*Social Services Act 1968* (No 65 of 1968)

Assent: 27 September 1968

Commenced: 27 September 1968

- 1969 The means test which applied for age and invalid pension purposes was varied so that only half the amount of means as assessed in excess of the permissible amount was deducted from the annual rate of pension. The amended means test became known as the tapered means test.

Sheltered employment allowance became subject to the same means test as that for invalid pension.

The income disregard in respect of children was increased (Table 2).

Following the introduction of the tapered means test funeral benefit at the higher rate for pensioners (\$40) was available to or in respect of only those pensioners who would have been eligible for pensions under the means test in operation immediately before the introduction of the tapered means test. A person who became eligible for a pension only as a result of the tapered means test was eligible for funeral benefit of \$20 if he paid for the funeral of another pensioner who would not have been entitled to pension but for the introduction of the tapered means test. The Pensioner Medical Service and fringe benefits also became subject to that means test. Persons who qualified for pension only as a result of the tapered means test were ineligible for the Pensioner Medical Service and fringe benefits.

Additional pension for second and later children was increased (Table 6).

Guardian's allowance payable to an unmarried pensioner with the custody, care and control of a child under the age of six years or an invalid child requiring full-time care and attention was increased from \$4 to \$6 per week. The rate remained at \$4 per week in other cases (Table 6).

An age or invalid pensioner could receive pension for an increased period of up to 30 weeks' absence from Australia.

The maximum standard and married rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7).

*Social Services Act 1969* (No 94 of 1969)

Assent: 27 September 1969

Commenced: 27 September 1969

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- 1970 Each spouse of a married pensioner couple became eligible for the standard rate of pension where the couple had lost the economies of living together because either, or both, had to leave their matrimonial home due to illness or infirmity and the situation was likely to be permanent. Persons so qualifying for the standard rate each became eligible, subject to means, for supplementary assistance if they paid rent or lodging charges.

*Social Services Act 1970* (No 2 of 1970)

Assent: 24 March 1970

Commenced: 24 March 1970

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The maximum standard and married rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7).

*Social Services Act (No 2) 1970* (No 59 of 1970)

Assent: 28 September 1970

Commenced: 28 September 1970

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- 1971 Rates of pension were increased. Persons receiving the maximum rate received the full increase of 50 cents per week; persons who had been receiving a pension within 50 cents of the maximum rate were granted partial increases. Other pensioners received no increase (Table 1). The increases also applied to those receiving sheltered employment allowances.

*Social Services Act 1971 (No 16 of 1971)*

Assent: 7 April 1971

Deemed commencement: 1 April 1971

Additional pension for children was increased to a uniform rate for each child (Table 6).

Rates of pension were increased. Persons receiving the maximum rate received the full increase (\$1.25 per week standard rate, \$1.00 per week married rate); persons who had been receiving a pension within \$1.25/\$1.00 of the maximum rate received partial increases. Other pensioners received no increase (Table 1). The rate of institutional pension was increased (Table 7).

Wife's allowance was increased (Table 3).

*Social Services Act (No 2) 1971 (No 67 of 1971)*

Assent: 29 September 1971

Commenced: 29 September 1971

- 1972 Rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7) and the 1971 provisions restricting pension increases to persons receiving pensions at or near the maximum rate were removed. As a result of these changes those pensioners affected by the 1971 provisions thus became eligible for pension increases of between \$1.00 and \$2.75 per week (standard) and 75 cents and \$2.25 per week (married).

*Social Services Act (No 2) 1972 (No 14 of 1972)*

Assent: 24 April 1972

Commenced: 24 April 1972

Provision was made for age and invalid pensions and wife's allowance to be paid to persons who went to other countries for temporary or permanent residence where corresponding pensions of those countries were payable to their former residents in Australia. To qualify, a total of 20 years' residence in Australia after the age of 16 years was required. This did not apply in the case of an invalid pensioner whose permanent incapacity or blindness occurred during his residence in Australia; or in the case of a woman receiving wife's allowance; or in the case of a widow pensioner where she and her husband were residing permanently in Australia when he died. Countries with which Australia entered into agreements under this provision were Italy, Greece, Malta and Turkey.

*Social Services Act (No 3) 1972 (No 53 of 1972)*

Assent: 7 June 1972

Commenced: 7 June 1972



The amount of means as assessed which permitted payment of a full pension was increased (Table 2).

Age and invalid pensioners who received superannuation pensions or annuities became entitled to concessional treatment for these payments under the means test. The annual rate of payment was converted, if it was to the financial advantage of the pensioner, to a property value according to a specific conversion factor which varied with age.

Supplementary assistance was increased to a maximum of \$4 per week (Table 1) and became payable to married pensioner couples (\$2 per week to each partner) under the same conditions as for single pensioners.

Wife's allowance was replaced by wife's pension, which became payable to the wife of an age or invalid pensioner if she was otherwise ineligible for pension in her own right. Wife's pension was subject to the means test and the maximum rate was set at the married rate of pension (Table 3).

The income disregard in respect of children was increased (Table 2).

The maximum standard and married rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7).

*Social Services Act (No 4) 1972* (No 79 of 1972)

Assent: 27 September 1972

Commenced: 27 September 1972

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- 1973 Guardian's allowance and additional pension for full-time dependent students of a pensioner became payable irrespective of the age of the student (the age limit of 21 years was removed). Funeral benefit was also payable in respect of the death of such students.

Where one partner in a married couple was a pensioner and the other a beneficiary, age and invalid pensions and unemployment and sickness benefits were disregarded for the purpose of assessing the other pension or benefit.

The maximum standard and married rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7).

Wife's pension was increased (Table 3).

*Social Services Act 1973* (No 1 of 1973)

Assent: 16 March 1973

Commenced: 16 March 1973

Deemed commencement: 14 December 1972 (age, invalid and wife's pensions)

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Legislation for reciprocal portable pensions which operated from 7 June 1972 was superseded by legislation enabling pensions granted in Australia to continue in any country in which the pensioner chose to live. Former residents of Australia who had been granted pensions on their return to Australia could not receive pensions overseas if they again left Australia within 12 months of their return. Funeral benefits were available to pensioners receiving pensions overseas, but not supplementary assistance or fringe benefits.



*Social Services Act (No 2) 1973* (No 26 of 1973)

Assent: 8 May 1973

Commenced: 8 May 1973

The limit of \$80 per 12-month period on the cost of books, equipment, appliances or tools of trade which could be provided in rehabilitation treatment and training was removed.

*Social Services Act (No 3) 1973* (No 48 of 1973)

Assent: 14 June 1973

Commenced: 14 June 1973

As a result of some pensions becoming taxable (see page 43) provision was made under the *Social Services Act* for income tax to be deducted from pension if so requested by the pensioner.

Transitional benefit for the aged blind became payable to permanently blind age pensioners and invalid pensioners of age pension age. This benefit supplemented the basic pension and was designed to alleviate the financial detriment which blind pensioners might experience as a result of their pensions becoming taxable. It was payable free of means test, initially at the rate of \$3 per week, and was taxable.

The means test on age pension payable to those persons aged 75 years and over was removed. (Wife's pension, guardian's allowance, additional pension for children and supplementary assistance continued to be subject to the appropriate means test, and additional pension for the first child of a blind age or invalid pensioner remained free of means test.)

The maximum standard and married rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7).

Wife's pension and additional pension for children were increased (Tables 3 and 6).

A training allowance was introduced for part-time trainees under the rehabilitation scheme and the allowance to married trainees was extended to unmarried trainees having the care of one or more children. Training and living-away-from-home allowances were increased.

*Social Services Act (No 4) 1973* (No 103 of 1973)

Assent: 26 September 1973

Commenced: 26 September 1973

Pensions payable to those persons of age pension age (65 years and over for men, 60 years for women) became subject to income tax from 1 July 1973. Wife's pension payable to women under 60 years of age whose husbands were of age pension age also became taxable. Supplementary assistance and additional payments for dependants remained exempt.

*Income Tax Assessment Act (No 5) 1973* (No 165 of 1973)

Assent: 11 December 1973

Commenced: 11 December 1973

From 26 September 1973 the levels of means as assessed at which entitlement to the Pensioner Medical Service and fringe benefits ceased were frozen at \$1716 for a single pensioner and \$2990 for a pensioner couple (these amounts being higher where there were children). These amounts represented the level of means as assessed at which the pension payable from September 1973 would have ceased under the pensions means test in operation prior to September 1969. This special means test did not apply to blind age or invalid pensioners.

*National Health Act (No 2) 1973* (No 202 of 1973)

Assent: 18 December 1973

Commenced: 18 December 1973

*Health Insurance Act 1973* (No 42 of 1974)

Assent: 8 August 1974

Commenced: 8 August 1974

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- 1974 Australian age and invalid pensions became payable to certain persons who lived overseas. Eligible persons were those who had lived an aggregate of 30 years in Australia, were of age pension age, or within five years of that age at the time of departure from Australia, or had become permanently incapacitated for work or blind in Australia, had left Australia before 8 May 1973 and were in special need of financial assistance. The claimant was required to satisfy the ordinary conditions for grant of pension in Australia.

The maximum standard and married rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7).

*Social Services Act 1974* (No 2 of 1974)

Assent: 22 March 1974

Commenced: 22 March 1974

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The maximum standard and married rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7).

The transitional benefit for aged blind pensioners was halved to \$1.50 per week. The first payment at the lower rate was made on 8 August 1974.

*Social Services Act (No 2) 1974* (No 23 of 1974)

Assent: 31 July 1974

Commenced: 31 July 1974

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The provisions that a pension was not payable if the claimant was not of good character or was not deserving of a pension were removed.

Persons who became permanently incapacitated for work or blind in Australia were no longer required to have had a period of residence in Australia before qualifying for invalid pension.

Persons receiving sheltered employment allowance became eligible for an incentive allowance in lieu of supplementary assistance. Incentive allowance was payable free of means test and at the rate of \$5 per week. This allowance was designed to encourage more people to enter sheltered employment and to eliminate the disincentive effect that the

supplementary assistance means test had on earnings of sheltered workshop employees.

Changes were made to the Act to enable the rates of training and living-away-from-home allowances payable under the rehabilitation provisions to persons undergoing vocational training, to be brought into line with those payable under the National Employment and Training System (NEAT) and thus were no longer tied to the rates of *Social Services Act* pensions. (NEAT rates were based on the average adult male award and subject to quarterly adjustment according to movements in that wage.)

The rate of additional pension for children was increased (Table 6).

The rate of supplementary assistance was increased (Table 1). Provision was made to restrict the amount of supplementary assistance payable to the amount paid for rent or lodging.

*Social Services Act (No 3) 1974* (No 91 of 1974)

Assent: 1 November 1974

Commenced: 1 November 1974

- 1975 The means test on age pension was removed for persons aged 70 to 74 inclusive. (Wife's pension, guardian's allowance, additional pension for children and supplementary assistance remained subject to the appropriate means test, and additional pension for the first child of a blind age or invalid pensioner remained free of means test.)

Transitional benefit for the aged blind introduced in 1973 ceased to be payable, as from 1 May 1975.

The maximum standard and married rates of pension and institutional pension were increased with retrospective effect from 1 May (Tables 1 and 7).

Additional pension for children was increased (Table 6).

*Social Services Act 1975* (No 34 of 1975)

Assent: 19 May 1975

Commenced: 19 May 1975

The Pensioner Medical Service was superseded with the introduction of Medibank from 1 July 1975, and pensioners became entitled to the full range of medical services including those of specialists. Free Pharmaceuticals continued under the same conditions that had applied under the Pensioner Medical Service arrangements and eligible pensioners were issued with Pensioner Health Benefit cards.

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From 9 September 1975 residence in an external territory other than Norfolk Island was counted as residence in Australia. Permanent incapacity for work, blindness or widowhood of a former resident of an external territory other than Norfolk Island occurring in that territory was deemed as occurring in Australia.

*Social Services Act (No 2) 1975* (No 101 of 1975)

Assent: 9 September 1975

Commenced: 9 September 1975

The de facto wife of an age or invalid pensioner no longer had to be living with her partner on a permanent basis for at least three years before she qualified for a wife's pension.

The minimum rate of age, invalid or wife's pension payable was set at \$1 per fortnight.

The maximum standard and married rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7) according to increases in the Consumer Price Index between the December quarter 1974 and the June quarter 1975.

Additional pension for children was increased (Table 6).

*Social Services Act (No 3) 1975* (No 110 of 1975)

Assent: 27 October 1975

Commenced: 27 October 1975

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- 1976 The training component and living-away-from-home allowance payable to full-time trainees under the National Employment and Training System (NEAT) were excluded from income for pension purposes.

The maximum standard and married rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7).

*Social Services Amendment Act 1976* (No 26 of 1976)

Assent: 30 April 1976

Commenced: 30 April 1976

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Pensioners entitled to a Pensioner Health Benefits card, including those gaining entitlement following the change to the income test, were exempt from payment of the health insurance levy introduced on 1 October 1976 with modifications to Medibank, and remained entitled to standard Medibank medical and hospital cover. Where only one member of a married couple was eligible for the Pensioner Health Benefits card the levy was payable at half rates.

*Health Insurance Levy Assessment Act (No 2) 1976* (No 98 of 1976)

Assent: 29 September 1976

Commenced: 29 September 1976

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Regulation 8A, Income Tax Regulations, inserted 30 June 1977

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The maximum standard and married rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7).

Pensions became subject to automatic increases twice yearly. In May of each year pensions were to be increased by the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index between the preceding June and December quarters and in November by the percentage increase between the preceding December and June quarters. The first increases under the new legislation took place in May 1977 (Table 1).

The means test on eligibility for pension was replaced by an income test, which took into account income alone. The test excluded the value of property from the calculation of pension eligibility but included income

derived from that property. Transitional arrangements allowed pensioners to continue at their previous rate of pension if they would otherwise suffer a loss of pension because of the change to the income test. Concessional treatment of superannuation pension was discontinued. The means test for funeral benefit was also replaced by an equivalent income test.

The provision was repealed whereby an age or invalid pensioner was disqualified from receipt of pension if he deprived himself of property or income in order to obtain a pension. Under new provisions, if the Director-General considered that a claimant or pensioner or spouse had directly or indirectly deprived himself of income in order to qualify for a pension or for a higher rate of pension the income so disposed of could be deemed to be income of the claimant or pensioner.

*Social Services Amendment Act (No 3) 1976* (No 111 of 1976)

Assent: 29 October 1976

Commenced: 29 October 1976

25 November 1976 (income test)

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- 1977 The scope of rehabilitation training was extended to include assistance to all handicapped people, within the broad working age group, who would be able to benefit substantially from rehabilitation even though unable to rejoin the workforce, such as those undertaking or resuming household duties or leading an independent or semi-independent life in their own home.

*Social Services Amendment Act 1977* (No 159 of 1977)

Assent: 10 November 1977

Commenced: 10 November 1977

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- 1978 The maximum rate of pension became subject to indexation adjustment only once a year each November (instead of the previous twice yearly adjustment) in accordance with the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index between the two previous June quarters. The first (and only) increase on this annual basis took place in November 1979 (Table 1).

The rate of pension payable to those aged 70 years or more free of income test was fixed at \$51.45 for a single pensioner and \$42.90 for a married person. These pensioners could receive a higher rate of pension if qualified after application of the income test. This special income test did not apply to blind age and invalid pensioners.

Additional pension for dependent students ceased to be payable for students 25 years of age or more.

Additional pension for children ceased to be payable unless the child was living in Australia (or temporarily abroad), was living overseas with the pensioner, or was not living in Australia but the pensioner was living in Australia and intended to bring the child to Australia as soon as it was reasonably practicable to do so. This had to be within four years.

*Social Services Amendment Act 1978* (No 128 of 1978)

Assent: 26 October 1978

Commenced: 26 October 1978

1 November 1978 (pension rate adjustment)

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- 1979 Payment of wife's pension was extended to women in approved benevolent homes, or to women who had no child in their care or who were under 50 years of age where their age or invalid pensioner husbands were in benevolent homes. Wife's pension was not to be paid if the wife or her husband were inmates of mental hospitals.

The same legislation provided for wife pensioners to be paid the standard rate instead of the married rate of pension where illness or infirmity forced the couple to live apart indefinitely, thereby causing the couple greater living expenses. In this case, supplementary assistance could be paid at the maximum rate to each partner.

The income levels at which eligibility for funeral benefits and fringe benefits, including Pensioner Health Benefit cards, ceased were raised from \$33 to \$40 per week for single pensioners and from \$57.50 to \$68 per week for married pensioner couples. These amounts were higher in the case of sheltered employment allowances and where there were children.

The maximum standard and married rates of pension were increased (Tables 1 and 7).

The maximum rate of pension again became subject to twice yearly automatic increases. In May of each subsequent year the rate was to increase by the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index for the six months between the preceding June and December quarters, and in November by the percentage increase for the six months between the preceding December and June quarters. The first increase under this legislation took place in May 1980 (Table 1).

*Social Services Amendment Act 1979* (No 121 of 1979)

Assent: 29 October 1979

Commenced: 29 October 1979

1 November 1979 (funeral benefits and fringe benefits)

2 November 1979 (automatic increase of pension)

Proclaimed commencement: 1 January 1981 (maintenance contribution to benevolent homes) (see 1981)

- 1980 Pensions became payable to patients in mental hospitals (other than those who had been convicted of an offence and who were, in effect, in prison). Wife's pension became payable to wives of mental hospital patients, in lieu of widow's pension.

Pay and allowances received by Defence Force Reservists, other than those called up for full-time service, were excluded from the definition of income.

Guardian's allowance was increased by \$2 to \$6 per week, or \$8 where there was a child under six years or an invalid child requiring full-time care (Table 6).

Additional pension for dependent children was increased (Table 6).

*Social Services Amendment Act 1980* (No 130 of 1980)

Assent: 19 September 1980

Commenced: 19 September 1980

1 November 1980 (pensions and benefits)

- 1981 The amount of pensioner contribution (including supplementary assistance) payable for maintenance of a pensioner in a benevolent home became payable at the same rate as prescribed in the *National Health Act* for patients in non-government nursing homes (Table 7). Where after the application of the income test the rate of pension was less than the amount payable directly to the home, no amount was paid to the pensioner. A savings provision protected existing pensioner inmates.

*Social Services Amendment Act 1979* (No 121 of 1979)

Assent: 29 October 1979

Commenced: 29 October 1979

Proclaimed commencement: 1 January 1981 (maintenance contribution to benevolent home)

The same general conditions for the grant of pension that applied for age and invalid pensions were extended to wife's pension: a claimant for wife's pension was required to be resident and physically present in Australia on the date of claim for pension, and a formal claim was now required.

*Social Services Amendment Act 1981* (No 159 of 1981)

Assent: 30 October 1981

Commenced: 30 October 1981

1 November 1981 (wife's pension provisions)

1 February 1982 (supplementary assistance and incentive allowance) (see 1982)

- 1982 The rate of supplementary assistance became either \$8 per week or one half of the amount by which rent paid or payable exceeded \$10 per week, whichever was the lower (Table 1). This was reduced by a withdrawal rate of 50 per cent of the pensioner's assessable income. Tenants of government housing authorities were no longer eligible for supplementary assistance, but a savings provision protected existing tenants. A married rate pensioner living with his spouse in the matrimonial home was entitled to one half of the combined amount of supplementary assistance payable to the couple.

Incentive allowance was increased to \$8 per week.

*Social Services Amendment Act 1981* (No 159 of 1981)

Assent: 30 October 1981

Commenced: 30 October 1981

1 February 1982 (supplementary assistance and incentive allowance)

The wording of the Act was clarified to ensure that persons could transfer from one pension to another outside Australia, where there was concurrent qualification, without having to return to Australia (in this context, the word pension included supporting parent's benefit).

Permissible income was increased (Table 2).

The rate of supplementary assistance was increased (Table 1).

The rate of incentive allowance was increased to \$10 per week.



Rent subsidies paid by a government or a government housing authority to private tenants were exempted from the definition of income for income test purposes.

The income levels at which eligibility for funeral benefits and fringe benefits (including pensioner health benefits) ceased were raised to \$54 per week for single pensioners without children and \$90 per week for married pensioner couples without children. The levels for sheltered employment allowees and incentive allowees became \$68 (single) and \$90 (combined married). The addition to these limits where there were children was increased to a new uniform \$20 per week per child.

*Social Security Legislation Amendment Act 1982* (No 98 of 1982)

Assent: 27 October 1982

Commenced: 27 October 1982

17 August 1982 (rent subsidies)

1 November 1982 (permissible income; incentive allowance increase; supplementary assistance; fringe benefit income limits)

1 February 1983 (incentive allowance for certain invalid pensioners) (see 1983)

1 March 1983 (rehabilitation allowance, training allowance) (see 1983)

1 April 1983 (mobility allowance) (see 1983)

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Provision was made for additional pension for children to continue to be paid, in the case of pensioners and sheltered employment and rehabilitation allowees with children leaving school and seeking work, until the children received unemployment benefit following the six-week deferment period, or during that period obtained employment or otherwise ceased to qualify for payment of additional pension.

*Social Security Amendment Act 1982* (No 148 of 1982)

Assent: 31 December 1982

Commenced: 31 December 1982

4 November 1982 (additional pension provision)

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- 1983 A rehabilitation allowance was introduced for persons undertaking a Commonwealth rehabilitation program and who would otherwise have been eligible for another social security pension or benefit. A person could not be paid both rehabilitation allowance and any other pension, benefit or allowance except training allowance. The rehabilitation allowance, including additional payments, was payable to persons under age pension age at the same rates and generally under the same conditions as invalid pension—ie income-tested except in the case of the blind (to whom the equivalent of the basic rate of pension and, in the case of a blind person with children, the equivalent of additional pension for one child, would be paid free of income test). The allowance was not taxable. Funeral benefits and fringe benefits were also available to recipients of the allowance under the same conditions as for invalid pensions. The allowance would be paid during the rehabilitation program and for up to six months afterwards if the recipient was unable to find employment.

A person who was receiving a rehabilitation allowance but, immediately prior to that, was eligible for invalid pension (or supporting parent's benefit) became specifically excluded from being counted as a dependant of another person for the purpose of payment of a pension, benefit or allowance. A savings provision protected existing recipients.

Rehabilitation allowance payments were excluded from the scope of costs subject to recovery from compensation payments but treatment and training costs continued to be recoverable.

For supplementary assistance purposes a married person receiving rehabilitation allowance was treated on the same basis as a married pensioner.

The training allowance was restructured as a payment in addition to the rehabilitation allowance. It was to be payable at rates determined by the Director-General according to full-time/part-time status and age, and was to be linked to the weighted average minimum weekly wage rates provided by the Australian Statistician. Training allowance was not to be taken into account when assessing income.

Living-away-from-home allowance was also tied to minimum wage rates and was not income-tested.

Provision was made for paying rehabilitation allowance and training allowance to another person on the claimant's behalf, where considered desirable by the Director-General.

From 1 February 1983 eligibility for incentive allowance was extended (on the same terms as for sheltered employment allowees) to invalid pensioners undertaking training at activity therapy centres or adult training centres financed under the Handicapped Persons Welfare Program. Invalid pensioners receiving incentive allowance were excluded from receiving supplementary assistance.

A tax-free mobility allowance of \$10 per week was introduced for severely handicapped persons in employment or undertaking vocational training for employment and unable, because of their disability, to use public transport without substantial assistance. The new allowance was excluded from assessment under the income test.

To be eligible for mobility allowance a person had to be aged 16 or more and physically or mentally handicapped; he also had to be present in Australia and legally able to remain permanently in Australia. Gainful employment (including sheltered employment) or vocational training had to be undertaken on a continuing basis for 20 or more hours per week. The allowance could continue to be paid for three months after employment or vocational training ceased.

The allowance was not payable during any period during which the person was provided with a vehicle by the Commonwealth under the gift car scheme for ex-servicemen, and was not payable for two years after a person received the benefit of a sales tax exemption on a new motor vehicle.

The mobility allowance was generally paid to the claimant but could be paid to another person on the claimant's behalf.

*Social Security Legislation Amendment Act 1982 (No 98 of 1982)*

Assent: 27 October 1982

Commenced: 27 October 1982

1 February 1983 (incentive allowance for certain  
invalid pensioners)

1 March 1983 (rehabilitation allowance, training allowance)

1 April 1983 (mobility allowance)

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## Widow's pension and supporting parent's benefit

The Commonwealth scheme for widow's pension was not introduced until 1942, although age and invalid pensions had been introduced more than 30 years earlier. Nevertheless, the idea of a scheme for widow's pension had been raised quite regularly since the early 1900s and several abortive attempts to introduce widow's pension had been made prior to 1942. The 1942 legislation, the *Widows' Pensions Act 1942* (No 19 of 1942) came as a result of the report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Social Security which had been asked to look into the matter of a pension for widows. The Committee had found that amongst the states only New South Wales and (to a very limited extent) Victoria had made specific provision for widows. Consequently, many widows were forced by circumstances to go out to work to provide for their children, a situation considered undesirable by the Committee.

### Initial provisions

The legislation divided widows into three eligibility groups designated by the Department of Social Services as classes A, B and C, although not formally described as such in the legislation (until 1947). The groups were:

- Class A – widows maintaining at least one child under the age of 16 years.
- Class B – widows, without dependent children, who were 50 years of age or more.
- Class C – widows under 50 years of age without dependent children who, in the 26 weeks following the death of their husbands, found themselves in necessitous circumstances.

The term 'widow' was rather broadly defined as it included women who had lost a breadwinner other than by the death of a legally married husband. Women covered by the definition included a de facto widow (a woman who for not less than the three years immediately prior to the death of a man, was wholly or mainly maintained by him and, although not legally married to him, lived with him as his wife on a permanent and bona fide domestic basis), a deserted wife (but not a deserted de facto wife) who had been deserted by her husband for not less than six months, a divorced woman who had not remarried and a woman whose husband was in a hospital for the insane. There were certain conditions. A deserted wife or divorcee was ineligible for a pension unless she had taken reasonable action to obtain maintenance, and a pension would not be granted if a widow had deprived herself of property or income in order to obtain a pension. Only a de jure or de facto widow was eligible for a class C allowance. Applicants for widow's pension were required to be of good character and deserving of a pension. They were required to be residing in Australia and to have resided continuously in Australia for a period of five years immediately preceding the date on which they applied for a pension, although some absences were not to be regarded as interrupting residence.

'Aliens' (except British subjects prior to marriage) and 'Aboriginal natives' of Australia, Africa, the Islands of the Pacific or New Zealand were excluded from the benefits of the Act. The exclusion of Aboriginals did not apply to those Australian Aboriginals who were exempt from the provisions of a state or Territory law 'relating to the control of Aboriginal natives' or who lived in a state or territory

which did not provide for such exemption but who were eligible on the grounds of character, standard of intelligence and development.

For class A widows maintaining at least one child under 16 years, the maximum rate of pension was £1.10.0 per week and for class B widows, £1.5.0 per week. For class C widows, allowance was paid at the rate of £1.5.0 per week for a period not exceeding 26 weeks immediately following the husband's or de facto husband's death (Table 4).

Pension and allowance were granted subject to a means test. Grants to widows in class A were subject to a more liberal means test than those in class B. Under the means test the home, furniture and personal effects of widows in the two groups were disregarded in calculating the value of property. After deducting any charges and encumbrances and excluding the value of any house owned by and resided in by the widow and of her furniture and personal effects, the real and personal property limit which disqualified an applicant from pension (referred to in this compendium as the upper limit of property) was £1000 for class A and £400 for class B (Table 5). In addition the pension of a class B widow was reduced by £1 per year for every complete £10 by which the value of her real and personal property, after deducting the value of her home, furniture and personal effects, exceeded £50 (Table 5). The Commissioner of Pensions had a discretionary power to disregard all or part of the value of a widow's property where he considered that special circumstances justified such action (for example where a widow had let her home and was unable to regain possession).

With regard to the temporary allowance (class C) a widow was usually considered eligible where, after paying her husband's debts and funeral expenses, the amount of her liquid assets remaining did not exceed £50.

The treatment of income under the means test was similar to that for age and invalid pensions. Income up to £32.10.0 per year (12 shillings and sixpence per week) did not affect the pension but the pension was reduced by any income received above that limit (referred to in this compendium as permissible income) (Table 5). For a class A widow 'income' included 5 per cent of the value of her real and personal property (excluding the value of any house owned by and resided in by her, and her furniture and personal effects) or the net income from that property, whichever was the greater.

A person could not be paid a widow's pension or allowance as well as an invalid or old-age pension.

Pension and allowance were paid four-weekly in arrears, either in cash at a post office nominated by the pensioner or by cheque. The rate of widow's pension was subject to automatic quarterly review based on movements in the retail price index ('C' Series). The legislation provided for automatic adjustment if the retail price index number moved upwards by a prescribed minimum.

The provisions relating to a widow pensioner who became an inmate of a hospital for the insane, a prison or benevolent asylum, were similar to those applying to age and invalid pensioners. Pension or allowance was suspended during periods of imprisonment or where the pensioner became an inmate of a hospital for the insane. On discharge from the hospital for the insane payment was resumed together with a payment of up to four weeks of the suspended pension or allowance. Where the pensioner was admitted to a benevolent asylum, the Commonwealth made a payment to the asylum towards the cost of

the pensioner's maintenance and a payment of a small 'institutional pension' to the pensioner herself, an amount not exceeding 8 shillings and sixpence per week (Table 7).

*Widows' Pensions Act 1942* (No 19 of 1942)

Assent: 5 June 1942

Commenced: 5 June 1942

30 June 1942 (payment of pensions and allowances)

From 1 July 1942 pension or allowance under the *Widows' Pensions Act 1942* was exempted from income tax.

*Income Tax Assessment Act (No 2) 1942* (No 50 of 1942)

Assent: 6 October 1942

Commenced: 6 October 1942

## Changes in provisions

- 1943 The term 'dependent female' was substituted for the term 'de facto widow'. The definition of the new term was the same as the one it superseded.

The *Widows' Pensions Act* was amended to reduce the delay in applying cost of living variations to widows' pensions.

*Widows' Pensions Act 1943* (No 15 of 1943)

Assent: 29 March 1943

Commenced: 1 April 1943

- 1944 The provisions of the *Widows' Pensions Act* relating to quarterly review of the maximum rates of pensions and allowances in accordance with the 'price-index-number' were repealed along with the similar provisions in the *Invalid and Old-age Pensions Act*.

Where a widow's pension or allowance had been suspended or forfeited because of her admission to a prison, provision was made for payment of the whole or any portion of the suspended or forfeited pension or allowance to some approved person for the benefit of a dependent child.

The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased to the amounts which had first become payable in August 1943 by virtue of the automatic cost of living adjustment (Tables 4 and 7).

*Widows' Pensions Act 1944* (No 15 of 1944)

Assent: 6 April 1944

Commenced: 6 April 1944

- 1945 The maximum rate of pension was increased (Table 4).

*Widows' Pensions Act 1945* (No 56 of 1945)

Assent: 11 October 1945

Commenced: 11 October 1945

- 1946 The means test was liberalised on lines similar to those adopted for invalid and old-age pensioners. Permissible income was raised to £1 per week (Table 5). The upper limit of property for class B widows was raised to £650; in respect of property valued at up to £400 pension was reduced by £1 for every £10 of property in excess of £50, thereafter the rate of reduction became £1 for every complete £7 between £400 and £650. (The upper limit of property for class A widows was retained at £1000.)

Property exemptions for both class A and B widows were expanded and in the computation of the value of property the following were disregarded: the surrender value of life insurance policies up to £200; the capital value of any life interest or annuity; the value of any contingent interest; the value of any reversionary interest up to £500; and the value of any property (not being a contingent or reversionary interest) to which the widow was entitled from the estate of a deceased person but which had not been received by the widow. Five per cent of the net value of the property of a class A widow or the net income derived from the property no longer had to be included in her income

*Widows' Pensions Act 1946* (No 27 of 1946)

Assent: 13 August 1946

Commenced: 13 August 1946

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- 1947 The term 'pension' was defined as including the allowance for class C widows.

The definition of income was broadened and became the same as for invalid and age pensions. Provision was made for any income over 15 shillings per week received by a deserted wife or divorcee from her husband for the maintenance of a child to be regarded as part of her income.

The requirement that a class A widow had to be maintaining one or more children was amended to provide that she had 'custody, care and control' of such children.

Provision was made for the payment of a pension to a woman whose husband was imprisoned for at least six months provided she had custody, care and control of one or more children or was aged 50 or more and otherwise eligible (class D). The rate of pension for class D widows was subject to the same income and property tests as applied to class B widows.

Pensions became payable fortnightly instead of four-weekly.

The Director-General of Social Services was given discretion to continue payment of a class A widow's pension for up to two years beyond the date on which the youngest or only child reached 16 years where the child was undergoing full-time education and was dependent on the pensioner.

A widow in receipt of a war widow's pension became excluded from receiving a civilian widow's pension as well. Existing entitlements were not affected.



The definition of income, treatment of absences from Australia in determining the period and continuity of residence, treatment of insurance moneys and the provisions applying to the forfeiture of pension instalments due to non-collection, were brought into line with the provisions relating to age and invalid pensions.

In determining a widow pensioner's assessable income, a deduction of up to 5 shillings per week became allowable for the first dependent child and 10 shillings per week for each additional dependent child under 16 years; the amount of the deduction was reducible by any amount received in respect of children (including child endowment and child's allowance) (Table 5). (In this compendium the deduction is referred to as the income disregard in respect of children.)

The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 4 and 7).

*Social Services Consolidation Act 1947* (No 26 of 1947)

Assent: 11 June 1947

Commenced: 1 July 1947

- 1948 In those cases where transitional arrangements allowed the receipt of both war widow's and civilian widow's pensions, a specific limit was imposed upon the total amount that a person could receive by way of dual pension. Where that limit was exceeded, the civil pension was reduced by the amount of the excess; the war pension was not affected. The ceiling rate for a class A widow was £3.12.6 per week, or £3.17.6 where no income was received for the first child; and £3.2.6. per week for class B, C and D widows.

Permissible income for all classes of widow was increased and the property test for class B widows was liberalised in line with that for age and invalid pensions. The value of exempt property and the upper limit of property were raised (Table 5).

The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 4 and 7).

*Social Services Consolidation Act 1948* (No 38 of 1948)

Assent: 19 October 1948

Commenced: 19 October 1948

- 1949 On 15 April 1949 a revised reciprocal agreement was signed with New Zealand, superseding the 1943 agreement which covered age and invalid pensions. Widow's pension and its New Zealand equivalent, widow's benefit, were among the payments covered by the new agreement. Reciprocal grants became available only for pensioners who became permanent residents in each country. Temporary pensioner residents were to be paid on an agency basis in the host country and quarterly financial adjustments made. A reciprocal grant of widow's pension/benefit could not be made unless the widow would have been qualified for a widow's pension/benefit in the country of origin.

Social Services (Reciprocity with New Zealand) Regulations Statutory Rules 1949, No 42

Gazetted: 30 June 1949

Commenced: 1 July 1949

*Social Services Consolidation Act 1949* (No 16 of 1949)

Assent: 29 June 1949

Commenced: 29 June 1949

1 July 1949 (reciprocity section)

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- 1950 See Age and Invalid Pension section for provisions regarding tuberculosis allowance granted under the *Tuberculosis Act 1948* and replacing pension from 13 July 1950.

*Social Services Consolidation Act (No 2) 1948* (No 69 of 1948)

Assent: 10 December 1948

Commenced: 10 December 1948

13 July 1950 (tuberculosis provisions)

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A Pensioner Medical Service scheme of free general practitioner medical services and medicines prescribed in the course of those services came into operation for pensioners, including widow pensioners, and their dependants.

National Health (Medical Services to Pensioners) Regulations Statutory Rules 1950, No 50

Gazetted: 25 August 1950

Commenced: 25 August 1950

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The special exemption of the surrender value of life insurance policies was increased to £500.

Where transitional arrangements allowed a person to receive both war widow's and civilian widow's pensions, the specific limit imposed on the amount of dual pension that could be received was raised to £4.0.0 per week for class A widows and £3.10.0 per week for class B, C and D widows.

The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 4 and 7).

*Social Services Consolidation Act (No 2) 1950* (No 26 of 1950)

Assent: 27 November 1950

Commenced: 27 November 1950

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- 1951 The Pensioner Medical Service scheme was extended to include the supply of all medicines prescribed by medical practitioners to pensioners and their dependants.

National Health (Medicines for Pensioners) Regulations Statutory Rules 1951, No 63

Gazetted: 29 June 1951

Commenced: 2 July 1951

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The income disregard in respect of children ceased to be reducible by child endowment. The maximum amount of the disregard was reduced to 5 shillings per week for second and subsequent children to bring it into line with the amount for the first child (Table 5).

The upper limits of income for class A, B and D widows were increased (Table 5).

The rate of reduction in pension for class B and D widows became £1 per annum for every complete £10 of that portion of the value of property exceeding £100 but not £450, £1 per annum for every complete £7 of the value of the property exceeding £450 but not £750, and £2 per annum for every complete £10 of the remainder of the value of the property (Table 5).

The special exemption of the surrender value of life insurance policies was increased to £750. The special exemption of the value of reversionary interests was increased to £750.

Where transitional arrangements allowed a person to receive both war widow's and civilian widow's pensions, the specific limit imposed on the amount of dual pension that could be received was raised to £4.10.0 per week for class A widows and £3.15.0 per week for class B, C and D widows.

The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 4 and 7).

*Social Services Consolidation Act 1951* (No 22 of 1951)

Assent: 31 October 1951

Commenced: 31 October 1951

- 1952 Provision was made to ensure that a class C widow pensioner expecting to give birth to a child of her late husband, would not be disqualified from pension at the expiration of 26 weeks after her husband's death, but would maintain her entitlement until the birth of the child or other termination of the pregnancy. After the birth she could qualify for a class A pension.

Where transitional arrangements allowed a person to receive both war widow's and civilian widow's pensions, the specific limit imposed on the amount of dual pension that could be received was raised to £4.17.6 per week for class A widows and £4.0.0 per week for classes B, C and D widows.

In the definition of income, the exclusion of benefits received under the *Hospital Benefits Act* was extended to such benefit payments received from registered hospital benefit organisations as did not exceed the amount payable to a hospital.

The residence qualification for widow's pension was reduced from five years to one year where the couple was residing permanently in Australia when the husband died.

The income disregard in respect of children was increased (Table 5).

The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 4 and 7).

*Social Services Consolidation Act 1952* (No 41 of 1952)

Assent: 25 September 1952

Commenced: 25 September 1952

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1953 Permissible income for widows was increased (Table 5).

The limit of £750 on the value of reversionary interests was removed and all such interests were disregarded in the computation of property value.

The upper limits of property for class A, B and D widows were increased (Table 5).

The property exemption was increased for class B and D widows (Table 5).

The scale of reduction where property exceeded the exemption level was revised: the pension rate was reduced by £1 per annum for every complete £10 of that portion of the value of property exceeding £150 but less than £450, and by £1 per annum for every complete £7 of the remainder of the value of the property.

Income no longer included benefits received from registered organisations under the medical benefits scheme for pharmaceutical, sickness or hospital benefits or for medical or dental services (including Commonwealth benefits) up to a limit of the total fees payable.

Where transitional arrangements allowed a person to receive both war widow's and civilian widow's pensions, the specific limit imposed on the amount of dual pension that could be received was raised to £5.5.0 for class A widows and £4.7.6 for class B, C and D widows.

The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 4 and 7).

*Social Services Consolidation Act 1953* (No 51 of 1953)

Assent: 26 October 1953

Commenced: 26 October 1953

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1954 Permissible income for widows was increased (Table 5).

Income from property (other than income consisting of an annuity, or which was derived from a life interest in property which was not the permanent home of the widow) was excluded from the means test.

The upper limits of property for class A, B and D widows were raised (Table 5).

The property exemption for class B and D widows was increased (Table 5) and the scale of progressive reduction was further liberalised: the rate of pension was reduced by £1 for every complete £12 of that portion of the value of the widow's property which was more than £200 but not £1750 (Table 5).

Where transitional arrangements allowed a person to receive both war widow's and civilian widow's pensions, the specific limit imposed on the amount of dual pension that could be received was raised to £6.0.0 per week for class A widows and £5.0.0 per week for class B, C and D widows.

Provision was made for fortnightly pension instalments to be adjusted to the nearest shilling.

*Social Services Act 1954* (No 30 of 1954)

Assent: 6 October 1954

Commenced: 6 October 1954

From 7 January 1954 a reciprocal agreement with the United Kingdom came into force. For widows the provisions were that a woman permanently resident in Australia who was receiving a United Kingdom widow's benefit, or who would be qualified for this benefit if 'notional' contributions were credited to her late husband in respect of his residence in Australia, would be eligible to have her United Kingdom pension supplemented up to the Australian rate for the appropriate class. The pro rata basis for cases of partial insurance status applied only where the husband's death occurred outside Australia.

A widow pensioner who left Australia to reside permanently in the United Kingdom lost her Australian pension but was given immediate entitlement to a United Kingdom widow's benefit of the appropriate class at the normal rate, free of means test.

Australian age and widow pensioners temporarily absent in the United Kingdom were also covered by the agreement which enabled them to receive their Australian pensions while so absent.

Generally, permanent residence was regarded as a period of likely residence of at least three years.

*Social Services (Reciprocity with United Kingdom) Regulations Statutory Rules 1954, No 8*

Gazetted: 28 January 1954

Deemed commencement: 7 January 1954

- 1955 The ceiling limits on war widow's pension plus civilian widow's pension were abolished, and a war pension thereafter ranked only as 'other income' under the means test.

The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 4 and 7).

*Social Services Act (No 2) 1955* (No 38 of 1955)

Assent: 19 October 1955

Commenced: 19 October 1955

From 1 November 1955 a special means test applied limiting participation in the Pensioner Medical Service to those who would have been eligible for the maximum rate of pension under the income test in force at 31 December 1953. Thus pensioners with income of more than £2 per week could not receive the benefits of the Pensioner Medical Service but pensioners already enrolled in the service retained their entitlements.

*National Health Act 1955* (No 68 of 1955)

Assent: 4 November 1955

Commenced: 4 November 1955

- 1956 Provision was made for payment of a class B pension to certain widows under 50 years of age. If a widow lost her entitlement to a class A pension after reaching 45 years through no longer having the custody, care and control of a child under 16 years, she could transfer immediately to a class B pension.

Class A widows with two or more children were granted additional pension of 10 shillings per week for each child after the first (Table 6). The additional pension was means tested.

*Social Services Act 1956* (No 67 of 1956)

Assent: 5 October 1956

Commenced: 5 October 1956

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- 1957 The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 4 and 7).

*Social Services Act 1957* (No 46 of 1957)

Assent: 17 October 1957

Commenced: 17 October 1957

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- 1958 A new reciprocal agreement with the United Kingdom replaced the 1954 agreement. The principal change made was that residence in the United Kingdom replaced national insurance status and counted as residence in Australia as the basis for grant of pension in Australia, that is, for widows, continuous residence in Australia of five years immediately prior to the date of claim for pension. The UK pension was supplemented, subject to the means test, by an Australian pension to bring the total to the Australian rate.

*Social Services (Reciprocity with United Kingdom) Regulations*

Statutory Rules 1958, No 30

Gazetted: 24 April 1958

Deemed commencement: 1 April 1958

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Supplementary assistance of 10 shillings per week became payable from 28 October 1958 for widow pensioners in all classes paying rent or board and lodging and entirely dependent on their pensions (Table 4).

The benefits of the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service, which provided for full-scale rehabilitation services and vocational training for invalid pensioners and unemployment and sickness beneficiaries who were suffering from a disability which was a handicap to employment but could be overcome by treatment or training, were extended to widow pensioners (and special beneficiaries) with similar problems. Pension or benefit continued during treatment but was replaced by a rehabilitation allowance during training. The maximum amount of rehabilitation allowance paid to the widow pensioner equalled the appropriate maximum amount of her widow's pension. Training allowance and living-away-from-home allowance were also payable, and were regarded as income for the purpose of the means test.

Benefits received from registered hospital and medical benefit organisations were wholly exempted as income for means test purposes.

The upper limit of property applying to class A, B and D widows was raised (Table 5). For class B and D widows the rate of pension continued to be reduced by £1 per annum for every complete £12 of that portion of the value of the widow's property which exceeded £200 but not £1750, but the reduction became £1 per annum for every complete £10 of the property value above £1750.

*Social Services Act 1958* (No 44 of 1958)

Assent: 29 September 1958

Proclaimed commencement: 15 October 1958

- 1959 The definition of income for means test purposes was amended to exclude clothing allowance payable by the Repatriation Department.
- The definition of income was amended to make clear that the exemption applying to benefit payments from friendly societies and trade unions did not include annuities.

The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 4 and 7).

- 1960 Provisions restricting Aboriginals eligibility for pension were removed and Aboriginals, other than those who were 'nomadic or primitive', became eligible on the same basis as other members of the community.

Pensioners and beneficiaries and persons supplying confidential information to the department in its investigation of claims for pension or benefit were given added protection through an amendment to the Act enabling a plea of privilege to be made in respect of all the documents in the departmental file.

*Social Services Act 1959* (No 57 of 1959)

Assent: 30 September 1959

Commenced: 30 September 1959

Proclaimed commencement: 2 February 1960 (eligibility of Aboriginal Australians; pleas of privilege)

Class D pensions were abolished as a separate class and women formerly receiving class D pensions were transferred to either class A or class B, as appropriate.

The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 4 and 7).

- 1961 The merged means test was introduced with effect from 1 March 1961, combining the separate income and property tests. Under the merged means test, a property component equivalent to £1 for each complete £10 of a widow's property above a stipulated amount was added to her annual rate of income other than from property. The means as assessed could consist entirely of income, entirely of property, or of various combinations of income and property.

For class A widows the complete exemption of property remained where the value of the widow's property did not exceed £2250. Where the value of property exceeded that amount, a property component of £1 for each complete £10 of property in excess of £1000 was added to the annual rate



of income to comprise the widow's means as assessed. The rate of pension was calculated by deducting from the maximum annual rate (this varying with the number of children) the amount by which means as assessed exceeded £182 (Table 5). No pension was payable where the value of property was £5550 or more, irrespective of the number of children.

For class B widows, a property component of £1 for each complete £10 of property valued above £200 was added to the annual rate of income. The rate of pension was calculated as described for class A above. If the widow had no income and her property did not exceed £2020, full pension was payable. The upper limit of property was £4300 and the upper limit of income was £409.10.0. If the property was valued at less than £210 the rate of income which allowed payment of a full pension was £182 per annum (Table 5).

*Social Services Act 1960* (No 45 of 1960)

Assent: 27 September 1960

Commenced: 27 September 1960

Proclaimed commencement: 1 March 1961 (means test provisions)

Additional pension granted to class A widows with two or more children was increased to 15 shillings per week for each child after the first (Table 6).

The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 4 and 7).

*Social Services Act 1961* (No 45 of 1961)

Assent: 27 September 1961

Commenced: 27 September 1961

- 1962 Where a pensioner's absence from Australia was for the primary purpose of temporary residence in Britain, payment of Australian pension and child's allowance could be continued during such temporary residence and for the periods of the journeys between the two countries.

*Social Services (Reciprocity with United Kingdom) Regulations*

Statutory Rules 1962, No 85

Gazetted: 27 September 1962

Commenced: 1 October 1962

- 1963 A new payment known as mother's allowance was incorporated in the rate of class A widow's pension (Table 6).

The maximum rate of pension for class A widows was increased to the standard rate of age or invalid pension plus the mother's allowance (Table 6).

Rates of pensions for class B and C widows were increased (Table 4).

A specific allowance was introduced for the first child of a widow pensioner. The rate was 15 shillings per week and was not subject to the means test (Table 6). (This was an extension of the child's allowance which was already payable in respect of the first child of an invalid or permanently incapacitated age pensioner.)

Additional pension for children was continued for full-time dependent students until the end of the calendar year in which the child reached 18 years of age (extension of the provision introduced in 1947).

The income disregard in respect of children was also extended to include a child who had attained 16 years until the end of the calendar year in which he reached 18 if he was dependent on the pensioner and receiving full-time education.

For class A widows with no income other than from property, the upper limit of property was raised to £6850.

*Social Services Act 1963* (No 46 of 1963)

Assent: 25 September 1963

Commenced: 25 September 1963

- 1964 Permissible income for a class A widow with property, apart from her home, furniture and personal effects, not exceeding £2250 in value, was increased to £12.15.0 per week (excluding child endowment or income derived from property), and the upper limit of property was increased to £6980. The upper limit of property for class B widows was increased to £4820.

The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 4 and 7).

*Social Services Act (No 2) 1964* (No 63 of 1964)

Assent: 23 September 1964

Commenced: 23 September 1964

Telephone rental concessions for pensioners were introduced. A reduction of one-third of the annual rental of a telephone became available to a pensioner who lived alone, or with another eligible person or persons, or with another person whose income did not exceed a specified amount.

Statutory Rules 1965, No 14, amending Regulation 29 of the Telephone Regulations of the *Post and Telegraph Act 1901–1961*

Gazetted: 4 February 1965

Deemed commencement: 1 October 1964

- 1965 The age at which payments for a student child of a pensioner ceased (and hence eligibility for a class A pension if there were no other children) was raised to the day on which the student turned 21 years. This brought the age of students for pension purposes into line with that which applied to child endowment. The income disregard in respect of children was also extended to cover these students.

The rate of supplementary assistance was increased and a means test introduced, under which the maximum rate was extended to pensioners whose means as assessed did not exceed £26 (Table 4); if above £26 then the rate of assistance was (in annual terms) an amount per annum equal to the amount by which £78 exceeded the amount of means as assessed.

Funeral benefit of up to £20 became payable to a pensioner who was responsible for the funeral costs of an age, invalid or widow pensioner, a non-pensioner spouse or a child. Payments to non-pensioners were made at a maximum of £10.

A class B widow eligible for supplementary assistance could continue to receive it while an inmate of a benevolent home (Table 7).

*Social Services Act 1965* (No 57 of 1965)

Assent: 1 October 1965

Commenced: 1 October 1965

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- 1966 Pensioners were no longer subject to a special means test for Pensioner Medical Service: pensioners and their dependants who satisfied the pensions means test for payment of a full or part pension became eligible for the Pensioner Medical Service.

*National Health Act 1965* (No 100 of 1965)

Assent: 13 December 1965

Commenced: 13 December 1965

1 January 1966 (PMS provision)

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Since 1947, for class A widow's pension, any amount in excess of 15 shillings per week received by a deserted wife or divorcee from her husband or former husband for the maintenance of a child was regarded as income. From October 1966 this 'free area' was raised to \$3 per week in respect of each such child.

The income disregard in respect of children was increased (Table 5).

The provision making Aboriginals who were considered to be living a 'nomadic or primitive' life ineligible for pension was repealed.

The provision preventing the grant of pension to 'aliens' was repealed.

The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 4 and 7).

*Social Services Act 1966* (No 41 of 1966)

Assent: 30 September 1966

Commenced: 30 September 1966

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- 1967 Provision was made for a grant of widow's pension from the date of a claimant's husband's admission to a mental hospital if the claim was lodged within three months of that date.

The merged means test was liberalised by increasing the amount of 'means as assessed' which permitted the payment of a full pension to \$520 (Table 5). This brought the upper property limit for class A widows with no income to \$16 040, and for class B widows to \$11 720.

*Social Services Act 1967* (No 10 of 1967)

Assent: 21 April 1967

Commenced: 21 April 1967

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- 1968 The residence qualification for widow's pension was removed where the woman and her husband were residing permanently in Australia when she became a widow.

A vocational training scheme for widow pensioners was introduced. The scheme was available to any class A or B widow who would derive substantial benefit from the training. Pension remained payable during

training together with a training allowance of \$4 per week. A living-away-from-home allowance of up to \$5 per week was payable where appropriate. Tuition fees and fares were met by the Commonwealth and books, equipment, appliances and tools of trade were provided up to an amount of \$80 in a 12-month period.

Additional pension for children was increased (Table 6). At the same time child's allowance was abolished and additional pension substituted, thus placing payments for a pensioner's first or only child on the same basis as payments for other children (Table 6). The effect was to extend the upper limit of income which precluded payment of pension by the amount of additional pension for the child.

The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 4 and 7).

*Social Services Act 1968* (No 65 of 1968)

Assent: 27 September 1968

Commenced: 27 September 1968

The *States Grants (Deserted Wives) Act 1968* provided for the Commonwealth to share up to certain limits, on a \$1 for \$1 basis, with the states the cost of helping mothers of families without a breadwinner (such as deserted wives or wives of prisoners) where they were ineligible for a pension or benefit under the *Social Services Act*. The Commonwealth share was half the cost of approved assistance paid to the mother or half the amount of a class A widow's pension, whichever was the lesser. In the case of deserted wives and wives of prisoners and mental hospital patients assistance was generally provided for only six months (after which class A widow's pension became payable). Payments to the states were to be made out of the National Welfare Fund.

*States Grants (Deserted Wives) Act 1968* (No 48 of 1968)

Assent: 21 June 1968

Commenced: 21 June 1968 (with retrospective effect from 1 January 1968)

- 1969 A 'tapered' means test was introduced under which the maximum annual rate of pension payable in any case, instead of being reduced, as previously, by all means as assessed in excess of the amount permitting payment of a full pension (\$520) was reduced by only half of the excess. For a widow with one child the effect of this (together with the increase in the rate of pension and deduction from income in respect of children) was to extend the upper limit of income from \$33.50 to \$61 per week in the case of a widow with a child who was an invalid or under six years of age, and to \$57 per week where the child was over six years and not an invalid, assuming that property was \$4500 or less in value in each instance. Higher amounts applied where the widow had more than one child.

For widows with no income, the upper limit of property was increased to \$26 960 (or \$29 040 in the case of a widow with a child who was an invalid or under six years of age). These limits applied irrespective of the number of children in the widow's care.

A class B widow pensioner could, if the value of her property was less than \$420, receive some pension until her income reached \$36.50 per week. If she had no income some pension remained payable until the value of her property reached \$19 380.

Mother's allowance was increased to \$6 per week for a widow with a child under six or an invalid child requiring full-time care (Table 6).

Following the introduction of the tapered means test funeral benefit at the higher rate for pensioners (\$40) was available to or in respect of only those pensioners who would have been eligible for pensions under the means test in operation immediately before the introduction of the tapered means test. The Pensioner Medical Service and other fringe benefits also became subject to that means test.

Additional pension for each child after the first was increased (Table 6).

The income disregard in respect of children was increased (Table 5).

In the case of divorcees or deserted wives the amount exempted under the means test in respect of maintenance received for a child was increased to \$4 per week.

Class A and B widows making temporary visits overseas became qualified for up to 30 weeks' pension on return instead of up to 12 weeks as previously.

Women widowed outside Australia became eligible for pension on return to Australia if they had lived in Australia for a continuous period of 10 years at any time.

The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 4 and 7).

*Social Services Act 1969* (No 94 of 1969)

Assent: 27 September 1969

Commenced: 27 September 1969

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- 1970 The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 4 and 7).

*Social Services Act (No 2) 1970* (No 59 of 1970)

Assent: 28 September 1970

Commenced: 28 September 1970

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- 1971 Rates of pension were increased. Class A and B widows receiving the maximum rate received the full increase of 50 cents. Class A and B widows who had been receiving a pension within 50 cents of the maximum rate received partial increases; others received no increases. Class C widows all received a 50 cent increase (Table 4).

*Social Services Act 1971* (No 16 of 1971)

Assent: 7 April 1971

Deemed commencement: 1 April 1971

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Additional pension for each child was raised to \$4.50 per week (Table 6). Rates of pension were increased. Class A and B widows receiving the maximum rate received the full increase (\$1.25 for class A, \$1.00 for class B). Class A and B widows who had been receiving a pension within \$1.00 of the maximum rate received partial increases; others received no increases. Class C widows all received a \$1.00 increase (Table 4).

Institutional pension was increased (Table 7).

*Social Services Act (No 2) 1971* (No 67 of 1971)

Assent: 29 September 1971

Commenced: 29 September 1971

- 1972 Rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 4 and 7) and the 1971 provisions restricting pension increases to persons receiving pensions at or near the maximum rate were removed. As a result of these changes those pensioners affected by the 1971 provisions became eligible for increases of between \$1.00 and \$2.75 for class A widows, 75 cents and \$2.25 for class B widows and 75 cents for all class C widows.

*Social Services Act (No 2) 1972* (No 14 of 1972)

Assent: 24 April 1972

Commenced: 24 April 1972

From June 1972 pensions could be paid to pensioners who went to other countries for temporary or permanent residence where governments agreed to pay their corresponding pensions to former residents of their countries residing in Australia. In the case of widow's pension, to qualify for payment in another country the pensioner and her husband had to be residing permanently in Australia when the husband died.

*Social Services Act (No 3) 1972* (No 53 of 1972)

Assent: 7 June 1972

Commenced: 7 June 1972

The income disregard in respect of children was increased (Table 5).

A special concession for recipients of superannuation and annuities was introduced, the annual rate of such payments being converted to a property equivalent for means test purposes by reference to a specific conversion factor. This conversion was to the pensioner's advantage in the majority of such cases but, where this was not so, the payments continued to be treated as income.

The maximum rate of supplementary assistance to widows was doubled (Table 4).

The amount of 'means as assessed' permitting payment of a full pension was doubled (Table 5).

The maximum rates of pension and institutional pension were increased (Tables 4 and 7).

*Social Services Act (No 4) 1972* (No 79 of 1972)

Assent: 27 September 1972

Commenced: 27 September 1972

- 1973 The age limit of 21 years was removed for the payment of additional pension for full-time students and for the payment of guardian's allowance or mother's allowance. Funeral benefit was also payable for such students.

The standard rate of pension was increased (Table 4).

Eligibility for the standard rate was extended to class B and C widows (Table 4). The new rates were paid on 27 March 1973, with retrospective effect to 5 December 1972.

The maximum rate of institutional pension was increased (Table 7).

*Social Services Act 1973* (No 1 of 1973)

Assent: 16 March 1973

Commenced: 16 March 1973

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Legislation for reciprocal portable pensions which operated from 7 June 1972 was superseded by legislation enabling pensions granted in Australia to continue in any country in which the pensioner chose to live. Former residents of Australia who had been granted pensions on their return to Australia could not receive pensions overseas if they again left Australia within 12 months of their return. Funeral benefits were available to pensioners receiving pensions overseas, but not supplementary assistance or fringe benefits.

*Social Services Act (No 2) 1973* (No 26 of 1973)

Assent: 8 May 1973

Commenced: 8 May 1973

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Supporting mother's benefit was introduced from 3 July 1973 (Table 4), payable at the same rate and subject to the same means test as class A widow's pension, to unmarried mothers, deserted de facto wives, women whose de facto husbands were in prison and other separated wives not eligible for widow's pension. A supporting mother had to have the custody, care and control of at least one qualifying child and could not be living with a man on a bona fide domestic basis. The benefit was payable from six months after birth of the child or separation whichever was later. Any child born of the mother or a child of whom the woman had the custody, care and control prior to the date on which she became a supporting mother, including a child who was adopted at the time, could qualify her for supporting mother's benefit, with the exception that, in the case of an unmarried mother, only a child born of that woman could be a qualifying child.

The *States Grants (Deserted Wives) Act 1968* continued to apply to supporting mothers during the six months waiting period.

The supporting mother had to be residing in Australia on the date she lodged her claim. If an unmarried mother, she must have been resident in Australia at the time of the child's birth. If a separated wife, she must have been living in Australia immediately prior to separation from her husband or de facto husband. In other circumstances five years continuous residence immediately preceding lodgement of the claim was necessary to qualify for benefit.



A benefit could not be granted to a supporting mother unless she had taken reasonable action to obtain maintenance from the father or fathers of the child or children.

A supporting mother could be granted some of the benefits available to widow pensioners with children—for example, participation in the training scheme for widow pensioners, reduced telephone rental, receipt of benefit overseas while eligibility continued, but not the health benefits available to pensioners.

*Social Services Act (No 3) 1973* (No 48 of 1973)

Assent: 14 June 1973

Commenced: 14 June 1973

3 July 1973 (supporting mother's benefit)

The maximum rates of pension, benefit and institutional pension were increased (Tables 4 and 7).

Additional pension for children was increased (Table 6).

As a result of some pensions becoming taxable (see below) provision was made for income tax to be deducted from pension or benefit if so requested by the recipient.

*Social Services Act (No 4) 1973* (No 103 of 1973)

Assent: 26 September 1973

Commenced: 26 September 1973

Widow's pension and supporting mother's benefit payable to women of age pension age became subject to income tax from 1 July 1973. Supplementary assistance and additional allowances for dependants remained exempt.

*Income Tax Assessment Act (No 5) 1973* (No 165 of 1973)

Assent: 11 December 1973

Commenced: 11 December 1973

From 26 September 1973 the levels of means as assessed at which entitlement for the Pensioner Medical Service and fringe benefits ceased, were frozen at \$1716 for a single pensioner (higher where there were children). This amount represented the level of means as assessed at which the pension payable from September 1973 would have ceased under the pensions means test in operation prior to September 1969.

*National Health Act (No 2) 1973* (No 202 of 1973)

Assent: 18 December 1973

Commenced: 18 December 1973

*Health Insurance Act 1973* (No 42 of 1974)

Assent: 8 August 1974

Commenced: 8 August 1974

- 1974 From 22 March 1974 Australian widow's pensions could be granted to certain persons who lived overseas. The persons eligible included widows who were living overseas but who had been widowed in Australia, had left Australia before 8 May 1973 and were in special need of financial assistance, and who could satisfy the ordinary conditions for grant of pension in Australia.

The maximum rates of pension, benefit and institutional pension were increased (Tables 4 and 7).

*Social Services Act 1974* (No 2 of 1974)

Assent: 22 March 1974

Commenced: 22 March 1974

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The maximum rates of pension, benefit and institutional pension were increased (Tables 4 and 7).

*Social Services Act (No 2) 1974* (No 23 of 1974)

Assent: 31 July 1974

Commenced: 31 July 1974

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Provision was made for any woman who became a widow or supporting mother while living overseas to become residentially qualified for pension or benefit, as appropriate, immediately on her return to Australia provided she had continuously resided in Australia for not less than 10 years at any time.

Mother's allowance and additional pension for children were extended to a class B widow pensioner with a child, not being a child of her own or a child who entered her care before she became a widow, thus placing her in the same position as a class A widow.

From 1 October 1974 the vocational training scheme for widow pensioners was incorporated into the new National Employment and Training system (NEAT) and the rates of training and living-away-from-home allowances were brought into line with those payable under the new scheme (removing the tie to pensions payable under *Social Services Act*). If a widow pensioner would be disadvantaged by a transfer to NEAT, arrangements could be made for her to complete her training under the provisions of the old scheme.

The provision that a widow be 'of good character and deserving of a pension' was repealed.

Additional pension for children was increased (Table 6). Supplementary assistance was increased (Table 4).

*Social Services Act (No 3) 1974* (No 91 of 1974)

Assent: 1 November 1974

Commenced: 1 November 1974

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- 1975 The maximum rates of pension, benefit and institutional pension were increased on 17 June with retrospective effect from 6 May 1975 (Tables 4 and 7).

The rate of additional pension for children was also increased (Table 6).

*Social Services Act 1975* (No 34 of 1975)

Assent: 19 May 1975

Commenced: 19 May 1975

The Pensioner Medical Service was superseded with the introduction of Medibank from 1 July 1975, and pensioners became entitled to the full range of medical services including those of specialists.

Department of Social Security Annual Report 1975–76

Residence in an external territory other than Norfolk Island became recognised as residence in Australia for the purposes of widow's pension.

A former resident of an external territory other than Norfolk Island who became widowed in a territory could qualify, subject to the other conditions, for a widow's pension or supporting mother's benefit, as if the event giving rise to eligibility had occurred in Australia.

*Social Services Act (No 2) 1975* (No 101 of 1975)

Assent: 9 September 1975

Commenced: 9 September 1975

A minimum rate of pension and supporting mother's benefit was set at \$1 per fortnight (ie if a pension or benefit was payable after application of the means test but was assessed at below \$1 per fortnight, the amount of the fortnightly instalment was increased to \$1).

Statutory authority was provided to prevent payment of widow's pension to a widow living with a man as his wife though not legally married to him. A couple in these circumstances was treated as a married couple.

The maximum rates of pension, benefit and institutional pension were increased (Tables 4 and 7).

The rate of additional pension for children was increased (Table 6).

*Social Services Act (No 3) 1975* (No 110 of 1975)

Assent: 27 October 1975

Commenced: 27 October 1975

- 1976 The training component and living-away-from-home allowance payable to full-time trainees under the National Employment and Training system (NEAT) were excluded from income for pension purposes.

The maximum rates of pension, benefit and institutional pension were increased (Tables 4 and 7).

*Social Services Amendment Act 1976* (No 26 of 1976)

Assent: 30 April 1976

Commenced: 30 April 1976

The income tax exemption for widow's pension and supporting mother's benefit paid to persons under age pension age was removed, bringing them into line with pensions payable to persons of age pension age and wife's pension paid to the wife of a pensioner of age pension age. The new provisions became effective on 1 July 1976. Supplementary assistance, mother's allowance and additional pension for children, however, remained exempt as in the case of these payments for other classes of pensioners.

*Income Tax Assessment Amendment Act (No 2) 1976* (No 56 of 1976)

Assent: 4 June 1976

Commenced: 4 June 1976

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Pensioners entitled to a Pensioner Health Benefits card, including those gaining entitlement following the change to the income test, were exempt from payment of the health insurance levy introduced on 1 October 1976 with modifications to Medibank, and were entitled to standard Medibank medical and hospital cover.

*Health Insurance Levy Assessment Act (No 2) 1976* (No 98 of 1976)

Assent: 29 September 1976

Commenced: 29 September 1976

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Regulation 8A, Income Tax Regulations, inserted 30 June 1977.

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The rates of widow's pension and supporting mother's benefit were increased (Tables 4 and 7).

Pensions and benefits became subject to automatic six-monthly increases: every May by the movement in the Consumer Price Index between the preceding June and December quarters and every November by the movement in the Consumer Price Index between the preceding December and June quarters. These provisions applied only to the basic rates—ie mother's allowance, additional pension for children and supplementary assistance were not subject to these procedures.

The means test on eligibility for pensions and supporting mother's benefit was replaced by an 'income test'. The effect of this change was to exclude the value of property from the calculation of pension eligibility but to include income derived from that property. A savings provision ensured that no pensioner or beneficiary suffered a reduction in pension or benefit entitlements as a result of this change. Concessional treatment of superannuation pension was abolished by this change. The means test for funeral benefit was also replaced by an equivalent income test.

If the Director-General considered that a claimant or pensioner had directly or indirectly deprived herself of income in order to obtain a pension, or a pension at a higher rate than otherwise entitled to, such income could be deemed to be income of the claimant or pensioner.

*Social Services Amendment Act (No 3) 1976* (No 111 of 1976)

Assent: 29 October 1976

Commenced: 29 October 1976  
25 November 1976 (income test)

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- 1977 Supporting mother's benefit was replaced by supporting parent's benefit (Table 4). The new benefit extended to males with the sole custody, care and control of one or more children the same benefits as were available to women by way of supporting mother's benefit. A supporting father included a widower, divorcee, separated husband or de facto husband, and the husband or de facto husband of a prisoner or mental hospital patient.

The scope of rehabilitation training was extended to include assistance to all handicapped people, within the broad working age group, who would be able to benefit substantially from rehabilitation even though unable to rejoin the workforce, such as those undertaking or resuming household duties or leading an independent or semi-independent life in their own home.

*Social Services Amendment Act 1977* (No 159 of 1977)

Assent: 10 November 1977

Commenced: 10 November 1977

- 1978 The provisions concerning the indexation of pensions and benefits were altered so that the rates of pension and benefit would be automatically adjusted once a year in November, in accordance with the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index between the two previous June quarters. The first (and only) increase under this legislation took place in November 1979.

Provision was made for an upper age limit of 25 years in determining whether a dependent full-time student aged 16 or more was a qualifying child for the purpose of class A widow's pension or supporting parent's benefit. The age limit also applied for payment of additional pension and benefit.

Additional pension for children ceased to be payable unless the child was living in Australia (or temporarily abroad), was living overseas with the pensioner, or was not living in Australia but the pensioner was living in Australia and intended to bring the child to Australia as soon as it was reasonably practicable to do so, but in any case within four years.

*Social Services Amendment Act 1978* (No 128 of 1978)

Assent: 26 October 1978

Commenced: 26 October 1978

1 November 1978 (indexation provisions)

- 1979 The maximum rate of pension again became subject to twice-yearly automatic increases. From May 1980 the rate would increase according to the movement in the Consumer Price Index between the preceding June and December quarters, and in November according to the movement between the preceding December and June quarters (Table 4).

The income levels at which eligibility for funeral benefits and Pensioner Health Benefit cards (and therefore fringe benefits) ceased, were raised, in the case of widow pensioners from \$33 to \$40 per week (more where there were children).

Supporting parent beneficiaries became eligible for Commonwealth fringe benefits and pensioner health benefits.

*Social Services Amendment Act 1979* (No 121 of 1979)

Assent: 29 October 1979

Commenced: 29 October 1979

1 November 1979 (funeral benefit and fringe benefits)

2 November 1979 (automatic increase of pensions)

Proclaimed commencement: 1 January 1981 (maintenance contribution to benevolent homes) (see 1981)

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- 1980 Pensions and supporting parent's benefit became payable to patients in mental hospitals. Wives of mental hospital patients were no longer entitled to widow's pension, but would receive wife's pension subject to a savings provision to protect those who would otherwise receive a lower rate of pension.

The *States Grants (Deserted Wives) Act 1968* was repealed (to operate from a date to be fixed by proclamation, see 1982). The six months qualifying period for the grant of supporting parent's benefit was eliminated. (Among those who became eligible for supporting parent's benefit as a result of these changes were deserted wives and wives of prisoners in the six-month period prior to their becoming eligible for widow's pension.)

Mother's allowance was increased (Table 6).

The rate of additional pension for children was increased (Table 6).

*Social Services Amendment Act 1980* (No 130 of 1980)

Assent: 19 September 1980

Commenced: 1 November 1980

Proclaimed commencement: 30 June 1982 (repeal of *States Grants (Deserted Wives) Act 1968*)

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- 1981 The amount of pensioner contribution (including supplementary assistance) payable for maintenance of a pensioner in a benevolent home became payable at the same rate as applied to patients in non-government nursing homes. Where after application of the income test the rate of pension was less than the amount payable directly to the home, no amount was paid to the pensioner (Table 7).

*Social Services Amendment Act 1979* (No 121 of 1979)

Assent: 29 October 1979

Commenced: 29 October 1979

Proclaimed commencement: 1 January 1981 (maintenance contribution to benevolent homes)

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- 1982 The rate of supplementary assistance became either \$8 per week or one half of the amount by which rent paid or payable exceeded \$10 per week, whichever was the lower (Table 4). This was reduced by a withdrawal rate of 50 per cent of the pensioner's assessable income. Tenants of government housing authorities were no longer eligible for supplementary assistance, but a savings provision protected existing tenants.

*Social Services Amendment Act 1981* (No 159 of 1981)

Assent: 30 October 1981

Commenced: 30 October 1981

1 February 1982 (supplementary assistance)

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Section 3 of the *Social Services Amendment Act 1980* was proclaimed to operate from 30 June 1982 and the repeal of the *States Grants (Deserted Wives) Act 1968* thus came into effect on that date.

Commonwealth of Australia Gazette, No G22, 1 June 1982

Proclaimed commencement for this part: 30 June 1982

A person who became a supporting parent beneficiary, or who was eligible for supporting parent's benefit or invalid pension prior to receiving a rehabilitation allowance, was specifically excluded from being taken into account in relation to the entitlement of another person to a pension, benefit or allowance. A savings provision protected existing recipients. Provision was made to ensure that a widow aged 45 or more who had been qualified for a class A widow's pension would become eligible for a class B widow's pension if she lost her class A entitlement because her child became a supporting parent beneficiary or rehabilitation allowee.

The provision under which a wife pensioner or service pensioner who was overseas at the time of the death of her husband had to return to Australia to claim widow's pension was removed.

Provision was made to allow a woman who became qualified to receive a class C widow's pension while overseas to transfer to a class A or B widow's pension if qualified, again without having to return to Australia.

The wording of the Act was clarified to ensure that persons could transfer from one pension to another outside Australia, where there was concurrent qualification, without having to return to Australia. In this context, pension included supporting parent's benefit.

Permissible income was increased (Table 5).

The maximum rate of supplementary assistance was increased (Table 4).

Rent subsidies paid by a government or a government housing authority to private tenants were exempted from the definition of income for the purposes of the income test.

The income level at which eligibility for funeral benefits and fringe benefits (including pensioner health benefits) ceased was raised to \$54 per week for single pensioners without children. The addition to this limit where there were children was increased to a new uniform amount of \$20 per week for each child.

*Social Security Legislation Amendment Act 1982* (No 98 of 1982)

Assent: 27 October 1982

Commenced: 27 October 1982

1 November 1982 (dependency provisions; women who became widows overseas; permissible income and supplementary assistance; income limits for funeral and fringe benefits)

1 February 1983 (maintenance payments) (see 1983)



Provision was made for additional pension for children to continue to be paid, in the case of pensioners and supporting parent beneficiaries with children leaving school and seeking work, until the children received unemployment benefit following the six-week deferment period, or during that period obtained employment or otherwise ceased to qualify for payment of additional pension.

*Social Security Amendment Act 1982* (No 148 of 1982)

Assent: 31 December 1982

Commenced: 31 December 1982

4 November 1982 (additional pension provision)

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- 1983 The wording of the Act was clarified to ensure that maintenance payments received by supporting parent beneficiaries in respect of their children would be treated in the same way as such payments to widow pensioners—thus amounts in excess of \$312 per annum per child would be included in the income of a supporting parent beneficiary for income test purposes.

*Social Security Legislation Amendment Act 1982* (No 98 of 1982)

Assent: 27 October 1982

Commenced: 27 October 1982

1 February 1983 (maintenance payments)

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## Unemployment, sickness and special benefits

Prior to the introduction of the Commonwealth unemployment benefits scheme in 1945, the relief of the able-bodied unemployed was undertaken by the states. Except in Queensland where an unemployment insurance scheme was introduced in 1923, the customary methods of assisting the unemployed in the states were the granting of rations or sustenance to the unemployed in need or the payment of food or wages in return for relief work provided mainly by local authorities in co-operation with state governments. The Commonwealth Government assisted by making grants to the states.

The unemployment relief systems of the states lapsed when the Commonwealth scheme, which provided for the payment of cash benefits to the unemployed, came into operation on 1 July 1945.<sup>1</sup>

At the same time the Commonwealth introduced a sickness benefit scheme which had no parallel in any of the states.

These schemes were combined in one Act, the *Unemployment and Sickness Benefits Act 1944*<sup>2</sup> (later incorporated in the *Social Services Consolidation Act 1947*), most of the provisions of which applied to both schemes. The legislation also provided for the payment of what was termed 'special benefit'.

### Initial provisions

The *Unemployment and Sickness Benefits Act 1944* (No 10 of 1944) provided for payment of benefits to men and women who had reached 16 years of age but not 65 (men) or 60 (women) who were not working because of unemployment or sickness. Applicants were required to have resided continuously in Australia for not less than 12 months immediately prior to the date of application for benefits but continuous residence was deemed not to have been interrupted by occasional absences not exceeding six months in total, by any absence during which the claimant's home or such children who were under 16 years remained in Australia, or by any absence connected with war service. Applicants could not be in receipt of, or qualified to receive, an old-age, invalid or widow's pension or a service pension. A married woman was not entitled to receive unemployment or sickness benefit unless it was not 'reasonably possible for her husband to maintain her'.

An Aboriginal Australian was not qualified to receive benefits unless the Director-General of Social Services was satisfied that, having regard to his character, standard of intelligence and social development, it was reasonable that he should receive them; an Aboriginal who was ordinarily engaged in employment satisfied these standards and was therefore eligible for benefit on the same basis as other persons.

1 For several years before this scheme commenced, an Australia-wide scheme of payments to persons 'disemployed' as a result of war-time restrictions upon non-essential industries had been in operation. (First Report of the Director-General of Social Services, Year Ended 30 June 1942, Department of Social Services, Canberra, p. 7).

2 Although this Act received the Royal Assent on 5 April 1944 it was not proclaimed to commence operation until 1 July 1945.

Unemployment benefit was not payable to unemployed persons whose unemployment was due to direct participation in a strike. Applicants were required to show that they were capable of undertaking and willing to undertake 'suitable' work and had taken reasonable steps to obtain such work. The Director-General of Social Services was empowered to determine what was suitable work. The Director-General also had the power to postpone or cancel the payment of unemployment benefit to a person who became voluntarily unemployed without good and sufficient reason, became unemployed through misconduct as a worker or who refused to accept other suitable employment. This power also applied in the case of a seasonal or intermittent worker whose income, in the opinion of the Director-General, was sufficient for the maintenance of himself and the persons ordinarily maintained by him, notwithstanding a period of temporary unemployment. (In practice, this provision proved difficult to administer and has since been disregarded.)

Sickness benefit was payable to persons temporarily incapacitated for work through sickness or accident and who had thereby suffered a loss of salary, wages or other income, and whose incapacity was not brought about with a view to obtaining the benefit. Applicants were required to present a medical certificate and also to show they had lost income up to the amount of benefit claimed. The Director-General of Social Services was empowered to cancel sickness benefit where the recipient refused or failed to provide a medical certificate showing such information as the Director-General requested, to submit himself for a medical examination by a medical practitioner nominated by the Director-General, or to take any action deemed reasonable for him to take in order to terminate or reduce the extent of his incapacity.

Benefit was cancelled if an unemployment or sickness beneficiary became imprisoned or an inmate of a hospital for the insane.

The maximum rates payable were the same for both unemployment and sickness benefit. These were as follows (see Table 8):

	per week £. s.d
Unmarried persons 16 years and under 18 years	15.0
Unmarried persons 18 years and under 21 years	1. 0.0
All other cases	1. 5.0

In the case of a married person, an additional benefit of £1 per week was payable for a dependent spouse (Table 8). Additional benefit for a dependent spouse was not payable where the spouse was in receipt of an age, invalid or service pension of £1 per week or more. Where the spouse's pension was less than £1 per week it was deducted from the weekly rate of additional benefit otherwise payable. Additional benefit of 5 shillings per week was payable in respect of the first child to any person qualified to receive unemployment or sickness benefit having the custody, care and control of one or more children under the age of 16 years (Table 8). Other children were covered by the child endowment scheme.

Unemployment and sickness benefits were subject to an income test. The value of property owned by claimants was disregarded (unlike the means test for pensions). Table 9 shows amounts of income permitted before benefit was reduced (permissible income). Income above those amounts entailed a

corresponding reduction in the maximum rate of benefit. Income excluded child endowment or maternity allowance, but included earnings, any other form of income including income from property, and any periodical payment or benefit by way of gift or allowance or for board or lodging provided to the claimant in excess of a prescribed sum.

In the case of a self-employed person, payment to a substitute (other than a relative) during a period of incapacity was accepted as loss of income for sickness benefit purposes.

For the purpose of calculating unemployment benefit the income of the claimant's spouse, and any 'unearned' income of dependent children under 16 years of age was taken into account. In the case of sickness benefit only the claimant's income was taken into account for the basic amount of benefit, but income of the spouse and children were taken into account in assessment of additional allowances for dependants. The rate of sickness benefit could not exceed the rate of salary, wages or other income lost. For the purpose of both unemployment and sickness benefit the amount of additional benefit payable for a dependent spouse was determined by the spouse's income.

In the case of sickness benefit any sick pay up to £1 per week received by the claimant from an approved friendly society or similar body was disregarded as income (Table 9). Where a person was entitled to some other payment such as war pension or worker's compensation or damages in respect of the disability for which he claimed sickness benefit, payment was made only to the extent to which such other payment was less than the amount of benefit. Where such other payment was in the form of a lump sum, the equivalent weekly value of the lump sum was taken as being received weekly. Where an incapacitated person had to wait for some time before receiving compensation or damages, sickness benefit could be paid subject to the condition that the whole or any part of the benefit should be a charge on the compensation or damages and repaid out of any amounts subsequently recovered.

Provision was made for a seven-day waiting period during which unemployment or sickness benefit was not payable. Unemployment benefit was payable from and including the seventh day after the day on which the claimant became unemployed or lodged his claim, whichever was the later. Sickness benefit was payable from and including the day of the claim or the seventh day after the person became incapacitated, whichever was the later. An unemployed beneficiary could transfer to sickness benefit or vice versa without loss of continuity of payment. Benefit was payable indefinitely in the case of unemployment and during the continuance of temporary incapacity in the case of sickness. Where incapacity through sickness became permanent, an invalid pension could be granted, subject to the conditions relating to the granting of invalid pensions.

Benefit was to be payable weekly on such days and in such manner as the Director-General of Social Services determined. (The administrative practice adopted was to pay benefits weekly in arrears by cheque posted to the beneficiary's address.) Where a benefit was payable for a period of less than a week, the amount of benefit was one-sixth of the weekly rate for every day, except Sunday, for which the benefit was payable. Benefit could be paid to the beneficiary or to some other approved person.

The *Unemployment and Sickness Benefits Act* also enabled the payment of ‘special benefit’, at the discretion of the Director-General of Social Services, to persons who by reason of age, physical or mental disability or domestic circumstances or any other reason were unable to earn a sufficient livelihood for themselves and their dependants and did not qualify for a pension or unemployment or sickness benefit.

The rate of special benefit was to be determined by the Director-General but was not to exceed that for unemployment or sickness benefit, whichever was the more appropriate in the circumstances. Special benefit was payable from such date and for such period as the Director-General determined.

Benefit payable under the *Unemployment and Sickness Benefits Act* was to be inalienable.

The Director-General was empowered to make the payment of an unemployment, sickness or special benefit conditional on the claimant or beneficiary undertaking a course of vocational or other training, undergoing a medical or similar examination, receiving medical or other treatment as required or doing any work as required.

The Director-General could require any person to furnish a confidential report relating to any matter which might affect payment of benefit to any other person.

Where a person acting as the delegate of the Director-General cancelled, suspended or reduced the benefit payable to any person, the beneficiary had the right to appeal against the decision to the Director-General.

*Unemployment and Sickness Benefits Act 1944* (No 10 of 1944)

Assent: 5 April 1944

Proclaimed commencement: 1 July 1945

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From 1 July 1945 unemployment, sickness and special benefits were exempted from income tax.

*Income Tax Assessment Act 1946* (No 6 of 1946)

Assent: 13 April 1946

Commenced: 13 April 1946

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## Changes in provisions

1947 The *Social Services Consolidation Act 1947* (No 26 of 1947) which incorporated the *Unemployment and Sickness Benefits Act*, made the following changes, effective from 1 July 1947, to the unemployment and sickness benefits scheme.

Provision was made to ensure that, where a claim for sickness benefit was lodged within six weeks of the commencement of the incapacity, there would be no loss of benefit due to failure to lodge the claim earlier. If the claim was lodged after the six-week period, payment would commence from the date of lodgement unless the Director-General was satisfied that the delay was due to the incapacity or some other sufficient cause.

An additional benefit not exceeding £1 per week became payable in cases where a man with one or more dependent children under 16 years of age had a housekeeper who was substantially dependent on him but not employed by him, where he was not receiving benefit for his wife (Table 8).

Where a beneficiary was living apart from his spouse and was making a maintenance payment of less than £1 per week for the spouse, the additional benefit payable was not to exceed the amount of the maintenance payment.

A partial additional benefit became payable for a partially dependent spouse.

Wives legally separated or likely to be permanently living apart from their husbands became eligible for benefit.

Additional benefit for the first child, of 5 shillings per week, became available to a beneficiary making regular contributions of not less than that amount towards the maintenance of such a child (as well as to the person having the custody, care and control of the child).

Where a claimant for sickness benefit claimed loss of income due to payments made to another person during the period of incapacity, payments to close relatives were no longer excluded.

The provision disqualifying married women from entitlement to unemployment or sickness benefit where it was reasonably possible for their husbands to maintain them, was changed to disqualification from sickness benefit alone, and the payment of a partial benefit was introduced where the husband was able to provide only partial maintenance.

The requirement that an applicant for benefits should not be in receipt of, or qualified to receive, an old-age, invalid, widow's, or service pension, was amended: the words 'or qualified to receive' were deleted (actual receipt of any of these pensions was retained as a disqualification).

Where the spouse of an unemployment beneficiary was receiving an age, invalid or service pension, £1 per week of such pension could be disregarded in assessing joint income (Table 9).

Benefits received under the *Pharmaceutical Benefits Act*, the *Hospital Benefits Act* and the *Tuberculosis Act* became exempt from income when applying the income test for benefit.

'Unearned income' of a claimant's children under 16 years of age was no longer taken into account when applying the income test for unemployment benefit.

The definition of friendly society was extended to include any body or society similar in nature to a friendly society.

The residential qualification for benefit was waived where a claimant satisfied the Director-General of Social Services that he intended to reside permanently in Australia.

Special benefit claimants and recipients were no longer subject to the provisions giving the Director-General power to make the payment of benefit conditional on complying with any requirement that he should undertake medical or rehabilitation treatment or vocational training.

*Social Services Consolidation Act 1947* (No 26 of 1947)

Assent: 11 June 1947

Commenced: 1 July 1947

- 1948 Amounts received in reimbursement of medical, dental and similar expenses actually paid (other than periodical payments or payments representing accumulations of instalments) were exempted when applying the income test for benefit.

Provision was made for income such as interest, dividends, etc usually credited or received periodically, to be included on a weekly basis in the assessment of income for benefit purposes.

The provision regarding payment of compensation or damages received in respect of the same incapacity for which sickness benefit had been paid, was re-cast, giving the Commonwealth legal authority to make the beneficiary liable to reimburse any overpayment of benefit where there was an overlap of payments. Provision was made also for compensation or damages to be paid directly to the Director-General in reimbursement of overpayments.

Legislation provided for the establishment of a civilian rehabilitation service, providing such facilities and other things as were necessary for the treatment and vocational training of pensioners and beneficiaries and claimants for pensions and benefits who but for that treatment and training would be likely to become unemployable.

*Social Services Consolidation Act (No 2) 1948* (No 69 of 1948)

Assent: 10 December 1948

Commenced: 10 December 1948

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- 1949 The 1943 reciprocal agreement in the field of pensions between Australia and New Zealand (*Invalid and Old-age Pensions (Reciprocity with New Zealand) Act 1943*) was repealed on 1 July 1949 by the *Social Services Consolidation Act 1949*, and a new, wider agreement replaced it. The new agreement covered additional benefits, including unemployment and sickness benefits in Australia and the corresponding benefits in New Zealand.

Social Services (Reciprocity with New Zealand) Regulations Statutory Rules 1949, No 42

Gazetted: 30 June 1949

Commenced: 1 July 1949

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- 1950 Benefit was cancelled where a beneficiary was granted an allowance under the *Tuberculosis Act 1948* (see Age and Invalid Pension section for details).

*Social Services Consolidation Act (No 2) 1948* (No 69 1948)

Assent: 10 December 1948

Commenced: 10 December 1948

13 July 1950 (tuberculosis provisions)

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The time limit for the lodgement of claims for sickness benefit was extended from six weeks to 13 weeks after the date of incapacity. Where the claim was lodged after that time payment would commence from the date of lodgement, unless the claimant could show that the delay was due to the effects of the incapacity or some other sufficient cause.



A claim for worker's compensation made within 13 weeks after the occurrence of the claimant's incapacity was to be treated as a claim for sickness benefit in determining the date from which the benefit would be paid.

War pension was exempted from income in assessment of unemployment and sickness benefit.

*Social Services Consolidation Act (No 2) 1950* (No 26 of 1950)

Assent: 27 November 1950

Commenced: 27 November 1950

- 1951 When applying the income test for unemployment benefit, the portion of an age, invalid or service pension received by the spouse of a claimant that could be excluded in the assessment of joint income was increased (Table 9).

*Social Services Consolidation Act 1951* (No 22 of 1951)

Assent: 31 October 1951

Commenced: 31 October 1951

- 1952 Rates of benefits were increased (Table 8).

Benefit payments received from registered hospital benefit organisations (up to the amount of hospital fees payable over and above the amount received by way of Commonwealth hospital benefits), were exempted when applying the income test for benefit.

The maximum exemption of payments from friendly societies was increased (Table 9).

The amount of an age, invalid or service pension which a spouse or unpaid housekeeper could receive and still be regarded as a dependant of a claimant for unemployment or sickness benefit was increased (Table 8).

Provision was made that where a beneficiary was living apart from his wife but was making a maintenance payment of less than £2 per week the additional benefit payable was not to exceed the amount of the maintenance payment. Previously the amount a beneficiary had to contribute for full payment was £1 per week.

*Social Services Consolidation Act 1952* (No 41 of 1952)

Assent: 25 September 1952

Commenced: 25 September 1952

- 1953 Benefit payments received from registered medical benefits organisations were exempted (under similar conditions to the exemption of hospital benefit payments) when applying the income test for benefit. The amount of medical benefits payable by the Commonwealth (in addition to hospital and pharmaceutical benefits) was also exempted.

*Social Services Consolidation Act 1953* (No 51 of 1953)

Assent: 26 October 1953

Commenced: 26 October 1953

- 1954 Reciprocity was provided for in the field of pensions and benefits between Australia and the United Kingdom, including unemployment and sickness benefit in Australia and the corresponding benefits in the United Kingdom.

Social Services (Reciprocity with United Kingdom) Regulations  
Statutory Rules 1954, No 8  
Gazetted: 28 January 1954  
Deemed commencement: 7 January 1954

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When applying the income test for unemployment benefit, the portion of an age, invalid or service pension received by the spouse of a claimant that could be excluded in the assessment of joint income was increased (Table 9).

*Social Services Act 1954* (No 30 of 1954)  
Assent: 6 October 1954  
Commenced: 6 October 1954

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- 1956 The following allowances payable to ex-members of the Defence Force by the Repatriation Department were exempted when applying the income test for benefits: decoration allowance, recreation transport allowance, and an allowance towards the cost, maintenance or running expenses of a vehicle provided by the Repatriation Department to a seriously incapacitated ex-member of the Force.

*Social Services Act 1956* (No 67 of 1956)  
Assent: 5 October 1956  
Commenced: 5 October 1956

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- 1957 Rates of benefits were increased (Table 8).

The amount of an age, invalid or service pension which a spouse or unpaid housekeeper could receive and still be regarded as a dependant of a claimant for unemployment or sickness benefit was increased (Table 8).

The amount of permissible income was increased (Table 9).

The portion of an age, invalid or service pension received by the spouse of a claimant for unemployment benefit that could be excluded in the assessment of joint income was increased (Table 9).

*Social Services Act 1957* (No 46 of 1957)  
Assent: 17 October 1957  
Commenced: 17 October 1957

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- 1958 The 1954 reciprocal agreement between Australia and the United Kingdom was replaced. Reciprocity of unemployment and sickness benefits in Australia and the corresponding benefits in the United Kingdom continued under similar conditions. The basis of eligibility for special benefit was changed from insurance status to residence in both countries.

Social Services (Reciprocity with United Kingdom) Regulations  
Statutory Rules 1958, No 30  
Gazetted: 24 April 1958  
Deemed commencement: 1 April 1958

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All amounts received for medical, hospital or dental treatment from organisations registered under the *National Health Act* were exempted when applying the income test for unemployment and sickness benefit (instead of amounts only up to the total fees payable).

The whole amount of payments from friendly societies and similar approved bodies was exempted from income when applying the means test for sickness benefit (instead of payments of only up to £2 per week (Table 9)).

The scope of the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service was widened to include persons receiving special benefit under the same conditions as those applying to recipients of unemployment and sickness benefit.

*Social Services Act 1958* (No 44 of 1958)

Assent: 29 September 1958

Proclaimed commencement: 15 October 1958

- 1959 An amount payable by the Repatriation Commission, known as a clothing allowance, was exempted when applying the income test for benefit.
- 1960 Restrictions on Aboriginals eligibility for benefit were removed and Aboriginals, other than those who were 'nomadic or primitive', became eligible on the same basis as other members of the community. (In practice Aboriginals had been eligible for unemployment and sickness benefits on much the same basis as other members of the community since 1945.)

*Social Services Act 1959* (No 57 of 1959)

Assent: 30 September 1959

Commenced: 30 September 1959

Proclaimed commencement: 2 February 1960 (provisions affecting Aboriginals)

The provisions for recovery of payments of sickness benefit paid prior to the awarding of compensation or damages (because some lump sum awards do not specifically state the incapacity or the period to which the award relates) were made more specific by providing for the recovery of such sickness benefit where the lump sum award could reasonably be regarded as compensation in respect of the incapacity and the period for which the sickness benefit was paid.

The definition of a person liable to pay compensation was amended to include an insurer who, under a contract of insurance, was liable to indemnify the person liable in the first instance to pay compensation, thus enabling recovery of sickness benefit or cost of rehabilitation treatment or training from such an insurer before the compensation or damages were disbursed.

*Social Services Act 1960* (No 45 of 1960)

Assent: 27 September 1960

Commenced: 27 September 1960

1961 Rates of benefits were increased (Table 8).

The amount of an age, invalid or service pension which a spouse or unpaid housekeeper could receive and still be regarded as a dependant of a claimant for unemployment or sickness benefit was increased (Table 8).

The portion of an age, invalid or service pension received by the spouse of a claimant for unemployment benefit that could be excluded in the assessment of joint income was increased (Table 9).

*Social Services Act 1961* (No 45 of 1961)

Assent: 27 September 1961

Commenced: 27 September 1961

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1962 Rates of benefits were increased (Table 8).

Additional benefit for the first child was increased to 15 shillings per week and additional benefit became payable for the second and subsequent dependent children at the rate of 15 shillings per week (Table 8).

The amount of an age, invalid or service pension which a spouse or unpaid housekeeper could receive and still be regarded as a dependant of a claimant for unemployment or sickness benefit was increased (Table 8).

The portion of an age, invalid or service pension received by the spouse of a claimant for unemployment benefit that could be excluded in the assessment of joint income was increased (Table 9).

*Social Services Act 1962* (No 1 of 1962)

Assent: 1 March 1962

Commenced: 1 March 1962

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The 1958 reciprocal agreement between Australia and the United Kingdom was amended and the provisions concerning the reciprocity of unemployment and sickness benefits in Australia and the corresponding benefits in the United Kingdom were extended. In particular, benefits were extended to include Australians becoming sick or unemployed while temporarily working in Britain.

*Social Services (Reciprocity with United Kingdom) Regulations*

Statutory Rules 1962, No 85

Gazetted: 27 September 1962

Commenced: 1 October 1962

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1966 Special provision was made to allow a person in receipt of sustenance allowance from the Repatriation Department, on becoming qualified to receive an unemployment benefit, to transfer to the benefit without loss of continuity of payment.

Sickness benefit could be paid to a person ceasing to be a mental hospital patient, for up to 12 weeks of the period of hospitalisation, subject to the claim being lodged within 13 weeks of the date of discharge from the hospital or, if absent but not discharged, the date of commencement of the absence.

All specific references to 'Aboriginal natives' were removed from the *Social Services Act* including the provision disqualifying 'Aboriginal natives' who were 'nomadic or primitive' from receiving pensions or benefits.

*Social Services Act 1966* (No 41 of 1966)

Assent: 30 September 1966

Commenced: 30 September 1966

- 1968 The rate of pension payable to a married person whose spouse was receiving an unemployment or sickness benefit was increased to the standard rate (\$14 per week) instead of the married rate (\$12.50 per week).

*Social Services Act 1968* (No 65 of 1968)

Assent: 27 September 1968

Commenced: 27 September 1968

- 1969 Rates of benefits were increased (Table 8).
- The amount of an age, invalid or service pension which a spouse or unpaid housekeeper could receive and still be regarded as a dependant of a claimant for unemployment or sickness benefit was increased (Table 8).
- The amount of permissible income was increased (Table 9).
- Adult rate of benefit became payable to an unmarried minor who had no parent living in Australia; the adult income test was to be applied when assessing the benefit.
- Additional benefit for children was increased (Table 8); where a beneficiary was claiming additional benefit by virtue of a regular contribution towards the maintenance of a child, the rate of the contribution was to be not less than \$2.50 per week.
- The portion of an age, invalid or service pension received by the spouse of a claimant for unemployment benefit that could be excluded in the assessment of joint income was increased (Table 9).
- The seven-day waiting period for unemployment or sickness benefit was required only once in every 13 weeks, in respect of more than one period of unemployment or sickness.
- The Director-General could, in special circumstances, release a person, wholly or partially, from liability to repay sickness benefit where a payment of compensation or damages was received in a lump sum and covered the period for which sickness benefit had been paid.

*Social Services Act 1969* (No 94 of 1969)

Assent: 27 September 1969

Commenced: 27 September 1969

- 1970 A higher rate of sickness benefit was introduced, referred to as long-term sickness benefit, and tied to the maximum standard rate of age and invalid pension, for people (except those without dependants and in hospital) who were in receipt of sickness benefit for six consecutive weeks or longer (Table 8). Long-term sickness beneficiaries without dependants were required to notify the department within seven days of admission to hospital.
- A supplementary allowance could be paid to people receiving long-term sickness benefit who paid rent and who were entirely or substantially dependent on their benefit. The maximum rate of the allowance was \$2 per week (Table 8).

*Social Services Act (No 2) 1970* (No 59 of 1970)

Assent: 28 September 1970

Commenced: 28 September 1970

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- 1971 Rates of long-term sickness benefit were increased (Table 8).

*Social Services Act 1971* (No 16 of 1971)

Assent: 7 April 1971

Deemed commencement: 1 April 1971

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Rates of long-term sickness benefit and additional benefits for dependants were increased (Table 8).

The amount of an age, invalid or service pension which a spouse or unpaid housekeeper could receive and still be regarded as a dependant of a claimant for unemployment or sickness benefit was increased (Table 8).

A standard rate of additional benefit for each dependent child was introduced; the rate was \$4.50 per week (Table 8).

The portion of an age, invalid or service pension received by the spouse of a claimant for unemployment benefit that could be excluded in the assessment of joint income was increased (Table 9).

*Social Services Act (No 2) 1971* (No 67 of 1971)

Assent: 29 September 1971

Commenced: 29 September 1971

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- 1972 Rates of benefits, other than long-term sickness benefit, were increased (Table 8).

*Social Services Act 1972* (No 1 of 1972)

Assent: 25 February 1972

Commenced: 25 February 1972

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Rates of long-term sickness benefit were increased (Table 8).

*Social Services Act (No 2) 1972* (No 14 of 1972)

Assent: 24 April 1972

Commenced: 24 April 1972

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Rates of long-term sickness benefit and supplementary allowance were increased (Table 8).

*Social Services Act (No 4) 1972* (No 79 of 1972)

Assent: 27 September 1972

Commenced: 27 September 1972

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- 1973 Rates of unemployment and sickness benefits were increased (Table 8); these increases brought unemployment and sickness benefit rates into line with age and invalid pension rates.

Long-term sickness benefit was abolished but supplementary allowance retained (long-term sickness benefit became superfluous with the raising of sickness benefit to the level of age and invalid pensions).

A 'standard' unmarried rate of benefit was introduced.

A 'married' rate of benefit was introduced. A married beneficiary was entitled to receive this rate plus an additional benefit of the same amount if the spouse was dependent.

An age, invalid or service pension received by the spouse of a claimant for unemployment benefit became exempt when applying the income test for benefit (Table 9) but the Director-General's discretion remained to reduce additional benefit for a spouse where any pension was received by that spouse.

Provision was made for payment of additional benefit for a child to continue after his 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and without limitation on age if the child was a dependent full-time student.

*Social Services Act 1973* (No 1 of 1973)

Assent: 16 March 1973

Commenced: 16 March 1973

Rates of benefits were increased (Table 8).

Double orphan's pension was exempted from income when applying the means test for benefit (double orphan's pension was introduced by this legislation).

Provision was made for income tax to be deducted from pension or benefit if so requested by the recipient.

*Social Services Act (No 4) 1973* (No 103 of 1973)

Assent: 26 September 1973

Commenced: 26 September 1973

Special benefit payable to persons of age pension age became subject to income tax from 1 July 1973.

*Income Tax Assessment Act (No 5) 1973* (No 165 of 1973)

Assent: 11 December 1973

Commenced: 11 December 1973

1974 Rates of benefits were increased (Table 8).

*Social Services Act 1974* (No 2 of 1974)

Assent: 22 March 1974

Commenced: 22 March 1974

Rates of benefits were increased (Table 8).

*Social Services Act (No 2) 1974* (No 23 of 1974)

Assent: 31 July 1974

Commenced: 31 July 1974

Rates of additional benefit for dependent children and supplementary allowance were increased (Table 8).

The amount of supplementary allowance payable from 1 November 1974 was restricted to the amount paid for rent or for lodging.

Handicapped child's allowance was exempted when applying the income test for benefits. (Handicapped child's allowance was introduced by this legislation, to come into operation on 30 December 1974.)



The married rate of benefit became payable to a claimant who had a de facto wife where the relationship had existed for not less than three years. (Previously, this additional benefit could be paid for a de facto wife only if she was keeping house for the beneficiary and one or more of his children, was substantially dependent on him and not employed by him.)

*Social Services Act (No 3) 1974* (No 91 of 1974)

Assent: 1 November 1974

Commenced: 1 November 1974

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1975 Rates of benefits were increased (Table 8).

Provision was made for the payment of benefits weekly in advance instead of weekly in arrears (payment of unemployment benefit weekly in advance had been made administratively since January 1975).

The special benefit provisions were amended to enable the payment of one week's special benefit to be made to persons newly released from gaol who had claimed and were qualified for unemployment or sickness benefit, thus bridging the statutory seven-day waiting period for these payments.

*Social Services Act 1975* (No 34 of 1975)

Assent: 19 May 1975

Commenced: 19 May 1975

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Rates of benefits were increased, except for unmarried persons under 18 years, as from 1 November 1975 (Table 8). The standard single rate of benefit was thus abolished.

Legislation eliminated the period of three years for which a woman was previously required to be living with a man on a bona fide domestic basis in order to be regarded as his wife and thus attract additional benefit.

*Social Services Act (No 3) 1975* (No 110 of 1975)

Assent: 27 October 1975

Commenced: 27 October 1975

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1976 In a statement on 23 March 1976 the Government announced:

- ▶ The definition of 'suitable work' be amended to allow the Commonwealth Employment Service to extend the range of jobs to which beneficiaries may be referred after they have been in receipt of unemployment benefit for a reasonable period.
- ▶ Persons receiving unemployment benefit be required to lodge their income statements personally with the CES each fortnight and that the Department of Social Security field officer selective review be stepped up.
- ▶ Unemployment benefit be not paid to school leavers during the long vacation but that benefit be paid from the commencement of the new school year if the students do not then return to school or proceed to university. This procedure will operate from the end of the 1976 school year.
- ▶ People who voluntarily give up their jobs will be required to wait six weeks before being granted unemployment benefit.

See also legislation of 1977.

Ministerial Statement by the Minister for Employment and Industrial Relations on unemployment benefit and the work test, 23 March 1976 (CPD, HR, 17 February—8 April 1976, pp. 869-872)

Rates of benefits, except for unmarried persons under 18 years of age, were increased (Table 8).

The training component and living-away-from-home allowance payable to full-time trainees under the National Employment and Training system (NEAT) were exempted when assessing entitlement to benefit.

*Social Services Amendment Act 1976* (No 26 of 1976)

Assent: 30 April 1976

Commenced: 30 April 1976

The Government announced that as from 10 May 1976 the conditions of eligibility for unemployment benefit would be varied, as an urgent interim measure, to enable a primary producer to work on his farm, pending his obtaining outside employment, and still be regarded as unemployed, providing that he satisfied the other conditions of eligibility.

Press Statement by Minister for Social Security, 18 May 1976.

Unemployment and sickness benefits, formerly exempt from income tax, became taxable from 1 July 1976. This included supplementary allowance and additional payments for dependants. Special benefit, previously taxable only if paid to persons of age pension age, also became taxable.

*Income Tax Assessment Amendment Act (No 2) 1976* (No 56 of 1976)

Assent: 4 June 1976

Commenced: 4 June 1976

Rates of benefits, except for single persons under 18 years, were increased (Table 8).

Provision was made for automatic six-monthly increases in benefits (except for single persons under 18 years) every May by the movement in the Consumer Price Index between the preceding June and December quarters, and every November by the increase in the Consumer Price Index between the preceding December and June quarters.

Legal sanction was given to an experimental procedure introduced in March 1976 with the concurrence of the Treasurer and the Minister for Social Security, which allowed for unemployment benefit to be paid fortnightly instead of weekly and related it to a five-day rather than a six-day week.

*Social Services Amendment Act (No 3) 1976* (No 111 of 1976)

Assent: 29 October 1976

Commenced: 29 October 1976

- 1977 The position of school leavers in regard to unemployment benefit was clarified: benefit was not to be payable for a 6-week period after a person ceased to be a full-time secondary school student or voluntarily ceased to undertake a full-time course of study at an institution of tertiary education (other than a course for a postgraduate or higher degree or similar qualification) without having completed the course and without good and sufficient reason.

From 1 November 1977 the provision disqualifying a married woman from receipt of sickness benefit if it was reasonably possible for her husband to maintain her was removed so that she could qualify for sickness benefit on the same basis as a married man. The income test for sickness benefit was also altered to take into account the combined income of husband and wife for the purpose of determining total entitlement (including additional benefit for a spouse).

The seven-day waiting period during which unemployment benefit was not payable was modified so that, where the Director-General was satisfied that the applicant had been capable of and willing to undertake suitable work and had taken reasonable steps to undertake such work, the date of commencement of benefit could be advanced by up to seven days, ie the waiting period could begin from the date of the applicant's unemployment or from seven days prior to the application, whichever was the later.

The provision that benefits could be paid in advance was changed so that payments would be made at such times as determined by the Director-General. The Treasurer in his Budget Speech of 16 August 1977 announced that the Government had decided to pay new claims for unemployment benefit in arrears instead of in advance (unemployment benefits which were current at 1 November 1977 and sickness and special benefit, except in certain cases, continued to be paid in advance).

*Social Services Amendment Act 1977* (No 159 of 1977)

Assent: 10 November 1977

Commenced: 10 November 1977

Deemed commencement: 1 November 1977 (sickness benefit provisions)

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- 1978 From 1 November 1978 indexation ceased to apply to rates of unemployment benefit for unmarried beneficiaries 18 years and over without dependants. The increase which would have been due in November 1978 under the repealed indexation provisions was not paid. These rates in future were to be reviewed annually by the Government at Budget time.

The provisions concerning the indexation of benefits were changed so that the rates of benefits which were subject to indexation would be automatically adjusted once a year in November in accordance with the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index between the two previous June quarters, instead of twice-yearly (in May and November) as before. The first (and, in the event, the only) increase under these arrangements took place in November 1979 (Table 8).

An upper age limit of 25 years was set for payment of additional benefits for full-time student children over 16 years.

Entitlement to additional benefit for a child outside Australia was withdrawn, unless the child was temporarily abroad, or living abroad pending migration to Australia within four years after the date of the claimant's arrival in Australia, or living abroad with a person receiving an Australian pension.

*Social Services Amendment Act 1978* (No 128 of 1978)

Assent: 26 October 1978

Commenced: 26 October 1978

1 November 1978 (unemployment and sickness  
benefit provisions)

- 1979 Twice-yearly automatic indexation of those pensions and benefits still subject to indexation was reintroduced, providing for increases in May of each year in line with the movement in the Consumer Price Index between the previous June and December quarters and in November of each year on the basis of movements in the Consumer Price Index between the previous December and June quarters. The first increase under this legislation took place in May 1980 (the November 1979 increase being based on the provisions for annual indexation). Unemployment and sickness benefits for unmarried persons aged under 18 and unmarried persons aged 18 years or over without dependants remained outside the scope of the indexation provisions.

A provision was introduced which precluded payment of unemployment or special benefit to a person whose unemployment was due to industrial action by himself or by members of a union of which he was a member. A further provision ensured that the spouse of a person disqualified from unemployment benefit on these grounds could qualify for unemployment or sickness benefit at the single rate plus additional benefit for the child. If the spouse was ineligible for unemployment benefit or sickness benefit in his own right and was experiencing hardship, special benefit could be paid at the single rate plus additional benefit for each child. Industrial action included strikes, bans, go-slow tactics or other unauthorised limitations on the work performance. The new provision applied only while the industrial action was in force.

A claimant for unemployment benefit was required to satisfy the Director-General that during a period of up to seven days prior to lodgement of a claim he was not disqualified from unemployment benefit by reason of industrial action.

Where a person became unemployed, voluntarily and without good and sufficient reason, or due to misconduct as a worker, or refusal or failure to accept an offer of suitable employment, and the Director-General postponed payment of benefit, it was required by law that any such postponement was to be for a period of at least six weeks and not more than 12 weeks (instead of for a period of any duration as before). No amendment was made to the legislation concerning cancellation of benefit.

Provisions for the recovery of sickness benefits from compensation were enacted (see 1982).

*Social Services Amendment Act 1979* (No 121 of 1979)

Assent: 29 October 1979

Commenced: 29 October 1979

2 November 1979 (indexation provisions)

Proclaimed commencement: 1 August 1982 (provisions regarding  
payment by way of compensation in relation  
to sickness benefit) (see 1982)

- 1980 Unemployment benefit for unmarried persons aged 18 years or more, without dependants, was increased (Table 8).

Additional benefit for children was increased (Table 8).

The income test for unemployment and sickness benefits was liberalised:

- ▶ An unmarried person aged 16 or 17 with at least one parent living in Australia could earn up to \$3 per week without reduction of benefit, after which benefit was reduced by half the amount of ‘other income’ between \$3 and \$40 per week and by the full amount of ‘other income’ above \$40 per week (Table 9).
- ▶ A person aged 18 years or more could receive other income up to \$6 per week without reduction of benefit, after which benefit would be reduced by half the amount of other income up to \$50 per week and by the full amount of other income above \$50 per week (Table 9).

Sickness benefit was extended to mental hospital patients (other than those who had been convicted of an offence and were, in effect, in prison).

Pay and allowances received by Defence Force Reservists, other than those called up for full-time service, were excluded from the definition of income for determination of unemployment and sickness benefits.

*Social Services Amendment Act 1980* (No 130 of 1980)

Assent: 19 September 1980

Commenced: 19 September 1980 (Defence Force Reservists)  
1 November 1980 (unemployment and sickness benefits)

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Eligibility for Commonwealth fringe benefits was extended to sickness beneficiaries, subject to the same income test as applied to pensioners and supporting parent beneficiaries.

*National Health Amendment Act (No 2) 1980* (No 131 of 1980)

Assent: 19 September 1980

Commenced: 1 November 1980 (fringe benefits)

*Health Insurance Amendment Act 1980* (No 132 of 1980)

Assent: 19 September 1980

Commenced: 19 September 1980  
1 November 1980 (fringe benefits)

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- 1981 The rate of benefit for unemployment beneficiaries aged 18 years and over without dependants was increased (Table 8).

*Social Services Amendment Act 1981* (No 159 of 1981)

Assent: 30 October 1981

Commenced: 30 October 1981  
1 November 1981 (rate of benefit)  
1 February 1982 (supplementary allowance) (see 1982)

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- 1982 The maximum rate of supplementary allowance became either \$8 per week or one half of the amount by which rent paid or payable exceeded \$10 per week, whichever was the lower (Table 8). This was reduced by a withdrawal rate of 50 per cent of the beneficiary's assessable income. Tenants of government housing authorities were no longer eligible for supplementary allowance, but a savings provision protected existing tenants. Where a beneficiary commenced to pay 'government rent' he was required to notify the department immediately.

A married beneficiary living in the matrimonial home with a spouse entitled to supplementary assistance or supplementary allowance was entitled to half the combined amount of supplementary assistance and allowance payable to the couple.

*Social Services Amendment Act 1981* (No 159 of 1981)

Assent: 30 October 1981

Commenced: 30 October 1981

1 February 1982 (supplementary allowance)

The waiting period for unemployment benefit was modified so that, where a claimant became registered as unemployed with the Commonwealth Employment Service and made a claim for benefit within 14 days of registration (or longer, if considered reasonable by the Director-General), the date of registration was taken to be the date of claim.

Where sickness benefit was claimed for an incapacity (referred to as the 'recurring incapacity') and the claimant had received sickness benefit previously for an incapacity with a related cause, benefit became payable from and including the start of the period of the recurring incapacity. This applied where the claim was lodged within the normal period; where lodgement was delayed the Director-General had to be satisfied that the delay was due to the cause of the recurring incapacity or to some other sufficient cause.

*Social Services Legislation Amendment Act 1982* (No 37 of 1982)

Assent: 2 June 1982

Commenced: 2 June 1982

The provision for recovery of sickness benefit, where compensation was awarded for the same incapacity as that for which the sickness benefit had been paid, was amended to remove the specific requirement that the compensation had to be paid for the same period as that for which benefit had been paid. In addition, greater responsibility was placed on the beneficiary, the person liable to pay compensation and the insurer to notify the department of events which were relevant to the recovery of amounts paid by the department.

*Social Services Amendment Act 1979* (No 121 of 1979)

Assent: 29 October 1979

Commenced: 29 October 1979

*Social Services Legislation Amendment Act 1982* (No 37 of 1982)

Assent: 2 June 1982

Commenced: 2 June 1982



Proclaimed commencement of 1979 provisions regarding payment by way of compensation in relation to sickness benefits (as amended by the *Social Services Legislation Amendment Act 1982*): 1 August 1982.

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From 2 August 1982 new grants of sickness benefit became payable in arrears (current recipients continued to be paid in advance).

Press Release by the Minister for Social Security 20 July 1982.

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The rate of benefit was increased for unmarried unemployment and sickness beneficiaries under 18 years (Table 8).

The rate of benefit was increased for unmarried unemployment beneficiaries aged 18 years or more without dependants (Table 8).

The income tests for all classes of unemployment and sickness beneficiaries were standardised. All beneficiaries could now receive other income of up to \$10 per week without reduction in benefit (Table 9); thereafter benefit was reduced by half the amount of other income between \$10 and \$60 per week, and by the full amount of other income over \$60 per week.

The maximum rate of supplementary allowance was increased (Table 8).

Where a beneficiary had been receiving additional benefit for a dependent child and that child became a supporting parent beneficiary, additional benefit ceased to be payable. A savings provision protected existing recipients.

Rent subsidies paid by a government or a government housing authority to private tenants were excluded from assessable income under the unemployment and sickness benefits income tests.

*Social Security Legislation Amendment Act 1982* (No 98 of 1982)

Assent: 27 October 1982

Commenced: 27 October 1982

17 August 1982 (rent subsidies)

1 November 1982 (unemployment and sickness benefit rates and income tests; supplementary allowance; dependancy provisions)

1 February 1983 (exclusion of supplementary allowance where spouse receiving incentive allowance) (see 1983)

1 March 1983 (rehabilitation allowance and training allowance) (see 1983)

1 April 1983 (mobility allowance) (see 1983)

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The provision restricting health benefit concessions and other Commonwealth fringe benefits to sickness beneficiaries whose other income fell below certain limits was abolished. Thus all sickness beneficiaries and their dependants became eligible for these concessions and benefits.

*Health Legislation Amendment Act (No 2) 1982* (No 112 of 1982)

Assent: 8 November 1982

Commenced: 8 November 1982

1 November 1982 (health benefit concessions and fringe benefits for sickness beneficiaries)

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The 'loss of income' provision for payment of sickness benefit was amended to extend eligibility to those people (in addition to those who had suffered an actual loss of salary, wages or other income through temporary incapacity for work because of sickness or accident) who:

- would have qualified for unemployment benefit but for their illness or incapacity but who were not receiving unemployment benefit at the time of falling ill (eg school leavers)
- had been receiving an invalid pension but ceased to qualify for it but nevertheless were temporarily unfit for work
- had been receiving a sheltered employment or rehabilitation allowance who were temporarily incapacitated for work.

The rate of payment was to be determined according to the rate of the relevant benefit, pension or allowance.

Supplementary allowance became payable to persons transferred from unemployment to sickness benefit or who, but for their sickness or incapacity, would have qualified for unemployment benefit.

Pensioners and supporting parent beneficiaries receiving supplementary assistance, sheltered employment allowees and those invalid pensioners receiving an incentive allowance, and rehabilitation allowees formerly receiving such assistance or allowance, who transferred to sickness benefit, became eligible for supplementary allowance immediately on transfer rather than serving the six-week qualifying period.

The seven-day waiting period required before payment of new grants of sickness benefit could be made was waived in the case of those persons qualifying for sickness benefit immediately after ceasing to receive a social security pension, benefit or allowance, a service pension, or a tuberculosis allowance, provided the claim for sickness benefit was lodged within 13 weeks of the cessation of payment of the pension, benefit or allowance. If the claim was lodged outside the 13-week period, then payment would commence from the date of lodgement; if, however, the Director-General of Social Security was satisfied that late lodgement was due to the cause of the incapacity or some other sufficient cause, arrears of benefit could be paid from the day after the former pension, benefit or allowance ceased.

Provision was made for additional benefit for children to continue to be paid, in the case of beneficiaries with children leaving school and seeking work, until the children received unemployment benefit following the six-week deferment period, or during that period obtained employment or otherwise ceased to qualify for additional benefit.

*Social Security Amendment Act 1982* (No 148 of 1982)

Assent: 31 December 1982

Commenced: 31 December 1982

1 November 1982 (additional benefit for children)

- 1983 A rehabilitation allowance was introduced and additional benefit ceased to be payable for students receiving this allowance.

A married-rate sickness beneficiary with a spouse receiving a rehabilitation allowance became entitled to half the combined amount of supplementary allowance payable to the couple, where they were living together in the matrimonial home.

A sickness beneficiary with an invalid pensioner spouse receiving an incentive allowance was excluded from entitlement to supplementary allowance (this change coincided with the introduction of incentive allowance for a limited range of invalid pensioners).

The provisions regarding recovery of sickness benefits from subsequent compensation payments were extended to include a person receiving a rehabilitation allowance but who would otherwise have been a sickness beneficiary.

Persons receiving a rehabilitation allowance were excluded from eligibility for special benefit.

The new training allowance and mobility allowance were excluded from assessable income for the purpose of the unemployment and sickness benefit income tests.

*Social Security Legislation Amendment Act 1982* (No 98 of 1982)

Assent: 27 October 1982

Commenced: 27 October 1982

1 February 1983 (exclusion of supplementary allowance where spouse receiving incentive allowance)

1 March 1983 (rehabilitation allowance and training allowance)

1 April 1983 (mobility allowance)

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## Maternity allowance

Maternity allowance was a lump sum payment made to a mother on the birth of a child. It was introduced in October 1912 and abolished in October 1978.

### Initial provisions

A maternity allowance was payable for a birth when a live or 'viable' child was born. The amount of the allowance was £5 for each birth (Table 14). Only one allowance was payable where more than one child was born at one birth. It was payable without means test and was not subject to tax.

Women, other than 'Asiatics' or 'Aboriginal natives' of Australia, Papua or the Islands of the Pacific, who were residents or who intended to settle in Australia, were eligible to claim maternity allowance. The allowance was not paid unless the claim for payment was made within three months of the birth.

The allowance was payable to a woman who gave birth to a child either in Australia or on board a ship proceeding from one port in the Commonwealth or a territory of the Commonwealth to another such port. No restriction was placed on the eligibility of unmarried women for maternity allowance, and there was no character test.

If the mother died the allowance was payable to the person best entitled to receive it (usually the father).

*Maternity Allowance Act 1912* (No 8 of 1912)

Assent: 10 October 1912

Proclaimed commencement: 10 October 1912

### Changes in provisions

- 1926 The provision excluding 'Asiatics' from receipt of the allowance was changed as it had resulted in a number of 'Asiatic' women of British nationality being refused the allowance. The term 'Asiatics' was removed from the provision and replaced by the term 'aliens'.

*Maternity Allowance Act 1926* (No 48 of 1926)

Assent: 23 August 1926

Commenced: 23 August 1926

- 1927 The provision excluding 'aliens' from receipt of the allowance was again altered to allow a woman married to an 'alien' to qualify for the allowance. (A woman who married an 'alien' automatically assumed the nationality of her husband and had consequently been excluded from receipt of the allowance.)

*Maternity Allowance Act 1927* (No 34 of 1927)

Assent: 22 December 1927

Commenced: 22 December 1927

- 1931 Maternity allowance became subject to an income test. Income was defined as including any moneys, valuable consideration or profits earned, derived or received by the claimant or her husband for her or his own use or benefit from any source whatever, whether in or out of the Commonwealth. The allowance was not payable where the total income for a period of 12 months preceding the date of the birth exceeded £260 for the claimant and her husband or for the claimant in the case of an ex-nuptial child or a child born after the death of the father (Table 15).

The amount of the allowance was reduced (Table 14).

*Financial Emergency Act 1931* (No 10 of 1931)

Assent: 17 July 1931

Commenced: 17 July 1931

Proclaimed commencement: 20 July 1931 (maternity allowance)

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The income test was widened to exclude from payment of maternity allowance those whose receipt of income under £260 was a casual or temporary circumstance.

*Financial Emergency Act (No 2) 1931* (No 47 of 1931)

Assent: 4 November 1931

Commenced: 4 November 1931

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- 1932 The upper limit of income was reduced (Table 15).

*Financial Emergency Act 1932* (No 35 of 1932)

Assent: 3 October 1932

Commenced: 3 October 1932

Proclaimed commencement: 12 October 1932 (maternity allowance)

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- 1934 Maternity allowance was increased for a woman who was the mother of one or more children under 14 years of age who were born prior to the birth to which the claim related and were living at the date of that birth. The amount of the allowance was increased by 5 shillings for each additional child, but with a limit of £5 on the total allowance to be paid (Table 14).

The upper limit of income was increased by £13 for each other child under 14 years living with the mother subject to a maximum of £299 (Table 15).

*Financial Relief Act 1934* (No 16 of 1934)

Assent: 1 August 1934

Commenced: 1 August 1934

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- 1936 The amount of additional maternity allowance payable where there was at least one other child under 14 years living with the mother became a flat 10 shillings (Table 14).

The amount of the allowance for a woman who had no other children was increased (Table 14).

The upper limit of income was increased (Table 15).

*Financial Relief Act (No 2) 1936* (No 29 of 1936)

Assent: 21 September 1936

Commenced: 21 September 1936

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- 1938 The definition of other children of a claimant included as well as her own children the children of her husband's previous marriage maintained wholly by him or by the claimant or by both of them.
- The three-month period in which a maternity allowance could be claimed could be extended if the Commissioner of Maternity Allowances was satisfied that there was sufficient reason for so doing.
- The amount of maternity allowance was increased (Table 14). The upper limit of income was increased (Table 15).
- Maternity Allowance Act 1937* (No 44 of 1937)  
Assent: 13 December 1937  
Commenced: 13 December 1937. Amendments applied in respect of births occurring on or after 1 January 1938.
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- 1942 Maternity allowance became payable to those Aboriginals exempt from the provisions of the law of the state or territory of the Commonwealth in which they resided relating to the control of 'Aboriginal natives', or if residing in a state or territory whose laws did not provide for such exemption the Commissioner was satisfied that those Aboriginals were of character, standard of intelligence and development which made payment of the allowance desirable. The allowance payable to an Aboriginal could be paid to an authority of a state or territory or some other authority or person if such payment were considered desirable for the benefit of the Aboriginal.
- Income from personal exertion earned, derived or received prior to marriage was excluded from the income of a married or widowed claimant for income test purposes.
- Maternity Allowance Act 1942* (No 4 of 1942)  
Assent: 18 May 1942  
Commenced: 9 July 1942
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- 1943 Maternity allowance was increased as follows:
- to £5 where there were no other children (a 10 shillings increase)
  - to £6 where there were one or two other children (a £1 increase)
  - to £7.10.0 where there were three or more other children
- The income test relating to maternity allowance was removed (Table 15).
- Maternity allowance became payable from the National Welfare Fund instead of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.
- Maternity Allowance Act 1943* (No 16 of 1943)  
Assent: 29 March 1943  
Commenced: 1 July 1943
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- 1944 The age below which other children were counted for maternity allowance purposes was increased from 14 to 16 years (this made the age limit the same as that which applied to child endowment and widow's pension). The amount payable for the periods of four weeks before and after the birth was increased by 12 shillings and sixpence per week when twins

were born and by £15.0 per week when triplets were born, a total increase in allowance of £5 and £10 respectively (each child of the birth must have been a viable child or must have lived more than 12 hours). Where more than one child was born at a birth, only one maternity allowance was payable.

Maternity allowance payable to any person residing on an Aboriginal station, reserve or settlement (whether of 'Aboriginal blood' or otherwise) could be paid to an authority of a state or territory of the Commonwealth controlling the affairs of 'Aboriginal natives' or some other suitable authority or person, for the benefit of the 'Aboriginal native' or other person, if such payment were desirable.

*Maternity Allowance Act 1944* (No 12 of 1944)

Assent: 5 April 1944

Commenced: 5 April 1944

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- 1947 The full amount of maternity allowance became payable upon the birth of a child but a pre-payment of £5 could be made during any time within four weeks prior to the expected date of the birth.

Maternity allowance became payable to wives of Commonwealth and state employees temporarily stationed overseas and wives of members of the Australian Defence Force where the birth occurred overseas. Payment could also be made to other Australian women temporarily overseas at the time of birth. To be eligible the woman or her husband had to be regarded as a resident of Australia for the purposes of the *Income Tax Assessment Act*. The allowance was not payable if the woman had received a similar allowance from any other country. In cases where the wife was not normally an Australian resident, the Director-General had to be satisfied that she intended to become a resident as soon as possible. This provision had been in force since 1 July 1946 on an 'act of grace' basis pending the legislation of 1947.

'Aliens' became entitled to maternity allowance for births in Australia. Payment was made immediately if the claimant had lived in Australia for 12 months; otherwise it was made 12 months after the date of her arrival in Australia (disqualification for maternity allowance for particular races no longer applied except for certain Aborigines).

Maternity allowance was not payable for births on ships outside Australian territorial waters if the mother had received or was entitled to receive a similar payment from an overseas country in respect of that birth.

The provision increasing maternity allowance by £5 for each child after the first in twins or triplets was extended to cover all children in excess of one born at multiple births.

*Social Services Consolidation Act 1947* (No 26 of 1947)

Assent: 11 June 1947

Commenced: 1 July 1947

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- 1948 An 'alien' woman became eligible for immediate payment of maternity allowance if she could satisfy the Director-General that she intended to remain in Australia permanently, otherwise the allowance could not be paid until 12 months after the date of her arrival.
- Social Services Consolidation Act (No 2) 1948* (No 69 of 1948)  
 Assent: 10 December 1948  
 Commenced: 10 December 1948
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- 1951 A maternity allowance became payable for an 'alien' woman who gave birth on board a ship bound for Australia or travelling from a port in Australia or a territory to another such port, but the payment could not be made until 12 months after her arrival unless she could satisfy the Director-General that she intended to remain in Australia permanently.
- The period in which a claim for maternity allowance had to be lodged was extended to six months after birth, or for such longer period as the Director-General; in special circumstances, allowed.
- Social Services Consolidation Act 1951* (No 22 of 1951)  
 Assent: 31 October 1951  
 Commenced: 31 October 1951
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- 1956 The amount of maternity allowance payable prior to a birth was increased from £5 to £10.
- Social Services Act 1956* (No 67 of 1956)  
 Assent: 5 October 1956  
 Commenced: 5 October 1956
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- 1960 Eligibility for maternity allowance was extended to all Aboriginal women except those who were in the opinion of the Director-General living a 'nomadic or primitive' life.
- Social Services Act 1959* (No 57 of 1959)  
 Assent: 30 September 1959  
 Commenced: 30 September 1959  
 Proclaimed commencement: 2 February 1960 (maternity allowance)
- 
- 1966 The provision making Aboriginal women who were in the opinion of the Director-General living a 'nomadic or primitive' life ineligible for maternity allowance was repealed.
- Social Services Act 1966* (No 41 of 1966)  
 Assent: 30 September 1966  
 Commenced: 30 September 1966
- 
- 1978 The provisions for maternity allowance were repealed. No maternity allowance was payable for births occurring on or after 1 November 1978.
- Social Services Amendment Act 1978* (No 128 of 1978)  
 Assent: 26 October 1978  
 Commenced: 26 October 1978  
 1 November 1978 (maternity allowance)
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## Family allowance

In 1941 a national scheme of child endowment, financed from consolidated revenue, was introduced into Australia. This scheme covered each child (after the first) under 16 years in families and each child under 16 years in approved non-government institutions. The scheme replaced a New South Wales State scheme and one for Commonwealth public servants. It has subsequently been expanded and is now called family allowance.

### Initial provisions

Child endowment was payable to any person maintaining more than one child, in respect of each child in excess of one maintained by him, and to any approved non-government institution in respect of every child maintained by it.

A child for endowment purposes was a child under 16 years of age (including an ex-nuptial child) but did not include a child maintained in a government institution. A child of an 'alien' father was also excluded unless the child was born in Australia or the mother was a British subject or had made a declaration to retain her rights as a British subject despite her marriage to an 'alien'.

Endowment could be granted to Aboriginal Australians except those who were nomadic or whose children in respect of whom endowment was claimed were wholly or mainly dependent upon Commonwealth or state government support.

The claimant and child must have been in Australia on the date of claim and must have been born in Australia or have resided in Australia for 12 months immediately prior to the date of claim. A child born during the temporary absence of a mother from Australia was regarded as being born in Australia.

Where the claimant was maintaining a child under 16 years of age not born in Australia who was the child of an 'alien' father, and was also maintaining a child who was born in Australia and was the child of such a father, endowment could be paid for the child born in Australia.

The endowment was usually paid to the mother (including stepmother, foster mother or adoptive mother), but could be paid to a prescribed person, such as the father or guardian, at the discretion of the Commissioner or a Deputy Commissioner of Pensions.

Endowment ceased when the endowee left Australia; the child reached the age of 16 years, left Australia, died, or, if a female child, married before the age of 16 years.

The amount of the endowment was 5 shillings per week for each eligible child (Table 11). The endowment was not subject to a means test, was not regarded as income for personal income tax purposes, and was to be absolutely inalienable.

The endowee was required to apply the endowment to the maintenance, training and advancement of the child in respect of whom the endowment was made or as otherwise prescribed in special cases.

*Child Endowment Act 1941* (No 8 of 1941)

Assent: 7 April 1941

Commenced: 7 April 1941 but endowment not payable for any period before  
1 July 1941

From 1 July 1941 endowment was exempted from tax.

Income tax concessions were discontinued for the maintenance of children in respect of whom child endowment was payable.

*Income Tax Assessment Act 1941* (No 58 of 1941)

Assent: 3 December 1941

Commenced: 31 December 1941

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## Changes in provisions

Under legislation passed in 1942 but back-dated to 1 July 1941, child endowment became payable to mission stations, which were approved institutions, for Aboriginal children who for not less than six months in any calendar year, or for any continuous period of not less than six months, were supervised and assisted by, although not mainly maintained by, that mission station. Endowment was granted at the rate of 5 shillings per week based on the average number of such children so supervised and assisted (Table 11).

The same legislation provided that, from July 1941, members of the Defence Force serving outside Australia would be regarded as residents of Australia for child endowment purposes.

The legislation also provided that, from 1 July 1941, child endowment would be payable to any person who had the custody, care and control of any children whose parents were dead and whose maintenance expenses were met out of moneys forming part of the estate of a deceased person—in respect of each child in excess of one.

1942 Child endowment became payable for children in government institutions (Table 11), except for children whose maintenance expenses were met wholly or mainly by parents or guardians, and except for children in hospitals for the insane who were maintained at government expense.

Child endowment became payable for those children in excess of one in a family where the children were not living with the parents as one family by reason of divorce, separation, unemployment, death of a parent or other reasonable circumstances.

*Child Endowment Act 1942* (No 5 of 1942)

Assent: 18 May 1942

Commenced: 30 June 1942

1 July 1941 (endowment payable to members of the Defence Force overseas, Aboriginal missions, and for children maintained by deceased estates)

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From 1 July 1941 income tax concessions were again made available in respect of children for whom child endowment was payable.

*Income Tax Assessment Act 1942* (No 22 of 1942)

Assent: 7 June 1942

Commenced: 7 June 1942

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1945 The rate of child endowment was increased (Table 11).

*Child Endowment Act 1945* (No 10 of 1945)

Assent: 27 June 1945

Commenced: 27 June 1945

Child endowment became payable from the National Welfare Fund instead of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

*National Welfare Fund Act 1945* (No 41 of 1945)

Assent: 11 October 1945

Deemed commencement: 1 July 1945

1947 The basis of eligibility for child endowment was changed from maintaining a child to having the custody, care and control of a child. A person making a reasonable contribution towards the expenses of maintaining a child in a government hospital for the insane was deemed to have the custody, care and control of that child.

The 12 months residence required for a claimant and children who were not born in Australia no longer applied if they intended to remain in Australia permanently.

Child endowment became payable to women living outside Australia who were the wives of members of the Defence Force or wives of Commonwealth and state employees stationed overseas. Other Australian residents living overseas temporarily could also qualify. To be eligible the woman or her husband had to be regarded as a resident of Australia for the purposes of the *Income Tax Assessment Act*. Child endowment was not payable if the woman was in receipt of a similar payment from any other country. In cases where the wife was not normally an Australian resident, the Director-General had to be satisfied that she intended to become a resident as soon as possible. The provision had been in force since 1 July 1946 on an 'act of grace' basis pending the legislation of 1947.

*Social Services Consolidation Act 1947* (No 26 of 1947)

Assent: 11 June 1947

Commenced: 1 July 1947

1948 The rate of child endowment was increased (Table 11).

*Social Services Consolidation Act 1948* (No 38 of 1948)

Assent: 19 October 1948

Commenced: 19 October 1948

Child endowment for those temporarily absent from Australia was no longer payable if they were residents of Australia for taxation purposes but were residing in Papua, Norfolk Island or New Guinea and exempt from Commonwealth income tax on income derived from sources within those territories.

*Social Services Consolidation Act (No 2) 1948* (No 69 of 1948)

Assent: 10 December 1948

Commenced: 10 December 1948

- 1950 Child endowment became payable for the first child of a family at the rate of 5 shillings per week (Table 11). The rate of endowment for each other child remained at 10 shillings per week.

*Social Services Consolidation Act 1950* (No 6 of 1950)

Assent: 28 June 1950

Deemed commencement: 19 June 1950

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- 1957 Child endowment for those temporarily absent from Australia was no longer payable if they were residents of Australia for taxation purposes but were temporarily residing in an external territory and exempt from Commonwealth income tax on income derived from sources within that territory. (Previously only residents of Papua, Norfolk Island or New Guinea were so excluded.)

*Social Services Act 1957* (No 46 of 1957)

Assent: 17 October 1957

Commenced: 17 October 1957

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- 1960 Child endowment became payable to all Aboriginal Australians unless the children were wholly or mainly dependent on government support.

The whole or a portion of the child endowment could be paid to a person, institution or authority on behalf of the endowee if considered desirable, for any reason, by the Director-General.

*Social Services Act 1959* (No 57 of 1959)

Assent: 30 September 1959

Proclaimed commencement: 2 February 1960

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- 1964 Child endowment became payable for student children aged 16 years or more, but under 21 years. A student was defined as a child receiving full-time education at a school, college or university and not in employment or self-employed. The rate of endowment for a student child was set at 15 shillings per week (Table 11). The presence of a student child in a family was not taken into account when determining the rate of allowance payable for children under 16 years.

The rate of endowment for the third and subsequent children in a family and for children in institutions was increased (Table 11).

An endowee became liable to notify when a child who was in the custody, care and control of the endowee ceased to be in the custody, care and control of the endowee; ceased to be in Australia; died; married; or, being a student child, ceased to be a full-time student or began employment.

*Social Services Act 1964* (No 3 of 1964)

Assent: 26 March 1964

Commenced: 26 March 1964

Deemed commencement: 14 January 1964 (student child endowment and increased rate of endowment)

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- 1966 All remaining restrictions on Aboriginal Australians for child endowment were removed.  
 ‘Hospitals for the insane’ were renamed ‘mental hospitals’.  
*Social Services Act 1966* (No 41 of 1966)  
 Assent: 30 September 1966  
 Commenced: 30 September 1966
- 
- 1967 The rate of child endowment for the fourth child under 16 years in a family was increased by 25 cents to \$1.75 per week with cumulative increases of 25 cents for each subsequent child (Table 11).  
*Social Services Act (No 2) 1967* (No 61 of 1967)  
 Assent: 18 September 1967  
 Commenced: 19 September 1967
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- 1971 The rate of child endowment for the third and subsequent children under 16 years in a family was increased (Table 11).  
 The rate of endowment for children under 16 years in institutions was increased (Table 11) but the rate for student children in institutions remained unchanged at \$1.50 per week.  
*Social Services Act (No 2) 1971* (No 67 of 1971)  
 Assent: 29 September 1971  
 Commenced: 29 September 1971
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- 1976 From 1 July 1976 income tax concessions for the maintenance of children were abolished.  
*Income Tax Assessment Amendment Act (No 2) 1976* (No 56 of 1976)  
 Assent: 4 June 1976  
 Commenced: 4 June 1976
- 
- Rates of child endowment were increased (Table 11) and child endowment became known as family allowance (legislation formalising this change of name was passed in 1982, see page 132).  
 The separate rate for students was abolished; henceforth all students were treated for rate purposes according to their position in the family (Table 11).  
 The age at which family allowance ceased to be payable for students was increased from 21 to 25 years. Students aged 18 or more but under 25 years were required to be wholly or substantially dependent.  
 Children of ‘alien’ fathers were no longer disqualified for family allowance on nationality grounds.  
 Family allowance became payable to a person in Australia who was not previously eligible, or for a child who was not previously eligible, if the claimant (or spouse) contributed regularly to the maintenance of the child and the claimant (or spouse) was a resident of Australia for income tax purposes.  
*Social Services Amendment Act (No 2) 1976* (No 62 of 1976)  
 Assent: 5 June 1976  
 Commenced: 5 June 1976
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- 1978 Student children aged 16 or 17 years as well as student children aged 18 but under 25 were required to be wholly or substantially dependent for family allowance to be payable for them.

Family allowance was no longer payable for students receiving invalid pension.

Where two persons were each qualified at the same time to receive family allowance in respect of the same child, family allowance could be apportioned or allocated to each.

Family allowance was no longer to be paid for a child living abroad except where the absence was temporary, or the claimant was living in Australia and intended bringing the child to Australia as soon as reasonably practicable to do so, in any case within four years.

- 1979 From 1 January 1979 family allowance was no longer payable for students receiving assistance under a prescribed educational scheme (the rates of allowance under these prescribed schemes were raised to compensate).

The prescribed schemes were:

- the Tertiary Education Assistance Scheme
- the Adult Secondary Education Assistance Scheme
- the Pre-School Teacher Education Assistance Scheme
- the Aboriginal Study Grants Scheme
- the Commonwealth Teaching Service Scholarship Scheme
- the Post-Graduate Awards Scheme.

Family allowance became payable at a monthly, rather than a weekly rate, the payment period to commence on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of each calendar month and to end on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the following month (Table 11).

*Social Services Amendment Act 1978* (No 128 of 1978)

Assent: 26 October 1978

Commenced: 26 October 1978

15 May 1979 (monthly rates of family allowance)

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Where a child moved from the custody, care and control of one person to another or entered or left an institution, family allowance became payable at a daily rate for the period in which the transfer took place.

*Social Services Amendment Act 1979* (No 121 of 1979)

Assent: 29 October 1979

Commenced: 29 October 1979

15 November 1979 (daily rate in case of transfer)

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- 1981 Rates of family allowance for children after the second, and for children in institutions, were increased (Table 11).

*Social Services Amendment Act 1981* (No 159 of 1981)

Assent: 30 October 1981

Commenced: 30 October 1981

15 December 1981 (allowance increases)

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- 1982 Child endowment had been referred to as 'family allowance' since 1976; in 1982 the term 'child endowment' was formally replaced in the Act by 'family allowance'.

Amendments to the Act made it clear that family allowance could be paid to an institution in respect of a student child who was an inmate of that institution.

Members of diplomatic missions and consular posts and foreign armed service personnel who were not Australian citizens or permanent residents were precluded from receipt of family allowance.

Persons who were prohibited immigrants within the meaning of the *Migration Act 1958* were precluded from receipt of family allowance.

*Social Services Legislation Amendment Act 1982* (No 37 of 1982)

Assent: 2 June 1982

Commenced: 2 June 1982

15 August 1982 (preclusion of payment of allowance)

A person or an institution was prevented from receiving a family allowance in respect of a child who became a supporting parent beneficiary. A savings provision protected existing recipients.

The rates of family allowance for first and second children were increased (Table 11).

*Social Security Legislation Amendment Act 1982* (No 98 of 1982)

Assent: 27 October 1982

Commenced: 27 October 1982

14 November 1982 (family allowance payments)

1 March 1983 (rehabilitation allowance) (see 1983)

Provision was made for family allowance to continue to be paid, in the case of students leaving school and seeking work, until the students received unemployment benefit following the six-week deferment period, or during that period obtained work or otherwise ceased to qualify for the allowance. The amendment applied in relation to the family allowance pay period commencing 15 October 1982 and to all subsequent payments.

*Social Security Amendment Act 1982* (No 148 of 1982)

Assent: 31 December 1982

Commenced: 31 December 1982

1 November 1982 (family allowance provision)

- 1983 A rehabilitation allowance was introduced, and family allowance ceased to be payable for students receiving this allowance.

*Social Security Legislation Amendment Act 1982* (No 98 of 1982)

Assent: 27 October 1982

Commenced: 27 October 1982

1 March 1983 (rehabilitation allowance)



## Handicapped child's allowance

### Initial provisions

With effect from 30 December 1974 a handicapped child's allowance was introduced for a parent or guardian having the custody, care and control of a severely physically or mentally handicapped child who was likely to need constant care and attention permanently or for an extended period.

The care and attention was to be given in the family home, not an institution. Continuation of handicapped child's allowance was allowed during periods of absence of the child from the family home of up to 30 days.

'Child' meant a person under 16 years of age.

The allowance was \$10 per week (Table 13), was free of any means or income test and was not taxable.

The allowance was payable only to recipients of child endowment and was a supplement to child endowment. Residence requirements were as for child endowment: 12 months residence if not born in Australia, or residence with the intention of staying permanently in Australia.

The Director-General of Social Services could require that the child be examined by a medical practitioner specified by him at any time during the consideration of a claim or while an allowance was being paid.

*Social Services Act (No 3) 1974* (No 91 of 1974)

Assent: 1 November 1974

Commenced: 1 November 1974

30 December 1974 (HCA provisions)

### Changes in provisions

1976 Handicapped child's allowance was increased (Table 13).

*Social Services Amendment Act (No 3) 1976* (No 111 of 1976)

Assent: 29 October 1976

Commenced: 29 October 1976

1977 Handicapped child's allowance was extended to include an allowance for a child who was not severely handicapped but who was 'substantially' handicapped, ie who had a physical or mental disability requiring care and attention only marginally less than that needed by a severely handicapped child, permanently or for an extended period, and subjecting the claimant to severe financial hardship.

Where the Director-General granted a handicapped child's allowance he was to inform the claimant in writing whether the allowance was for a severely handicapped or a substantially handicapped child.

The rate of the allowance for a substantially handicapped child was to be determined by the Director-General but could not exceed the severely handicapped rate. The allowance could be cancelled at any time at the discretion of the Director-General.

*Social Services Amendment Act 1977* (No 159 of 1977)

Assent: 10 November 1977

Commenced: 10 November 1977

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- 1978 Payment of handicapped child's allowance was extended to include dependent full-time students aged 16 and under 25 years providing they were not receiving an invalid pension (Table 13).

Provision was made to continue payment of handicapped child's allowance during short absences of a child from the family home in the case of a substantially handicapped child as well as a severely handicapped child.

Where a nursing home benefit or handicapped children's benefit was paid for a child who became an inmate of an institution on any day or days during an endowment period, an amount calculated in accordance with a formula became deductible from the handicapped child's allowance.

Handicapped child's allowance ceased to be payable for children outside Australia except in certain specified circumstances.

- 1979 Handicapped child's allowance became payable at the rate of \$65 per month instead of \$15 per week (Table 13). Payment was to be made on a monthly basis, instead of the existing four-weekly basis.

*Social Services Amendment Act 1978* (No 128 of 1978)

Assent: 26 October 1978

Commenced: 26 October 1978

15 May 1979 (monthly payments)

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Where a handicapped child moved from the custody, care and control of one person to another or entered or left an institution, handicapped child's allowance became payable at a daily rate for the period in which the child was in the care of the person or approved institution, from and including the day the transfer took place instead of from the commencement of the next endowment period.

Provision was made to permit handicapped child's allowance to continue to be paid to a person for a child (other than a child for whom a nursing home benefit or handicapped children's benefit was payable) who was temporarily in an institution, even though family allowance (formerly child endowment) was not payable to the person during that time.

*Social Services Amendment Act 1979* (No 121 of 1979)

Assent: 29 October 1979

Commenced: 29 October 1979

15 November 1979 (HCA provisions)

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- 1980 Handicapped child's allowance was increased (Table 13).

*Social Services Amendment Act 1980* (No 130 of 1980)

Assent: 19 September 1980

Commenced: 19 September 1980

1 November 1980 (HCA provisions)

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- 1982 A recipient of handicapped child's allowance was required to notify the department within 14 days of the child's absence from the private home.

*Social Services Legislation Amendment Act 1982* (No 37 of 1982)

Assent: 2 June 1982

Commenced: 2 June 1982

The rate of handicapped child's allowance was increased (Table 13).

*Social Security Legislation Amendment Act 1982* (No 98 of 1982)

Assent: 27 October 1982

Commenced: 27 October 1982

14 November 1982 (HCA rate increase)

1 March 1983 (rehabilitation allowance) (see 1983)

Provision was made for handicapped child's allowance to continue to be paid, in the case of students leaving school and seeking work, until the students received unemployment benefit following the six-week deferment period, or during that period obtained work or otherwise ceased to qualify for the allowance. The amendment applied in relation to the family allowance pay period commencing 15 October 1982 and to all subsequent payments.

*Social Security Amendment Act 1982* (No 148 of 1982)

Assent: 31 December 1982

Commenced: 31 December 1982

1 November 1982 (HCA provision)

- 1983 A rehabilitation allowance was introduced, and the parents of full-time students under 25 receiving this allowance were excluded from eligibility for handicapped child's allowance.

*Social Security Legislation Amendment Act 1982* (No 98 of 1982)

Assent: 27 October 1982

Commenced: 27 October 1982

1 March 1983 (rehabilitation allowance)



## Double orphan's pension

Pensions for orphans were introduced in September 1973 at a rate of \$10 per week to the guardian of a child under 16 years of age or of a full-time student aged 16 years but under 21 years, both of whose parents were dead or one of whose parents was dead and the whereabouts of the other unknown to the claimant.

### Initial provisions

Double orphan's pension was payable to a person or an institution qualified to receive child endowment in respect of a child who was a double orphan.

The term 'child' was defined in the same way as in the child endowment provisions. Such a child was a person under the age of 16 years; or a person aged 16 but under 21 years, receiving full-time education at a school, college or university and not in employment or engaged in work on his own account.

A double orphan was a child (other than an adopted child) both of whose parents were dead, or an adopted child both of whose adoptive parents were dead or, if there was only one adoptive parent, whose adoptive parent was dead.

Where one parent was dead and the whereabouts of the other unknown to the claimant the other parent was deemed to be dead ('parent' included adoptive parent).

The rate of double orphan's pension was \$10 per week (Table 12). Payment of pension was made as an addition to child endowment payments.

A double orphan's pension was to be applied for the maintenance, training and advancement of the child in respect of whom it was granted.

Provisions for the claiming and payment of double orphan's pension were the same as those which applied for child endowment. The pension was not subject to an income test or to income tax, and could continue to be paid during temporary absences overseas.

*Social Services Act (No 4) 1973* (No 103 of 1973)

Assent: 26 September 1973

Commenced: 26 September 1973

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### Changes in provisions

1974 The rate of double orphan's pension was increased (Table 12).

*Social Services Act (No 3) 1974* (No 91 of 1974)

Assent: 1 November 1974

Commenced: 1 November 1974

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1975 Double orphan's pension became payable in respect of a child whose sole surviving parent or adoptive parent had been convicted of an offence and sentenced to imprisonment for life or for not less than 10 years or was a mental hospital patient and was likely to require care or treatment for an indefinite period.



*Social Services Act (No 3) 1975* (No 110 of 1975)

Assent: 27 October 1975

Commenced: 27 October 1975

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- 1976 From the endowment period commencing 15 June 1976, double orphan's pension became payable in respect of students up to the age of 25 years instead of 21 years. Students aged 18 years or over were required to be wholly or substantially dependent on the person who received the pension.

*Social Services Amendment Act (No 2) 1976* (No 62 of 1976)

Assent: 5 June 1976

Commenced: 5 June 1976

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- 1978 From 26 October 1978 student children aged 16 or 17 years were required to be wholly or substantially dependent for payment of double orphan's pension.

Double orphan's pension was no longer to be paid for a child living abroad except where the absence was temporary, or the claimant was living in Australia and intended bringing the child to Australia as soon as reasonably practicable to do so, in any case within four years.

Double orphan's pension became no longer payable in respect of a person who was in receipt of an invalid pension. (Double orphan's pension remained payable for persons who were in receipt of assistance under a prescribed educational scheme even though family allowance was no longer payable for them.)

Double orphan's pension became payable for monthly periods commencing on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of each calendar month and ending on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the following month. The weekly rate of \$11 per week was restated as \$47.70 per month (Table 12).

*Social Services Amendment Act 1978* (No 128 of 1978)

Assent: 26 October 1978

Commenced: 26 October 1978

15 May 1979 (monthly rate of double orphan's pension)

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- 1979 Where a child moved from the custody, care and control of one person to another or entered or left an institution, double orphan's pension became payable at a daily rate for the period in which the transfer took place.

Further amendments provided definitions for 'adoptive child' and 'adoptive parent'. The effect of the definitions was to specifically provide that payment would not be made where the child had been adopted under the laws of another country.

*Social Services Amendment Act 1979* (No 121 of 1979)

Assent: 29 October 1979

Commenced: 29 October 1979

15 November 1979 (child's movement from one person to another or from an institution)

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- 1980 Double orphan's pension was increased (Table 12).  
*Social Services Amendment Act 1980* (No 130 of 1980)  
Assent: 19 September 1980  
Commenced: 19 September 1980  
1 November 1980 (pension increase)
- 
- 1981 Eligibility for double orphan's pension was extended to cover a refugee child, both of whose parents were outside Australia or the whereabouts of whose parents were unknown.  
*Social Services Amendment Act 1981* (No 159 of 1981)  
Assent: 30 October 1981  
Commenced: 30 October 1981  
*Social Services Amendment Act (No 2) 1981* (No 170 of 1981)  
Assent: 2 December 1981  
Deemed commencement: 30 October 1981
- 
- 1982 Provision was made for double orphan's pension to continue to be paid, in the case of students leaving school and seeking work, until the students received unemployment benefit following the six-week deferment period, or during that period obtained work or otherwise ceased to qualify for the pension. The amendment applied in relation to the family allowance pay period commencing on 15 October 1982 and to all subsequent payments.  
*Social Security Amendment Act 1982* (No 148 of 1982)  
Assent: 31 December 1982  
Commenced: 31 December 1982  
1 November 1982 (double orphan's pension provision)
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## Family income supplement

### Initial provisions

A family income supplement in the form of a tax-free allowance was introduced to provide assistance for low-income families not in receipt of a pension or benefit.

The new allowance:

- was payable in respect of children under 16 years and dependent full-time students who had reached 16 but not 25 years, provided in each case that family allowance was payable for the child or student and no direct income-tested Commonwealth payment was being made to or in respect of that child or student under the Secondary Allowance Scheme or related schemes
- was set at a maximum rate equal to the maximum additional benefit payable in respect of the child of an unemployment beneficiary (\$10 per week at the time of introduction)
- was subject to an income test (see below)
- was generally payable to the family breadwinner (if two or more persons were eligible for the allowance in respect of the same child and were permanently living apart, the Director-General could direct that the payment be apportioned or made wholly to one person)
- was payable to a second person on behalf of the person entitled to it if the Director-General so determined.

The claimant had to be present in Australia at the time of lodging the claim and be legally able to remain in Australia; no allowance was payable in respect of any period during which the claimant or child were outside Australia.

The income test provided for the total allowance to be reduced by one-half of total parental income in excess of a prescribed limit; if the rate of allowance thus calculated was between one and 49 cents per week, the rate payable was 50 cents per week. The prescribed limit was the level of income at which the entitlement of a married couple without children to a Health Care Card ceased under the Disadvantaged Persons Health Care program, which in turn was governed by the *Health Insurance Act 1973*.

The income test was applied by reference to average weekly parental income over the four weeks preceding the date of claim. Entitlement was determined for the following six months, subject to the proviso that the allowance could be reduced or terminated within that period if during any four weeks income averaged more than 125 per cent of the weekly income on which the original assessment was made; if income decreased, the rate of allowance could be increased.

Recipients of the allowance were required to notify the department of changes in their circumstances where their rate of allowance could be affected.

*Social Security Legislation Amendment Act 1982* (No 98 of 1982)

Assent: 27 October 1982

Commenced: 27 October 1982

1 May 1983 (family income supplement)



**Table 1:** Age and invalid pension: Maximum rates

DATE ON WHICH RATES WERE FIRST PAID	PENSION £. S .D PW	SUPPLEMENTARY ASSISTANCE £. S .D PW
1. 7.09 (a)	10.0	
12.10.16	12.6	
1. 1.20	15.0	
13. 9.23	17.6	
8.10.25	1. 0.0	
23. 7.31	17.6	
13.10.32 (b)	15.0	
26.10.33	17.6	
4. 7.35	18.0	
24. 9.36	19.0	
9. 9.37	0.0	
26.12.40	1.0	
3. 4.41	1.6	
11.12.41	3.6	
2. 4.42	5.0	
1.10.42	5.6	
7. 1.43	6.0	
1. 4.43	6.6	
5. 8.43	7.0	
5. 7.45	12.6	
3. 7.47	17.6	
21.10.48	2. 2.6	
2.11.50	2.10.0	
1.11.51	3. 0.0	
2.10.52	3. 7.6	
29.10.53	3.10.0	
27.10.55	4. 0.0	
24.10.57	4. 7.6	
23.10.58	4. 7.6	10.0
8.10.59	4.15.0	10.0
6.10.60	5. 0.0	10.0
5.10.61	5. 5.0	10.0

DATE ON WHICH RATES WERE FIRST PAID	STANDARD (c) £. S .D PW	MARRIED (EA) (c) £. S .D PW	SUPPLEMENTARY ASSISTANCE £. S .D PW
14.11.63	15.0	5. 5.0	10.0
1.10.64	6. 0.0	5.10.0	10.0
14.10.65	6. 0.0	5.10.0	1. 0.0

(a) Payment of old-age pension commenced on 1.7.09 for males and females aged 65 and over.  
Payments of old-age pension for females aged 60–64 and of invalid pension commenced on 15.12.10.  
Until 1963 the amount of pension did not take marital status into account.

(b) If income 2 shillings and sixpence per week or more, see page 10.

(c) Standard and married rates of pension were introduced in 1963.

**Table 1:** Age and invalid pension: Maximum rates (continued)

DATE ON WHICH RATES WERE FIRST PAID	STANDARD (c) \$ PW	MARRIED (EA) (c) \$ PW	SUPPLEMENTARY ASSISTANCE \$ PW
13.10.66 (d)	13.00	11.75	2.00
10.10.68	14.00	12.50	2.00
9.10.69	15.00	13.25	2.00
8.10.70	15.50	13.75	2.00
8. 4.71	16.00	14.25	2.00
7.10.71	17.25	15.25	2.00
4. 5.72	18.25	16.00	2.00
5.10.72	20.00	17.25	4.00
14.12.72	21.50	18.75	4.00
4.10.73	23.00	20.25	4.00
4. 4.74	26.00	22.75	4.00
8. 8.74	31.00	25.75	4.00
14.11.74	31.00	25.75	5.00
1. 5.75	36.00	30.00	5.00
13.11.75	38.75	32.25	5.00
13. 5.76	41.25	34.25	5.00
11.11.76	43.50	36.25	5.00
12. 5.77	47.10	39.25	5.00
10.11.77	49.30	41.10	5.00
11. 5.78	51.45	42.90	5.00
9.11.78	53.20	44.35	5.00
8.11.79	57.90	48.25	5.00
8. 5.80	61.05	50.85	5.00
6.11.80	64.10	53.40	5.00
7. 5.81	66.65	55.55	5.00
5.11.81	69.70	58.10	5.00
11. 2.82	69.70	58.10	8.00
6. 5.82	74.15	61.80	8.00
4.11.82	77.25	64.40	10.00

(c) Standard and married rates of pension were introduced in 1963.

(d) Decimal currency was introduced in 1966.



**Table 2:** Age and invalid pension: Means test/income test

DATE OF EFFECT	PERMISSIBLE INCOME (a) £. S. D PA	UPPER LIMIT OF PROPERTY (b) £. S. D	EXEMPT PROPERTY (a) (EACH) £. S. D	MAXIMUM INCOME DISREGARD FOR CHILDREN (c) £. S. D PA
1. 7.09	26. 0.0	310. 0.0	50. 0.0 (d)	
24.12.12	26. 0.0	310. 0.0	50. 0.0 (e)	
13. 9.23	32.10.0	400. 0.0	50. 0.0 (e)	
13.12.41	32.10.0	400. 0.0	50. 0.0 (f)	
15. 8.46	52. 0.0	650. 0.0	50. 0.0	
3. 7.47	52. 0.0	650. 0.0	50. 0.0	26. 0.0
21.10.48	78. 0.0	750. 0.0	100. 0.0	26. 0.0
1.11.51	78. 0.0	1000. 0.0	100. 0.0	13. 0.0
2.10.52	78. 0.0	1000. 0.0	100. 0.0	26. 0.0
29.10.53	104. 0.0 (g)	1250. 0.0	150. 0.0	26. 0.0
14.10.54	182. 0.0	1750. 0.0	200. 0.0	26. 0.0
23.10.58	182. 0.0	2250. 0.0	200. 0.0	26. 0.0

DATE OF EFFECT	MEANS AS ASSESSED (h)		EXEMPT PROPERTY (a) (EACH) £. S. D	MAXIMUM INCOME DISREGARD FOR CHILDREN (c) £. S. D PA
	SINGLE	MARRIED (EA)		
9. 3.61	182. 0.0	182. 0.0	200. 0.0	26. 0.0

DATE OF EFFECT	MEANS AS ASSESSED (h)		EXEMPT PROPERTY (a) \$	MAXIMUM INCOME DISREGARD FOR CHILDREN (c) \$ PA
	SINGLE \$	MARRIED (EA) \$		
13.10.66 (i)	364.00	364.00	400.00	156.00
24. 4.67	520.00	442.00	400.00	156.00
9.10.69	520.00	442.00	400.00	208.00
5.10.72	1040.00	897.00	400.00	312.00

DATE OF EFFECT	PERMISSIBLE INCOME (j)		EXEMPT PROPERTY (a) \$	MAXIMUM INCOME DISREGARD FOR CHILDREN (c) \$ PA
	SINGLE \$	MARRIED (EA) \$		
25.11.76	1040.00	897.00	Abolished	312.00
4.11.82	1560.00	1300.00		312.00

- (a) Represents the level of income or property allowable before pension was reduced. From 9.3.61 exempt property was the amount of assessable property disregarded in calculating means as assessed under the merged means test.
- (b) Represents the value of property beyond which pension ceased to be payable. From 9.3.61 the upper limit of property was abolished as such; the upper limit of means as assessed at which a person's entitlement to pension ceased was thereafter determined by the interaction of the maximum pension rate and the means test parameters.
- (c) Represents the maximum amount of income disregarded in respect of each dependent child.
- (d) £100 for each single pensioner if property included the home lived in by the pensioner; if not, £50. £50 for each married pensioner if property included the home lived in by the pensioner; if not, £25.
- (e) Pensioner's home fully exempted in 1912. The value of exempt property became £50 for each single pensioner and £25 for each married pensioner.
- (f) Property exemption for married pensioners became the same as for single pensioners.
- (g) Permissible income increased to £130 if married and spouse not a pensioner or service pensioner.
- (h) Merged means test introduced.
- (i) Decimal currency was introduced in 1966.
- (j) Means test replaced by an income test.

**Table 3:** Wife's allowance/pension (a): Maximum rates

DATE ON WHICH RATES WERE FIRST PAID	£. S.D PW
8. 7.43 (b)	15.0
3. 7.47	1. 0.0
30. 6.49	1. 4.0
1.11.51	1.10.0
2.10.52	1.15.0
5.10.61	2. 7.6
3.10.63	3. 0.0
	<b>\$ PW</b>
10.10.68 (c)	7.00
7.10.71	8.00
5.10.72	17.25
14.12.72	18.75
4.10.73	20.25
4. 4.74	22.75
8. 8.74	25.75
1. 5.75	30.00
13.11.75	32.25
13. 5.76	34.25
11.11.76	36.25
12. 5.77	39.25
10.11.77	41.10
11. 5.78	42.90
9.11.78	44.35
8.11.79 (d)	48.25
8. 5.80	50.85
6.11.80	53.40
7. 5.81	55.55
5.11.81	58.10
6. 5.82	61.80
4.11.82	64.40

(a) Wife's allowance was replaced by wife's pension in October 1972.

(b) Wife's allowance was subject to the same means/income test as for age and invalid pensions.

(c) Decimal currency was introduced in 1966.

(d) From 8.11.79 wife's pension became payable at a rate equivalent to the standard rate (rather than the married rate) of age or Invalid pension where illness or infirmity forced the couple to live apart indefinitely, thereby causing them greater living expenses.

**Table 4:** Widow's pension and supporting parent's benefit: Maximum rates

DATE ON WHICH RATES WERE FIRST PAID	WIDOW'S PENSION				SUPPORTING MOTHER'S/PARENT'S BENEFIT	SUPPLEMENTARY ASSISTANCE
	CLASS A (a) £. S.D PW	CLASS B £. S.D PW	CLASS C £. S.D PW	CLASS D £. S.D PW		£. S.D PW
27. 7.42	1.10.0	1. 5.0	1. 5.0	—	—	—
17.11.42	1.10.6	5.6	5.6	—	—	—
9. 2.43	1.11.0	6.0	6.0	—	—	—
4. 5.43	1.11.6	6.6	6.6	—	—	—
21. 9.43	1.12.0	7.0	7.0	—	—	—
16.10.45	1.17.6	7.0	12.6	—	—	—
8. 7.47	2. 2.6	12.0	17.6	1.12.0	—	—
25.10.48	2. 7.6	17.0	2. 2.6	1.17.0	—	—
7.11.50	2.15.0	2. 2.0	2. 7.6	2. 2.0	—	—
6.11.51	3. 5.0	2.10.0	2.10.0	2.10.0	—	—
7.10.52	3.12.6	2.15.0	2.15.0	2.15.0	—	—
5.11.53	3.15.0	2.17.6	2.17.6	2.17.6	—	—
1.11.55	4. 5.0	3. 7.6	3. 7.6	3. 7.6	—	—
29.10.57	4.12.6	3.15.0	3.15.0	3.15.0	—	—
28.10.58	4.12.6	3.15.0	3.15.0	3.15.0	—	10.0
13.10.59	5. 0.0	4. 2.6	4. 2.6	4. 2.6	—	10.0
11.10.60	5. 5.0	4. 7.6	4. 7.6	—	—	10.0
10.10.61	5.10.0	4.12.6	4.12.6	—	—	10.0
8.10.63	8.10.0	5. 2.6	5. 2.6	—	—	10.0
6.10.64	8.15.0	5. 7.6	5. 7.6	—	—	10.0
19.10.65	8.15.0	5. 7.6	5. 7.6	—	—	1. 0.0
	\$ PW	\$ PW	\$ PW	\$ PW	\$ PW	\$ PW
4.10.66 (b)	18.50	11.75	11.75	—	—	2.00
1.10.68	20.50	12.50	12.50	—	—	2.00

  

DATE ON WHICH RATES WERE FIRST PAID	WIDOW'S PENSION				SUPPORTING MOTHER'S/PARENT'S BENEFIT \$ PW	SUPPLEMENTARY ASSISTANCE \$ PW
	CLASS A (a) \$ PW	CLASS B \$ PW	CLASS C \$ PW	CLASS D \$ PW		
	ONE CHILD UNDER 6 OR INVALID	NO CHILD UNDER 6 OR INVALID				
30. 9.69	23.50	21.50	13.25	13.25	—	2.00
29. 9.70	24.00	22.00	13.75	13.75	—	2.00
13. 4.71	24.50	22.50	14.25	14.25	—	2.00
12.10.71	27.75	25.75	15.25	15.25	—	2.00
25. 4.72	28.75	26.75	16.00	16.00	—	2.00
10.10.72	30.50	28.50	17.25	17.25	—	4.00
5.12.72	32.00	30.00	21.50	21.50	—	4.00

**Table 4:** Widow's pension and supporting parent's benefit: Maximum rates (continued)

DATE ON WHICH RATES WERE FIRST PAID	WIDOW'S PENSION				SUPPORTING MOTHER'S/PARENT'S BENEFIT		SUPPLEMENTARY ASSISTANCE \$ PW
	CLASS A (a) \$ PW		CLASS B \$ PW	CLASS C \$ PW	BENEFIT \$ PW		
	ONE CHILD UNDER 6 OR INVALID	NO CHILD UNDER 6 OR INVALID		CLASS D \$ PW	ONE CHILD UNDER 6 OR INVALID	NO CHILD UNDER 6 OR INVALID	
3. 7.73	32.00	30.00	21.50	21.50	32.00	30.00	4.00
9.10.73	34.00	32.00	23.00	23.00	34.00	32.00	4.00
26. 3.74	37.00	35.00	26.00	26.00	37.00	35.00	4.00
13. 8.74	42.00	40.00	31.00	31.00	42.00	40.00	4.00
5.11.74	42.50	40.50	31.00	31.00	42.50	40.50	5.00
6. 5.75	49.00	47.00	36.00	36.00	49.00	47.00	5.00
13.11.75	52.25	50.25	38.75	38.75	52.25	50.25	5.00
13. 5.76	54.75	52.75	41.25	41.25	54.75	52.75	5.00
11. 11. 76	57.00	55.00	43.50	43.50	57.00	55.00	5.00
12. 5.77	60.60	58.60	47.10	47.10	60.60	58.60	5.00
10.11.77	62.80	60.80	49.30	49.30	62.80 (c)	60.80 (c)	5.00
11. 5.78	64.95	62.95	51.45	51.45	64.95	62.95	5.00
9.11.78	66.70	64.70	53.20	53.20	66. 70	64.70	5.00
8.11.79	71.40	69.40	57.90	57.90	71.40.	69.40	5.00
8. 5.80	74.55	72.55	61.05	61.05	74.55	72.55	5.00
6.11.80	82.10	80.10	64.10	64.10	82.10	80.10	5.00
7. 5.81	84.65	82.65	66.65	66.65	84.65	82.65	5.00
5.11.81	87.70	85.70	69.70	69.70	87.70	85.70	5.00
11. 2.82	87.70	85.70	69.70	69.70	87. 70	85.70	8.00
6. 5.82	92.15	90.15	74.15	74.15	92.15	90.15	8.00
4.11.82	95.25	93.25	77.25	77.25	95.25	93.25	10.00

(a) From 8.10.63 includes mother's allowance of £2 and allowance for one child. See Table 6 for additional pension for other children. From 30.9.69 mother's allowance was increased to \$6 where the pensioner had a child under 6 or an invalid child in her care. The allowance was increased from 6.11.80 bringing it up to \$8 per week if the pensioner or supporting parent had a child under 6 years or invalid.

(b) Decimal currency was introduced in 1966.

(c) Supporting parent's benefit replaced supporting mother's benefit.

**Table 5:** Widow's pension (a): Means test/income test

DATE OF EFFECT	CLASS A				CLASS B		
	PERMISSIBLE INCOME (b)	UPPER LIMIT OF PROPERTY (c)	EXEMPT PROPERTY (b)	MAXIMUM INCOME DISREGARD FOR CHILDREN (d)	PERMISSIBLE INCOME (b)	UPPER LIMIT OF PROPERTY (c)	EXEMPT PROPERTY (b)
	£. S. D PA	£. S. D	£. S. D	£. S. D PA	£. S. D PA	£. S. D	£. S. D
27. 7.42	32.10.0	1000. 0.0	50. 0.0		32.10.0	400. 0.0	50. 0.0
13. 8.46	52. 0.0	1000. 0.0	50. 0.0		52. 0.0	650. 0.0	50. 0.0
8. 7.47	52. 0.0	1000. 0.0	50. 0.0	13. 0.0 (e)	52. 0.0	650. 0.0	50. 0.0
26.10.48	78. 0.0	1000. 0.0	100. 0.0	13. 0.0 (e)	78. 0.0	750. 0.0	100. 0.0
6.11.51	78. 0.0	1250. 0.0	150. 0.0	13. 0.0	78. 0.0	1000. 0.0	100. 0.0
7.10.52	78. 0.0	1250. 0.0	150. 0.0	26. 0.0	78. 0.0	1000. 0.0	100. 0.0
5.11.53	104. 0.0	1500. 0.0	150. 0.0	26. 0.0	104. 0.0	1250. 0.0	150. 0.0
19.10.54	182. 0.0	1750. 0.0	200. 0.0	26. 0.0	182. 0.0	1750. 0.0	200. 0.0
28.10.58	182. 0.0	2250. 0.0	200. 0.0	26. 0.0	182. 0.0	2250. 0.0	200. 0.0
	<b>MEANS AS ASSESSED (f)</b>				<b>MEANS AS ASSESSED (f)</b>		
14. 3.61	182. 0.0	Abolished	1000. 0.0	26. 0.0	182. 0.0	Abolished	200. 0.0
	<b>\$ PA</b>		<b>\$</b>	<b>\$ PA</b>	<b>\$ PA</b>		<b>\$</b>
4.10.66 (g)	364.00		2000.00	156.00	364.00		400.00
2. 5.67	520.00		2000.00	156.00	520.00		400.00
30. 9.69	520.00		2000.00	208.00	520.00		400.00
10.10.72	1040.00		2000.00	312.00	1040.00		400.00
	<b>PERMISSIBLE INCOME (h)</b>				<b>PERMISSIBLE INCOME (h)</b>		
25.11.76	1040.00			312.00	1040.00		
4.11.82	1560.00			312.00	1560.00		

(a) Supporting mother's benefit (later called supporting parent's benefit) was introduced in 1973 subject to the same means test as Class A widow's pension.

(b) Represents the level of income or property allowable before pension was reduced. From 14.3.61 no property was taken into account if the total value did not exceed £2250 (\$4500). If value of property exceeded £2250 (\$4500), the excess over £1000 (\$2000) was taken into account, see page 67.

(c) Represents the value of property beyond which pension ceased to be payable. From 14.3.61 the upper limit of property was abolished as such; the upper limit of means as assessed at which a person's entitlement to pension ceased was thereafter determined by the interaction of the maximum pension rate and the means test parameters.

(d) Represents the maximum amount of income disregarded in respect of each dependent child.

(e) £13 for the first child, £26 for the second and each subsequent child.

(f) Merged means test introduced.

(g) Decimal currency was introduced in 1966.

(h) Means test was replaced by an income test.

**Table 6:** Child's allowance (a) and additional pension for children (b) and mother's/guardian's allowance

DATE ON WHICH RATES WERE FIRST PAID		CHILD'S ALLOWANCE/ADDITIONAL PENSION FOR CHILDREN		MOTHER'S/GUARDIAN'S ALLOWANCE	
AGE/INVALID	WIDOWS/ SUPPORTING PARENTS	FIRST CHILD	SECOND AND OTHER CHILDREN		
		£. S. D PW	£. S. D PW	£. S. D PW	
8.7.43		5.0			
29.6.49		9.0			
1.11.51		11.6			
11.10.56		11.6	10.0		
	16.10.56	–	10.0		
5.10.61		15.0	10.0		
	10.10.61	–	15.0		
3.10.63		15.0	15.0		
	8.10.63	15.0 (c)	15.0	2. 0.0 (c)	
14.10.65		15.0	15.0	2. 0.0 (d)	
		\$ PW	\$ PW	\$ PW	
	1.10.68 (e)	2.50	2.50	4.00	
10.10.68		2.50	2.50	4.00	
				ONE CHILD UNDER 6 OR INVALID	NO CHILD UNDER 6 OR INVALID
	30.9.69	2.50	3.50	6.00	4.00
9.10.69		2.50	3.50	6.00	4.00
7.10.71		4.50	4.50	6.00	4.00
	12.10.71	4.50	4.50	6.00	4.00
4.10.73		5.00	5.00	6.00	4.00
	9.10.73	5.00	5.00	6.00	4.00
	5.11.74	5.50	5.50	6.00	4.00
14.11.74		5.50	5.50	6.00	4.00
1.5.75		7.00	7.00	6.00	4.00
	6.5.75	7.00	7.00	6.00	4.00
4.11.75		7.50	7.50	6.00	4.00
13.11.75		7.50	7.50	6.00	4.00
6.11. 80	6.11.80	10.00	10.00	8.00	6.00

(a) Until 1956 payment (called child's allowance and free of means test) was made for the first child of some categories of age and invalid pensioners. From 1956 payment (called additional pension for children, and means-tested) was made for each child after the first; this payment was brought to the same level as child's allowance in 1963. In 1965 eligibility for child's allowance and additional pension for children was extended to all age pensioners. In 1968 child's allowance was abolished and replaced by additional pension for children and this was means-tested.

(b) See Table 8 for rates of additional benefit for children.

(c) From 8.10.63 paid to widow pensioners.

(d) From 14.10.65 paid to unmarried age and invalid pensioners.

(e) Decimal currency was introduced in 1966.

**Table 7:** Institutional pension paid to pensioners: Maximum rates

DATE ON WHICH RATES WERE FIRST PAID	AGE/INVALID (a) £. S.D PW	WIDOWS £. S.D PW	SUPPLEMENTARY ASSISTANCE (a) £ . S.D PW
13. 9.23 (b)	3.0		
8.10.25	4.0		
4.10.28	5.6		
23.7.31	5.0		
13.10.32	3.9		
26.10.33	5.0		
9.9.37	6.0		
26.12.40	6.6		
3.4.41	7.3		
2.4.42	8.6		
27.7.42	8.6	8.6	
5.8.43	9.6	8.6	
24.4.44	9.6	9.6	
5.7.45	11.6	9.6	
3.7.47	13.0	9.6	
8.7.47	13.0	11.0	
21.10.48	15.0	11.0	
25.10.48	15.0	13.0	
2.11.50	17.6	13.0	
7.11.50	17.6	15.0	
1.11.51	11.0	15.0	
6.11.51	1.0	17.6	
2.10.52	3.6	17.6	
7.10.52	3.6	0.0	
29.10.53	4.6	0.0	
5.11.53	4.6	1.0	
27.10.55	8.0	1.0	
1.11.55	8.0	4.6	
24.10.57	1.10.6	4.6	
29.10.57	10.6	7.0	
8.10.59	13.0	7.0	
13.10.59	13.0	9.6	
6.10.60	1.15.0	1.9.6	
11.10.60	15.0	11.6	
5.10.61	17.0	11.6	
10.10.61	17.0	13.6	
8.10.63	1.17.0	16.6	
14.11.63 (a)	2. 0.0	16.6	
1.10.64	2. 2.0	16.6	
6.10.64	2. 2.0	18.6	
1.10.65	2. 2.0	18.6	10.0
	\$ PW	\$ PW	\$ PW
4.10.66 (c)	4.20	4.20	.00
13.10.66	4.50	4.20	.00
1.10.68	4.50	4.50	.00
10.10.68	4.80	4.50	.00
30. 9.69	4.80	4.80	.00
9.10.69	5.10	4.80	.00
29. 9.70	5.10	5.00	.00
8.10.70	5.30	5.00	.00
7.10.71	6.00	5.00	.00
12.10.71	6.00	6.00	.00
25.4.72	6.00	6.25	.00



**Table 7:** Institutional pension paid to pensioners: Maximum rates (continued)

DATE ON WHICH RATES WERE FIRST PAID	AGE/INVALID (a) \$ PW	WIDOWS \$ PW	SUPPLEMENTARY ASSISTANCE (a) \$ PW
4.5.72	6.25	6.25	.00
5.10.72	7.00	6.25	.00
10.10.72	7.00	7.00	.00
5.12.72	7.00	7.50	.00
14.12.72	7.50	7.50	.00
4.10.73	8.00	7.50	1.00
9.10.73	8.00	8.00	.00
26.3.74	8.00	8.50	.00
4.4.74	8.50	8.50	.00
8.8.74	10.00	8.50	.00
13.8.74	10.00	10.00	.00
1.5.75	12.00	10.00	.00
6.5.75	12.00	12.00	.00
4.11.75	12.00	13.00	.00
13.11.75	13.00	13.00	.00
13.5.76	14.00	14.00	1.00
11.11.76	14.50	14.50	1.00
12.5.77	15.70	15.70	1.00
10.11.77	16.45	16.45	.00
11.5.78	17.15	17.15	.00
9.11.78	17.75	17.75	.00
8.11.79	19.30	19.30	.00
8. 5.80	20.35	20.35	.00
6.11.80	21.40	21.40	.00
1.1.81 (d)	3.90	3.90	5.00
7.5.81	4.00	4.00	5.00
5.11.81	4.60	4.60	5.00
11. 2.82	1.80	1.80	8.00
6. 5.82	2.40	2.40	8.00
4.11.82	0.95	0.95	10.00

(a) In 1963 standard and married rates were introduced, but were amalgamated in 1971. Married rates during this period were: £1.17.0 (1963); £1.19.0 (1964); \$4.20 (1966); \$4.50 (1968); \$4.80 (1969); \$5.00 (1970). Persons receiving pension at the married rate did not receive supplementary assistance.

(b) Payments had been made from 1916 on an 'act of grace' basis (see text).

(c) Decimal currency was introduced in 1966.

(d) Pensioner contribution payable to a benevolent home for a pensioner's maintenance became payable at a rate not exceeding that paid by a patient in a non-government nursing home as prescribed in the *National Health Act* (but a savings provision ensured that current benevolent home pensioners did not have their apportionment reduced).

**Table 8:** Unemployment and sickness benefits (a): Maximum rates

DATE OF EFFECT	UNEMPLOYMENT AND SICKNESS BENEFITS			LONG-TERM SICKNESS BENEFIT		ADDITIONAL BENEFITS FOR DEPENDANTS			
	MARRIED PERSONS AND UNMARRIED PERSONS 21 YEARS AND OVER	UNMARRIED PERSONS 18-20 YEARS	UNMARRIED PERSONS 16-17 YEARS	ADULTS, MARRIED MINORS AND UNMARRIED MINORS WITH NO PARENT IN AUSTRALIA	OTHER CASES	DEPENDENT SPOUSE OR UNPAID HOUSEKEEPER	FIRST CHILD	SECOND AND SUBSEQUENT CHILDREN	SUPPLEMENTARY ALLOWANCE
	£. S.D PW (b)	£. S.D PW (b)	£. S.D PW (b)			£. S.D PW	£. S.D PW	£. S.D PW	
1.7.45	1. 5.0	1. 0.0	15.0		—	1. 0.0	5.0	—	—
25.9.52	2.10.0	2. 0.0	1.10.0	—	—	2. 0.0	5.0	—	—
17.10.57	3. 5.0	2. 7.6	1.15.0	—	—	2. 7.6	10.0	—	—
27. 9.61	3.15.0	2. 7.6	1.15.0	—	—	2.12.6	12.6	—	—
1. 3.62	4. 2.6	2. 7.6	1.15.0	—	—	3. 0.0	15.0	15.0	—
	\$ PW	\$ PW	\$ PW	\$ PW	\$ PW	\$ PW	\$ PW	\$ PW	\$ PW
27.9.69 (c)	10.00	6.00	4.50		—	7.00	2.50	3.50	—
28.9.70	10.00	6.00	4.50	15.50	10.00	7.00	2.50	3.50	2.00
1.4.71	10.00	6.00	4.50	16.00	10.50	7.00	2.50	3.50	2.00
29.9.71	10.00	6.00	4.50	17.25	11.25	8.00	4.50	4.50	2.00
25.2.72	17.00	11.00	7.50	17.25	11.25	8.00	4.50	4.50	2.00
24.4.72	17.00	11.00	7.50	18.25	12.00	8.00	4.50	4.50	2.00
27.9.72	17.00	11.00	7.50	20.00	13.00	8.00	4.50	4.50	4.00

(a) Special benefit is payable at a rate determined by the Director-General but not exceeding the rate of unemployment or sickness benefit.

(b) An 'unmarried person' includes a widow, widower, or person whose marriage has been dissolved.

(c) Decimal currency was introduced in 1966.

**Table 8:** Unemployment and sickness benefits (a): Maximum rates (continued)

DATE OF EFFECT	UNEMPLOYMENT AND SICKNESS BENEFITS			ADDITIONAL BENEFIT		
	MARRIED PERSONS	UNMARRIED PERSONS 18 YEARS AND OVER	UNMARRIED PERSONS UNDER 18 YEARS	FOR EACH DEPENDENT CHILD AND FULL-TIME STUDENT OVER 16	SUPPLEMENTARY ALLOWANCE	
	\$ PW	\$ PW	\$ PW	\$ PW	\$ PW	
16.3.73	37.50	21.50	21.50	4.50	4.00	
26.9.73	40.50	23.00	23.00	5.00	4.00	
22.3.74	45.50	26.00	26.00	5.00	4.00	
31.7.74	51.50	31.00	31.00	5.00	4.00	
1.11.74	51.50	31.00	31.00	5.50	5.00	
19.5.75	60.00	36.00	36.00	7.00	5.00	
11.75	64.50	38.75	36.00	7.50	5.00	
5.76	68.50	41.25	36.00	7.50	5.00	
11.76	72.50	43.50	36.00	7.50	5.00	
5.77	78.50	47.10	36.00	7.50	5.00	
11.77	82.20	49.30	36.00	7.50	5.00	
5.78	85.80	51.45	36.00	7.50	5.00	
	UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFICIARIES WITH DEPENDANTS; SICKNESS BENEFICIARIES	UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFICIARIES WITHOUT DEPENDANTS		ADDITIONAL BENEFIT FOR EACH DEPENDENT CHILD AND FULL-TIME STUDENT 16-25	SUPPLEMENTARY ALLOWANCE	
	\$ PW	\$ PW	\$ PW	\$ PW	\$ PW	
1.11.78	88.70	53.20	51.45	36.00	7.50	5.00
1.11.79	96.50	57.90	51.45	36.00	7.50	5.00
5.80	101.70	61.05	51.45	36.00	7.50	5.00
11.80	106.80	64.10	53.45	36.00	10.00	5.00
5.81	111.10	66.65	53.45	36.00	10.00	5.00
11.81	116.20	69.70	58.10	36.00	10.00	5.00
2.82	116.20	69.70	58.10	36.00	10.00	8.00
5.82	123.60	74.15	58.10	36.00	10.00	8.00
1.11.82	128.80	77.25	64.40	40.00	10.00	10.00

(a) Special benefit is payable at a rate determined by the Director-General but not exceeding the rate of unemployment or sickness benefit.

**Table 9:** Unemployment and sickness benefits: Income test

DATE OF EFFECT	LIMIT OF PERMISSIBLE INCOME BEFORE REDUCTION IN RATE OF BENEFIT				EXEMPTION FROM INCOME OF AGE, INVALID OR SERVICE PENSION RECEIVED BY SPOUSE OF CLAIMANT FOR UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT £. S.D PW	EXEMPTION FROM INCOME OF AMOUNTS RECEIVED FROM FRIENDLY SOCIETIES BY A CLAIMANT FOR SICKNESS BENEFIT £. S.D PW
	MARRIED PERSONS AND UNMARRIED PERSONS 21 YEARS AND OVER (a)	UNMARRIED PERSONS 18-20 YEARS (a)	UNMARRIED PERSONS 17 YEARS (a)	UNMARRIED PERSONS 16 YEARS (a)		
	£. S.D PW	£. S.D PW	£. S.D PW	£. S.D PW		
1. 7.45	1 0.0	15.0	10.0	5.0	—	1. 0.0
1. 7.47	1 0.0	15.0	10.0	5.0	1. 0.0	1. 0.0
31.10.51	1 0.0	15.0	10.0	5.0	1.10.0	1. 0.0
25. 9.52	1.0.0	15.0	10.0	5.0	1.10.0	2. 0.0
6.10.54	1 0.0	15.0	10.0	5.0	2. 0.0	2. 0.0
	MARRIED PERSONS AND UNMARRIED PERSONS (a) 21 YEARS AND OVER (b) £. S.D PW	UNMARRIED PERSONS (a) UNDER 21 YEARS £. S.D PW				
17.10.57		2. 0.0	1. 0.0		2. 7.6	2. 0.0
15.10.58		2. 0.0	1. 0.0		2. 7.6	
27.9.61		2. 0.0	1. 0.0		2.12.6	
1.3.62		2. 0.0	1. 0.0		3. 0.0	
		\$ PW	\$ PW		\$ PW	
27.9.69 (c)		6.00	3.00		7.00	
29.9.71		6.00	3.00		8.00	
16.3.73		6.00	3.00	wholly exempted		
	MARRIED PERSONS AND UNMARRIED PERSONS 18 YEARS AND OVER (d)	UNMARRIED PERSONS (a) UNDER 18 YEARS				
1.11.80		6.00	3.00			
1.11.82		10.00	10.00			

(a) An 'unmarried person' includes a widow, a widower, or a person whose marriage has been dissolved.

(b) From 27.9.69 the income test for married persons and single persons 21 years and over was applied when assessing benefits for unmarried persons under 21 years who had no parent living in Australia.

(c) Decimal currency was introduced in 1966.

(d) From 1.11.80 the income test for married persons and single persons 18 years and over was applied when assessing benefits for unmarried persons under 21 years who had no parent living in Australia.

**Table 10:** Board and/or lodging received by pensioner/beneficiary

DATE OF EFFECT	£. S.D PW
15.4.09	5.0
2.10.16	7.6
1.1.20	10.0
13.9.23	12.6

**Table 11:** Family allowance

DATE ON WHICH RATES WERE FIRST PAID	FIRST CHILD S.D	SECOND CHILD S.D	THIRD CHILD S.D	FOURTH CHILD (a) S.D	FIFTH CHILD (a) S.D	CHILDREN IN INSTITUTIONS S.D	STUDENT CHILDREN S.D
<b>WEEKLY RATES</b>							
29.7.41	–	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0 (b)	–
30.6.42	–	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0	–
24.7.45	–	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.6	–
7.12.48	–	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	–
18.7.50	5.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	–
11.2.64	5.0	10.0	15.0	15.0	15.0	10.0	–
7.4.64	5.0	10.0	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0	15.0
	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$
17.10.67 (c)	0.50	1.00	1.50	1.75	2.00	1.50	1.50
9.11.71	0.50	1.00	2.00	2.25	2.50	2.00 (d)	1.50
13. 7.76	3.50	5.00	6.00	6.00	7.00	5.00 (e)	(f)
<b>MONTHLY RATES (g)</b>							
15.6.79	15.20	21.70	26.00	26.00	30.35	21.70	(f)
15.1.82	15.20	21.70	39.00	39.00	45.55	39.00	(f)
14.11.82	22.80	32.55	39.00	39.00	45.55	39.00	(f)

(a) From September 1967 family allowance for the fourth child was Increased by 25c to \$1.75, for the fifth child by 50c to \$2.00, and so on with cumulative Increases of 25c for each subsequent child.

(b) Endowment was payable in respect of children in non-government institutions from 29.7.41. The provision was extended to government institutions from 30.6.42.

(c) Decimal currency was introduced in 1966.

(d) Increase applied only in respect of children under 16 years. The rate for full-time students who had reached 16 but not 21 years remained at \$1.50 per week.

(e) Students were included until their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday.

(f) Students were included until their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday and payment was made according to their position in the family.

(g) Family allowance became payable at a monthly rate from June 1979.

**Table 12:** Double orphan's pension

DATE FROM WHICH PAYABLE	\$ PER WEEK	\$ PER MONTH
9.10.73	10.00	
5.11.74	11.00	
15.5.79		47.70
15.11.80		55.70

**Table 13:** Handicapped child's allowance (a)

DATE FROM WHICH PAYABLE	UNDER 16 YEARS \$ PER WEEK	STUDENT 16-24 \$ PER WEEK
14.1.75	10.00	
15.11.76	15.00	
16.10.78	15.00	15.00
	\$ PER MONTH	\$ PER MONTH
15.5.79	65.00	65.00
15.11.80	73.00	73.00
14.11.82	85.00	85.00

(a) Rates shown are those payable in respect of a severely handicapped child. The rate payable in respect of a substantially handicapped child depends on the parents' financial circumstances but cannot exceed the amount payable in respect of a severely handicapped child.

**Table 14:** Maternity allowance: Rates

DATE FROM WHICH PAYABLE	EACH CONFINEMENT £. S.D	FIRST CHILD £. S.D	SECOND CHILD £. S.D	THIRD CHILD £. S.D	FOURTH CHILD £. S.D	OTHER CHILDREN £. S.D
10.10.12	5. 0.0					
20.7.31	4. 0.0					
1.8.34 (a)		4. 0.0	4. 5.0	4.10.0	4.15.0	5. 0.0
21.9.36	4.10.0	5. 0.0	5. 0.0	5. 0.0	5. 0.0	
1.1.38 (a)		4.10.0	5. 0.0	5. 0.0	7.10.0	7.10.0
1.7.43 (a)		15. 0.0	16. 0.0	16. 0.0	17.10.0	17.10.0
1.11.78	Abolished					

(a) The rate was determined by the number of children under 16 in the claimant's custody, care and control. From 5.4.44, £5 was added for each additional child born in twins or triplets, and from 1.7.47 this provision was extended to cover each additional child born in all multiple births.

**Table 15:** Maternity allowance: Income test

DATE OF EFFECT	UPPER LIMIT OF INCOME (a) £PA		
20.7.31			260
12.10.32			208
	NO OTHER CHILDREN	ADDITIONAL ALLOWANCE FOR EACH OTHER CHILD	MAXIMUM ALLOWABLE INCOME
1.8.34 (b)	208	13	299
21.9.36	221	13	312
1.1.38	247	13	338
1.7.43	Income test abolished		

(a) For the 12 months preceding the birth, and in respect of the claimant and husband (or claimant only where single or widowed).

(b) The upper limit was £208 plus £13 for each other child under 14 years living with the mother, subject to a maximum of £299.





## Social security bills

### Dates of second reading speeches from 1908

	House of Representatives	Senate
Invalid and Old-age Pensions Bill 1908	3. 6.08	4. 6.08
Invalid and Old-age Pensions Bill 1909	20. 7.09	4. 8.09
Invalid and Old-age Pensions (Income) Bill No 2 1909	25.11.09	30.11.09
Maternity Allowance Bill 1912	24. 9.12	3.10.12
Invalid and Old-age Pensions Bill 1912	12.12.12	18.12.12
Invalid and Old-age Pensions Bill 1916	20. 9.16	29. 9.16
Invalid and Old-age Pensions Bill 1917	24. 8.17	5. 9.17
Invalid and Old-age Pensions Bill 1919	24.10.19	24.10.19
Invalid and Old-age Pensions Bill 1920	22.11.20	24.11.20
Invalid and Old-age Pensions Bill 1923	24. 8.23	24. 8.23
Invalid and Old-age Pensions Bill 1925	17. 9.25	23. 9.25
Maternity Allowance Bill 1926	12. 8.26	12. 8.26
Invalid and Old-age Pensions Bill 1926	5. 8.26	6. 8.26
Maternity Allowance Bill 1927	9.12.27	13.12.27
Invalid and Old-age Pensions Bill 1928	5. 9.28	6. 9.28
Financial Emergency Bill 1931	3. 7.31	14. 7.31
Invalid and Old-age Pensions Bill 1931	22.10.31	27.10.31
Financial Emergency Bill (No 2) 1931	14.10.31	27.10.31
Financial Emergency Bill 1932	16. 9.32	28. 9.32
Financial Relief Bill 1932	23.11.32	1.12.32
Financial Relief Bill 1933	6.10.33	20.10.33
Invalid and Old-age Pensions Bill 1933	6.12.33	7.12.33
Financial Relief Bill 1934	24. 7.34	27. 7.34
Australian Soldiers' Repatriation Bill 1935	20.11.35	4.12.35
Invalid and Old-age Pensions Bill 1935	14. 3.35	29. 3.35
Financial Relief Bill (No 2) 1936	16. 9.36	18. 9.36
Invalid and Old-age Pensions Bill 1937	31. 8.37	1. 9.37
Maternity Allowance Bill 1937	8.12.37	8.12.37
Invalid and Old-age Pensions Bill 1940	12.12.40	13.12.40
Child Endowment Bill 1941	27. 3.41	2. 4.41
Invalid and Old-age Pensions Bill 1941	29.10.41	21.11.41
Income Tax Assessment Bill 1941	29.10.41	26.11.41
Widows' Pensions Bill 1942	14. 5.42	27. 5.42
Maternity Allowance Bill 1942	30. 4.42	14. 5.42
Invalid and Old-age Pensions Bill 1942	30. 4.42	14. 5.42
Income Tax Assessment Bill 1942	15. 5.42	2. 6.42

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Invalid and Old-age Pensions Bill 1943	10. 3.43	24. 3.43
Invalid and Old-age (Reciprocity with New Zealand) Bill 1943	30. 6.43	30. 6.43
Unemployment and Sickness Benefits Bill 1944	10. 2.44	2. 3.44
Widows' Pensions Bill 1944	23. 3.44	29. 3.44
Maternity Allowance Bill 1944	10. 2.44	30. 3.44
Invalid and Old-age Pensions Bill 1944	23. 2.44	29. 3.44
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Invalid and Old-age Pensions Bill 1945	13. 6.45	21. 6.45
National Welfare Fund Bill 1945	7. 9.45	3.10.45
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Invalid and Old-age Pensions Bill 1946	12. 7.46	1. 8.46
Widows' Pensions Bill 1946	12. 7.46	1. 8.46
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Social Services Consolidation Bill (No 2) 1948	28.10.48	23.11.48
Social Services Consolidation Bill 1949	23. 6.49	23. 6.49
Social Services Consolidation Bill 1950	15. 3.50	9. 5.50
Social Services Consolidation Bill (No 2) 1950	15.11.50	21.11.50
Social Services Consolidation Bill 1951	26. 9.51	17.10.51
Social Services Consolidation Bill 1952	9. 9.52	17. 9.52
Social Services Consolidation Bill 1953	8.10.53	21.10.53
National Health Bill 1953	27. 3.53	1.12.53
	12.11.53	
Social Services Bill 1954	23. 9.54	30. 9.54
Social Services Bill 1955	10. 5.55	24. 5.55
Social Services Bill (No 2) 1955	15. 9.55	12.10.55
National Health Bill 1955	26.10.55	27.10.55
Social Services Bill 1956	20. 9.56	26. 9.56
Social Services Bill 1957	1.10.57	8.10.57
Social Services Bill 1958	16. 9.58	23. 9.58
Social Services Bill 1959	3. 9.59	28. 9.59
Social Services Bill 1960	8. 9.60	22. 9.60
Social Services Bill 1961	5. 9.61	14. 9.61
Social Services Bill 1962	20. 2.62	27. 2.62
Social Services Bill 1963	10. 9.63	18. 9.63
Social Services Bill 1964	10. 3.64	18. 3.64
Social Services Bill (No 2) 1964	3. 9.64	17. 9.64

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National Health Bill 1965	11.11.65	23.11.65
Social Services Bill 1966	15. 9.66	27. 9.66
Social Services Bill 1967	4. 4.67	13. 4.67
Social Services Bill (No 2) 1967	15. 8.67	31. 8.67
States Grants (Deserted Wives) Bill 1968	2. 5.68	5. 6.68
Social Services Bill 1968	17. 9.68	19. 9.68
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Social Services Bill (No 4) 1972	21. 9.72	21. 9.72
Social Services Bill 1973	28. 2.73	8. 3.73
Social Services Bill (No 2) 1973	5. 4.73	1. 5.73
Social Services Bill (No 3) 1973	22. 5.73	29. 5.73
Social Services Bill (No 4) 1973	11. 9.73	18. 9.73
National Health Bill (No 2) 1973	14.11.73	6.12.73
Health Insurance Bill 1973	29.11.73	11.12.73
Social Services Bill 1974	20. 3.74	21. 3.74
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Social Services Bill (No 3) 1974	16.10.74	24.10.74
Social Services Bill 1975	22. 4.75	14. 5.75
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Social Services Amendment Bill (No 2) 1976	20. 5.76	27. 5.76
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National Health Amendment Bill (No 2) 1980	27. 8.80	11. 9.80
Health Insurance Amendment Bill 1980	27. 8.80	11. 9.80
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Social Services Legislation Amendment Bill 1982	25. 3.82	4. 5.82
Health Legislation Amendment Bill (No 2) 1982	14.10.82	20.10.82
Social Security Legislation Amendment Bill 1982	23. 9.82	13.10.82
Social Security Amendment Bill 1982	9.12.82	15.12.82

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