

WIDOW'S PENSION

This guide to entitlement to widows' pensions was prepared by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services. The N.S.W. address of the Department is Australia House, 50 Carrington Street, Sydney. 2000. Branch offices are at Armidale, Lismore, Lithgow, Newcastle, Orange, Wagga and Wollongong

These pensions are paid to widows and other women who satisfy certain conditions. There is a means test on income and on property. A person cannot receive a widow's pension as well as an age or invalid pension or tuberculosis allowance.

Women Eligible

- **Class A**—A widow with one or more children in her care.
- **Class B**—A widow of at least 50 years of age, or a widow of at least 45 years of age whose Class A pension ceases because she no longer has a child in her care.
- **Class C**—A widow under 50, without children, who is in necessitous circumstances within the 26 weeks following her husband's death.

For Classes A and B, the term "widow" includes a deserted wife, a divorcee, a woman whose husband has been imprisoned for at least six months, and a woman whose husband is in a mental hospital. Certain "dependent females" may qualify for A, B, or C Class pensions.

Children

For pension purposes the term "child" means a child under the age of 16 years. It also includes a child over that age but under 21 years if dependent on the widow and receiving full-time education.

Residence Qualification

Five years' continuous residence in Australia immediately prior to claiming pension is required. This period is reduced to one year if the woman and her husband were living permanently in Australia when he died. Certain absences count as residence. Residence in New Zealand or Britain may be treated as residence in Australia.

Women Ineligible

These include:

- a woman who is not a British subject;
- a woman who is receiving a war widow's pension under the Repatriation Act because of her husband's death;
- a deserted wife or a divorcee who has not taken reasonable action to obtain maintenance from her husband or former husband.

Class A

The rate of pension payable depends on the widow's *means as assessed*. These consist of:

- her annual rate of income, *plus*
- a property component equal to \$2 (£1) for each complete \$20 (£10) of her property above \$2,000 (£1,000), if the value of her property exceeds \$4,500 (£2,250). If the widow's property does not exceed \$4,500 (£2,250), no property component is counted.

A widow's *means as assessed* may consist entirely of income, entirely of property component, or of various combinations of income and property component.

The pension payable in any case is calculated by deducting from the maximum rate of pension—this varies with the number of children—the amount by which *means as assessed* exceed \$364 (£182). In all cases, however, no pension is payable where the value of property is \$13,960 (£6,980) or more. Thus—

- if a widow's *means as assessed* are not more than \$364 (£182), a full pension is payable.
- if her *means as assessed* equal or exceed \$364 (£182) plus the maximum rate of pension applicable in her case, no pension is payable.
- if her *means as assessed* exceed \$364 (£182) but do not exceed the sum of \$364 (£182) plus the maximum rate of pension applicable in her case, a reduced pension is payable, provided the value of her property is less than \$13,960 (£6,980).

A widow who owns property valued at \$4,500 (£2,250) or less may receive full pension if the annual rate of her income does not exceed \$364 (£182). If the annual rate of her income exceeds \$364 (£182), the pension is reduced by the excess.

Thus, a widow whose property is valued at \$4,500 (£2,250) or less and who has one child remains eligible for some pension unless the annual rate of her income is \$1,196 (£598) or more.

Similarly, a widow with no income may receive a full pension if the value of her property does not exceed \$5,640 (£2,820). The pension is reduced by \$2 (£1) a year for each complete \$20 (£10) by which the value of her property exceeds \$5,640 (£2,820), but she remains eligible for some pension unless her property is valued at \$13,960 (£6,980) or more.

Where a widow has income and her property is worth more than \$4,500 (£2,250), the rate of income which she may receive and still be entitled

to a full pension varies with the value of her property. The rate of income which makes her ineligible for a pension also varies with the value of her property. Conversely, the value of property which does not affect the pension, and the value of property which makes her ineligible for a pension, both vary with the annual rate of her income. In all such cases, property of \$2,000 (£1,000) is disregarded.

Class B

The rate of pension payable depends on the widow's *means as assessed*. These consist of:

- her annual rate of income, *plus*
- a property component equal to \$2 (£1) for each complete \$20 (£10) of her property above \$400 (£200).

A widow's *means as assessed* may consist entirely of income, entirely of property component, or of various combinations of income and property component.

The pension payable is calculated by deducting from the maximum annual rate of pension the amount by which the widow's *means as assessed* exceed \$364 (£182). Thus—

- if her *means as assessed* are not more than \$364 (£182) she receives the full pension of \$559 (£279 10s.) a year (equivalent to \$10.75 (£5 7s. 6d.) a week).
- if her *means as assessed* exceeds \$364 (£182) and are less than \$923 (£461 10s.) a reduced pension is payable. The rate payable is the maximum rate of \$559 (£279 10s.) a year less the amount by which *means as assessed* exceeds \$364 (£182).
- if her *means as assessed* are \$923 (£461 10s.) or more, no pension is payable.

A widow who owns property valued at less than \$420 (£210) may receive a full pension if the annual rate of her income does not exceed \$364 (£182). If the annual rate of her income exceeds \$364 (£182) the pension is reduced by the excess. She remains eligible for some pension unless the annual rate of her income is \$923 (£461 10s.) or more.

Similarly, a widow with no income may receive a full pension if the value of her property does not exceed \$4,040 (£2,020). The pension is reduced by \$2 (£1) a year for each complete \$20 (£10) of property over \$4,040 (£2,020), but she remains eligible for some pension unless her property is valued at \$9,640 (£4,820) or more.

Where a widow has income and her property is worth \$420 (£210) or more, the annual rate of income which she may receive and still be entitled to a full pension varies with the value of her property. The rate of income which makes her ineligible for a pension also varies with the value of her property. Conversely, the value of property which does not affect the pension, and the value of property which makes her ineligible for pension, both vary with the annual rate of her income. In all cases, property of \$400 (£200) is disregarded.

Class C

There is no specific means test for Class C pension which is payable only if the widow is in necessitous circumstances.

"Income" includes earnings and any other form of income, with certain exceptions.

The main exceptions are: income from property; gifts or allowances from children, parents, brothers, or sisters; payments, other than annuities, by way of benefit from friendly societies; child endowment or other payments for children; Commonwealth health benefits and amounts received from registered benefit organizations.

Amounts in excess of \$1.50 (15s.) a week paid to a deserted wife by her husband, or to a divorcee by her former husband, for the maintenance of a child are counted as her income.

In addition, in arriving at income for means test purposes, a widow's actual income as defined above may be reduced by up to \$52 (£26) a year, equivalent to \$1 (10s.) a week, for each dependent child.

"Property" includes all real and personal property, e.g., houses; land; money in hand, in a bank, invested or lent; shares; legacies; vehicles other than for personal use; livestock.

"Property" does not include the pensioner's home, furniture, or personal effects.

Other types of property disregarded are: The surrender value (up to \$1,500 (£750)) of life insurance policies; the value of any reversionary interest; and the capital value of any life interest, annuity or contingent interest.

Telephone Rental, Radio and Television Licence Concessions

A concessional telephone rental equal to two-thirds of the amount otherwise payable is available for pensioners who live alone; and pensioners living in a household each member of which is also

entitled to the concession or has an income not exceeding \$988 (£494) a year. Reduced rate radio and television licences are also available to pensioners in these categories.

Rates of Payment

Maximum rates are as follows:

Class A—\$832 (£416) a year, equivalent to \$16 (£8) a week, i.e., the Standard Rate pension of \$12 (£6) a week plus Mother's Allowance of \$4 (£2) a week.

Payments for children: An allowance of \$78 (£39) a year, equivalent to \$1.50 (15s.) a week, for one child and, subject to the means test, extra pension of \$78 (£39) a year, equivalent to \$1.50 (15s.) a week, for each other child are payable.

Class B—\$559 (£279 10s.) a year, equivalent to \$10.75 (£5 7s. 6d.) a week.

Class C—\$10.75 (£5 7s. 6d.) a week for not more than 26 weeks immediately following the husband's death. If the widow is pregnant, payment continues until the birth when she may qualify for a Class A pension.

Supplementary Assistance of \$104 (£52) a year, equivalent to \$2 (£1) a week, is available to widow pensioners who pay rent and whose *means as assessed* do not exceed \$52 (£26). The assistance is reduced by the amount of *means as assessed* in excess of \$52 (£26).

Payment of Pension

Pensions are paid fortnightly, either by cheque posted to the pensioner's address, or in cash at a nominated post office.

Pensioner Medical Service

Free medical treatment of a general practitioner nature and free pharmaceutical benefits are available to certain pensioners and their children. Those eligible are notified.

HOW TO APPLY

Claim forms may be obtained from all post offices and from all offices of the Commonwealth Department of Social Services.

Applicants living in metropolitan areas should send their claims to the Director of Social Services in the capital city of the State in which they live. Others should send their claims to the nearest Registrar of Social Services.

AGE PENSIONS

This guide to entitlement to age pensions was prepared by the Commonwealth Department of Social Services. The N.S.W. address of the Department is Australia House, 50 Carrington Street, Sydney, 2000. Branch offices are at Armidale, Bankstown, Broken Hill, Gosford, Lismore, Lithgow, Newcastle, Orange, Wagga Wagga and Wollongong

These pensions are paid to people who satisfy age and residence requirements. There is a means test on income and on property except for blind people.

Qualifying Age

At least 60 years for women, or 65 for men.

Residence

A person must have lived in Australia at any time continuously for a period of 10 years. If he has completed 5 years' but not 10 years' continuous residence and has lived in Australia for periods which, in total, exceed 10 years he may be eligible. Residence in New Zealand or Britain may be treated as residence in Australia. Certain absences do not affect eligibility.

Rates of Pension

The maximum Married Rate is \$1,222 a year (\$23.50 a week) for a married couple, both pensioners, i.e., \$611 a year (\$11.75 a week) each.

For a married person whose spouse receives an unemployment, sickness or special benefit, a tuberculosis allowance or a service pension, the maximum is also \$611 a year (\$11.75 a week).

The maximum Standard Rate is \$676 a year (\$13 a week). This applies to a single person, to a married man whose wife receives a wife's allowance, or to a married person whose spouse does NOT receive an age or invalid pension, an unemployment, sickness or special benefit, a tuberculosis allowance or a service pension.

Note: The maximum standard or married rate may be increased by additional pension for children but only the husband's pension is increased in the case of a married couple, both pensioners. The standard rate pension may also be increased by the addition of the guardian's allowance and supplementary assistance. The actual rate payable may be less than the appropriate maximum rate after taking *means as assessed* into account.

Information about the additional benefits mentioned, and others, is shown in this article.

Definitions of income and property are given on the next page.

"Income" includes earnings and any other form of income with certain exceptions.

The main exceptions are: income from property; gifts or allowances from children, parents, brothers or sisters; payments, other than annuities, by way of benefit from friendly societies; child

endowment or other payments for children; sheltered employment allowance; Commonwealth health benefits and amounts received from registered benefit organizations.

In addition, in arriving at income for means test purposes, income as defined above may be reduced by up to \$156 a year (\$3 a week) for each dependent child.

"Property" includes all real and personal property, e.g., houses; land; money in hand, in a bank, invested or lent; shares; legacies; vehicles other than for personal use; livestock.

"Property" does not include the pensioner's home, furniture or personal effects.

Other types of property disregarded are: The surrender value (up to \$1,500) of life insurance policies; the value of any revisionary interest; and the capital value of any life interest, annuity or contingent interest.

OPERATION OF THE MEANS TEST

The actual pension payable is the maximum married or standard rate plus, where appropriate, additional pension for children and guardian's allowance, less the amount, if any, by which the *means as assessed* exceed \$442 if the claimant is married, or \$520 if the claimant is single, widowed or divorced. The effect of this is as follows:

WHERE THE CLAIMANT IS MARRIED

The figures shown are those applying after the combined income and combined property values of husband and wife are halved (*see* 'Married People' in previous column).

	Where the Married Rate applies	Where the Standard Rate applies
If the claimant's property is valued at less than \$420:	\$	\$
● a full pension is payable if the annual rate of income does not exceed	442	442
● no pension is payable if the annual rate of income reaches or exceeds	1,053*	1,118*
● a part pension is payable where the annual income is between \$442 and \$1,053* or \$442 and \$1,118*, as appropriate.		
If the claimant has no income:		
● a full pension is payable if the value of property is less than	4,840	4,840
● no pension is payable if the value of property reaches or exceeds	10,940	11,580
● a part pension is payable where the value of property is in the range \$4,840 to \$10,940 or \$4,840 to \$11,580, as appropriate.		

* Increased by \$78 for each child in excess of one. Where husband and wife are both pensioners only the husband receives the increase; the wife would not be eligible for pension if income reaches or exceeds \$1,053 and the standard rate would then apply to the husband. Also see 'For all claimants' below.

WHERE THE CLAIMANT IS SINGLE, WIDOWED OR DIVORCED

If the claimant's property is valued at less than \$420:	
● a full pension is payable if the annual rate of income does not exceed	\$520
● no pension is payable if the annual rate of income reaches or exceeds	\$1,196 or, if guardian's allowance is payable \$1,404*
● a part pension is payable if the annual rate of income is between \$520 and \$1,196 or \$520 and \$1,404*, as appropriate.	
If the claimant has no income:	
● a full pension is payable if the value of property is less than	\$5,620
● no pension is payable if the value of property reaches or exceeds	\$12,360 or, if guardian's allowance is payable, \$14,440
● a part pension is payable if the value of property is in the range \$5,620 to \$12,360 or \$5,620 to \$14,440, as appropriate.	

* Increased by \$78 for each child in excess of one.

Married People

For married couples, except where they are separated or in other special circumstances, the income and property of each is taken to be half the combined income and property of both, even if only one is a pensioner or claimant.

The rate of pension payable depends on the claimant's *means as assessed*. These consist of:

- his annual rate of income, *plus*
- a property component equal to \$2 for each complete \$20 of his property above \$400.

A person's *means as assessed* may consist entirely of income, entirely of property component, or of various combinations of income and property component.

FOR ALL CLAIMANTS

If a claimant's property is valued at \$420 or more, the rates of income which will permit him to receive a full pension, or make him ineligible for a pension, both vary with the value of his property. Conversely, the value of property which does not affect the pension, and the value which makes him ineligible for a pension, both vary with his income. In all cases property of \$400 is disregarded.

Guardian's Allowance

A Guardian's Allowance of \$208 a year (\$4 a week) is payable, as an addition to the standard rate pension and subject to the means test, to widowers and other unmarried pensioners with one or more children.

Supplementary Assistance

Supplementary Assistance of \$104 a year (\$2 a week) is available to standard rate pensioners who pay rent, or pay for board and lodging or for lodging, and whose *means as assessed* do not exceed \$52. The assistance is reduced by the amount of *means as assessed* in excess of \$52.

Benefits for Dependants

A Wife's Allowance of \$312 a year (\$6 a week) may be paid, subject to the means test, to a non-pensioner wife if the pensioner is permanently incapacitated for work or has a child. The wife's allowance is affected by income and property on the same basis as the pension, i.e., it is reduced by the amount of *means as assessed* over \$442.

A Child's Allowance of \$78 a year (\$1.50 a week) may be paid, free of the means test, for one child, and extra pension of \$78 a year may be paid, subject to the means test, for each other child.

Children

For pension purposes the term "child" means a child under the age of 16 years in the pensioner's care. It also includes a child over that age but under 21 years if dependent on the pensioner and receiving full-time education.

Special Provisions for Blind People

Permanently blind people, if qualified in other respects, receive the maximum standard or married rate of pension and child's allowance of \$1.50 a week free of the means test. Wife's allowance, guardian's allowance, the extra pension for children other than the first, and supplementary assistance are subject to the means test. There are limits to the amount a blind person may receive from age and war pensions.

Payment of Pension

Age pensions are paid fortnightly by cheque posted to the pensioner's address or, in special circumstances, in cash at a nominated Post Office.

Pensioner Medical Service

Free medical treatment of a general practitioner nature is available to most age pensioners and their dependants, while all age pensioners and their dependants are eligible for free pharmaceutical benefits. Entitlement cards are issued by the Department of Social Services.

Pensioners who hold Pensioner Entitlement Cards, and their dependants, are generally entitled to in-patient hospitalization, without charge, in the public wards of public hospitals.

Telephone Rental, Radio and Television Licence Concessions

A concessional telephone rental equal to two-thirds of the amount otherwise payable is available for blind people; pensioners who live alone; and pensioners living in a household each member of which is also entitled to the concession or has an income not exceeding \$1,196 a year.

Reduced rate radio and television licences (free for blind pensioners) are also available to pensioners in the abovementioned categories.

HOW TO APPLY FOR A PENSION

Claim forms may be obtained from any Post Office and from all offices of the Commonwealth Department of Social Services.

People living in metropolitan areas should send their claims to the Director of Social Services in the capital city of the State in which they live. Others should send them to the nearest Registrar of Social Services.

If both husband and wife wish to claim a pension, a separate form should be used by each.

A person cannot receive an age pension as well as an invalid or widow's pension, a tuberculosis allowance, or a service pension (except one for pulmonary tuberculosis).