



Australian Government



Centrelink

giving you options

# Manage your bills for free

## Centrepay



# What is Centrepay?

Centrepay is a **free** direct bill-paying service offered to customers receiving payments from Centrelink. Through Centrepay you can choose to pay bills by having a regular amount deducted from your Centrelink payment.

## Why use Centrepay?

Centrepay is voluntary. Customers who choose to use Centrepay benefit from its convenience and security, knowing that their payments are under control.

Instead of having large bills every month or quarter your bills are paid in manageable amounts from your payment, making it easier for you to budget.

## Which bills can I pay with Centrepay?

Using Centrepay, you can pay bills like:

- rent
- telephone
- electricity, gas and water
- education fees
- ambulance costs
- child care
- home care services
- no-interest loans
- rental of household goods.

**Note:** deductions to pay court fines cannot be taken from your Family Tax Benefit payment.

## How do I find out if an organisation or person is registered with Centrepay?

This information can be obtained by contacting Centrelink or by speaking to the organisation or person you would like to pay.

## Will it cost me anything?

No, Centrepay does not charge you any fee to deduct the money from your payment, unlike other methods available for paying bills. However, the organisation or person to which we send your deduction is charged a fee. This fee must not be passed on to you. If you believe this is occurring discuss it with the organisation or person you pay. If you are not satisfied with the response, contact Centrelink.

## Is there a minimum payment amount?

Yes, the minimum payment amount for Centrepay deductions is \$10 per fortnight.

However, there are some organisations that require a different minimum amount. Contact the organisation you want to pay if you are unsure of what minimum amount is required.



# How do I apply for Centrepay?

The easiest way to start Centrepay deductions is by **calling** Centrelink using the numbers provided in this brochure. Some participating organisations can organise your Centrepay deductions for you. You can also go online and use Centrelink's eServices to start Centrepay deductions at **[www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au)**. Alternatively, you can complete a Centrepay deduction form.

## To start Centrepay deductions you will need to have the following information:

1. Your Centrelink Customer Reference Number (CRN).
2. The name of the organisation or person you want to pay.
3. If available, the address and phone number of the organisation or person you want to pay.
4. The Centrepay Reference Number of the organisation or person you want to pay. This number always starts with 555.
5. Your account and/or billing number if you have one, for instance your electricity account/bill number.
6. The amount you want deducted from your Centrelink payment each fortnight.
7. The Centrelink payment from which you want the deduction to be paid.
8. The payday that you want the deduction to start.



Centrelink will send you a letter confirming the details of your deduction. Centrepay will pay your deduction to the organisation or person you have nominated on the same day you receive your Centrelink payment.

## Can I change my Centrepay deduction once it has started?

Yes, the service is voluntary and you can change, suspend or cancel the deduction at any time by **calling** Centrelink using the numbers provided in this brochure or if you use Centrelink's eServices you can change your Centrepay deductions online at **[www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au)**. Alternatively, you can complete a Centrepay deduction form.

Centrelink will send you a letter whenever you change, suspend or cancel your deduction. We will also advise the organisation or person you are paying if you change, suspend or cancel your deduction.

## You can make the following changes to your deduction:

- **you can suspend** your deduction amount temporarily for a maximum period of 13 weeks
- **you can nominate a target amount** and deductions will be made until that amount is reached. Your deductions will automatically stop when your target amount has been reached
- **you can change the deduction amount** you are paying to a new amount or change the amount temporarily for a maximum period of 13 weeks
- **you can cancel your deduction** at any time.

## Centrelink may not be able to deduct the full amount requested if:

- your Centrelink payment is reduced because of income or earnings
- your Centrelink payment has been reduced or suspended because of a non-payment period
- your Centrelink payment is reduced because other deductions have been made, such as overpayments, leaving you with insufficient payment left for your Centrepay deduction.

If this happens you will need to contact the organisation or person your deductions are being paid to and make other arrangements.

## What happens to the information I provide?

Your personal information is protected by law. Centrelink may give your information to the organisation or person that you have nominated, for the purpose of:

- checking your account number and the amount you want to pay, **and**
- reconciling your payment deduction details.

Centrelink can give your information to someone else in special circumstances where Commonwealth legislation allows or requires, or where you give permission, see the *Your Right to Privacy* factsheet.

In addition to this, limited personal information may be used to conduct customer surveys run by Centrelink, its policy departments or by research organisations on their behalf, see the *Customer Research and You* factsheet.

# Contact Centrelink for more information.

If you have any questions about Centrepay visit Centrelink's website or you can **call** Centrelink on your normal payment number.

Why wait in line? Register online to do your own deductions using Centrelink's eServices at **[www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au)**

## How to find out more

<b>Employment Services</b>	<b>13 2850</b>
<b>Youth and Student Services</b>	<b>13 2490</b>
<b>Family Assistance Office</b>	<b>13 6150</b>
<b>Disability, Sickness and Carers</b>	<b>13 2717</b>
<b>Retirement Services</b>	<b>13 2300</b>
<b>In languages other than English</b>	<b>13 1202</b>
<b>Customer Relations</b>	<b>Freecall™ 1800 050 004</b>
(for complaints, compliments and suggestions)	
<b>Australian Government Services</b>	
<b>Fraud Tip-off Line</b>	<b>13 1524</b>
<b>TTY* payment enquiries</b>	<b>Freecall™ 1800 810 586</b>

\*TTY is only for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment. A TTY phone is required to use this service.

Go to our website at **[www.centrelink.gov.au](http://www.centrelink.gov.au)**

**Important:** calls to '13' numbers from a standard telephone service can be made from anywhere within Australia for not more than the cost of a local call (call charges may vary depending upon the telephone service provider). Calls to '1800' numbers are free of charge. Calls from public and mobile telephones may be charged at a higher rate.

## Disclaimer

The information contained in the publication is intended only as a guide.

### What are your responsibilities?

The information is accurate as at February 2009, but may of course change. If you use this publication after that date, please check with Centrelink that the details are up to date.

### What is the position if you deal with a third party?

You may deal with a third party who is not a member of Centrelink's staff. If you do so, please remember that Centrelink has not authorised any third parties to provide information or advice to you.

