



Disability Services

Information Sheet

Benefits, concessions and low-cost services for people with disability

People with disability, and people caring for someone with disability, may be able to take advantage of benefits, concessions and low-cost/free services. If you know of a scheme you think would benefit others, please let us know by phoning 1300 786 117 or emailing disabilityinfo@dfc.sa.gov.au.



Note: This information is intended as a guide only. Please check directly with the relevant agencies for current details of benefits, concessions and low-cost services.

Centrelink Benefits

There are Centrelink benefits and payments for which people with disability, and their carers, may be eligible:

- ▶ Disability Support Pension
- ▶ Carer payments. Payments vary depending on whether you are caring for an adult or child and on how much care is provided. They include:
 - Carer payment, when the person receiving care has a severe disability or medical condition or is frail aged
 - Carer Allowance (child or adult)
 - Carer Supplement.
- ▶ Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme
- ▶ Mobility Allowance
- ▶ Pensioner Education Supplement
- ▶ Education Entry Payment
- ▶ Rent Assistance
- ▶ Bereavement Allowance.

Low income earners also may receive certain benefits.

Pension concession cards or Health Care Cards are issued with some ongoing payments.

You can get more information about Centrelink benefits and services if you:

- ▶ phone the Disability, Sickness, Carers inquiry line on 132 717 (TTY, free call 1800 810 586). The National Relay Service can also be used on 133 677

- ▶ write to, or visit, a Centrelink office. If a Centrelink office has sent you mail, address your letter to that office. Addresses of Customer Service Centres are in the White Pages
- ▶ visit the comprehensive Centrelink website at <http://www.centrelink.gov.au>. Send an inquiry via the message facility on the website, including requests to phone you.

Note: Centrelink has several fact sheets, booklets and brochures about benefits that apply to people with disability and their carers. These publications can be sent to you or downloaded from the website.

Centrelink also provides additional and specialist help for customers in a number of ways; for example:

- ▶ help in other languages. Phone Centrelink on 131 202 to speak to Centrelink in your own language
- ▶ get phone or face-to-face assistance from Centrelink senior customer service advisors or social workers
- ▶ some Centrelink information is available in various formats such as large print or audio format (cassette or CD) and Braille
- ▶ you can authorise someone else to make inquiries for you. You can also authorise someone else to handle all ongoing matters with Centrelink for you.

Country services

People in country areas may be eligible for practical assistance to remain living at home. Support may be provided through community health centres, hospitals and other agencies. Help may include equipment, friendly visiting, home support for families caring for children and adults with disability, respite care, social work and some allied health services depending on availability and eligibility. Contact your closest Community Health Service or regional hospital for more information. There may be a cost for these services.



Education

Centrelink

Centrelink provides benefits to help meet educational costs for people with disability and their carers, including Mobility Allowance, Pensioner Education Supplement, Assistance for Isolated Children Scheme and Education Entry Payment. Contact Centrelink (refer above).

School Card

The School Card program helps parents on low incomes with school fees for both government and non-government schools. You can find out more by visiting the Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) website at <http://www.decs.sa.gov.au>.

University scholarships

Scholarships are available for students with disability, through Adelaide University, Flinders University and UniSA (for example, the Sir Charles Bright Scholarship Trust). Information is available on the university websites at:

Adelaide—<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/scholarships>

Flinders—<http://www.flinders.edu.au/enrolling/fee-information/scholarships.cfm>

UniSA—<http://www.unisa.edu.au/scholarship/>

Electricity, gas, rates and bills

Concessions administered through the Department for Families and Communities (DFC)

You may be eligible for a range of concessions on various bills if you are receiving certain Centrelink allowances or have a pensioner concession card. Concessions may cover; council rates and water/sewerage rates, driver's licence and motor vehicle registration costs, prescription spectacles, ambulance cover, transport fares, phone bills, energy bills, the Emergency Services Levy, Save the River Murray Levy, and reduced-cost funeral expenses.

Phone the Department for Families and Communities Concessions Hotline on 1800 307 758 (TTY 8226 6789)

Visit the Department for Families and Communities Concession Finder at the website <http://www.sa.gov.au/concessions>. The easy online tool will help you work out concessions for which you may be eligible.

Entertainment

Companion Card

People with a permanent disability may be eligible for this card if they need a carer to attend recreational/leisure events with them. The card allows free entry for a carer at participating venues. The card also allows free travel for a carer on public transport when they are with the card holder who has a valid metro ticket. Phone 1800 667 110 (free call) or download an application form at <http://www.sa.companioncard.asn.au>.

Equipment and home modifications

Independent Living Centre (ILC)

The Independent Living Centre offers free advice on equipment and techniques to help with everyday tasks. Located at 11 Blacks Road, Gilles Plains, the Centre has a large showroom staffed by health professionals.

Make an appointment to visit the ILC to see and trial a range of equipment or get help over the phone or by email.

Phone staff at the Independent Living Centre on 1300 885 886 (SA/NT callers only) or 8266 5260 or email ilcsa@dfc.sa.gov.au or visit <http://www.sa.gov.au/disability/ilc>.

Equipment and Home Modifications Program

The DFC Equipment and Home Modifications Program is available to eligible clients of Community and Home Support SA. This service includes equipment and home

modifications for mobility, access, transfer, bathing and personal care, pressure management and seating.

Eligible clients need to be assessed by a Community and Home Support SA therapist.

Disability Services clients—contact your Service Coordinator for more information.

Domiciliary Care clients—contact 1300 295 673.

Housing SA

Housing SA will make alterations to its properties to help eligible tenants live independently (for example, installing handrails and ramps or removing a bathtub). The involvement of a health professional is required for more complex modifications. Phone Housing SA on 131 299.



Local councils

Several councils provide a low-cost handrail installation service, primarily for older residents. Councils usually require an appropriate health professional to assess the positioning and type of rails. Contact your local council for more information.

Veterans' Affairs

Department of Veterans' Affairs has *Home Front* and *Home Care Services* which provide home modifications and maintenance, in-home supports and respite to eligible veterans and war widows/widowers who need some assistance to stay at home. Phone 133 254 (metro only) or 1800 555 254 (regional only) or visit <http://www.dva.gov.au>

Novitatech

Free information and advice is available to anyone about technology solutions (for example, someone may need a specialised way to use a computer). A short-term hire scheme is available so that you can try before you buy. Technology can be very expensive, so it's important to work out funding it before buying. Your service coordinator may help you look at funding options if you're a Disability Services client. Phone Novitatech on 1300 855 585, or visit <http://www.novitatech.org.au>.

Technical Aid to the Disabled (TAD)

TAD provides customised, one-off equipment solutions. Volunteers with specialty expertise (engineers, people with electronic/mechanical expertise) are available through TAD to help design and fabricate unique items. Their labour is free, so costs are for materials only. TAD also provides services for carers, care centres, workplaces, schools or recreational facilities. Phone TAD on 8261 2922 (regional callers 1300 663 243) or visit <http://www.tadsa.org.au>.

The Low Vision and Adaptive Technology Centre

Equipment, technology and other services are available to support people with vision impairment. You can apply for support if you have a significant vision loss. Phone 8232 4777 or visit the Royal Society for the Blind website at <http://www.rsb.org.au>.

Financial

No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS) SA Network

You may qualify for a NILS loan if you're on a low income and need to replace or purchase an essential household item (for example, a refrigerator or washing machine). This non-government scheme is administered through various agencies depending on the area in which you live. Phone 8202 5187 (UnitingCare Wesley Adelaide) or visit <http://www.nils-sa.org.au>.

Centrepay

Centrepay is a free service for Centrelink customers that allows you to make regular direct payments for living expenses (for example, rent, phone, electricity) from your Centrelink payment. Phone 132 717 or visit <http://www.centrelink.gov.au>.

Centrelink Free Financial Information Service

This service is available to anyone in the community, not only Centrelink customers. You can obtain further details by phoning Centrelink 132 300.

Health

Ambulance cover

The only pension card in South Australia with entitlement to free ambulance cover is a Department of Veterans' Affairs Gold Card. Reduced cost ambulance cover is available to holders of a Health Care Card. Do not assume you have ambulance cover if you have a Health Care Card or other Centrelink card. Phone the South Australian Ambulance Service on 1300 136 272 or visit <http://www.saambulance.com.au>.

Continence

▶ Continence Resource Centre

The Continence Resource Centre provides information and advice on bladder and bowel problems, continence services, continence funding schemes and continence product information. The centre is located at the Independent Living Centre, 11 Blacks Road Gilles Plains and includes a large product display. It is open to the general public and health professionals—an appointment is preferable, but not vital. Phone 8266 5260 or 1300 885 886 (SA/NT callers only) or visit <http://www.sa.gov.au> (search for "continence resource centre")

▶ Continence Aids Payment Scheme (CAPS)

This Australian Government program, CAPS, helps people with permanent and severe continence issues to meet some costs of continence products. Eligible people receive a payment toward the cost of continence products. Phone Medicare on 132 001 (selection 1) or visit <http://www.bladderbowel.gov.au>.

▶ National Continence Helpline

Free confidential advice and information from Continence Nurse Advisors is available to anyone in the community. Phone 1800 330 066 to find out about continence services in your local region or visit <http://www.continence.org.au> for more information.

Dental

Free or reduced-cost dental services are available to eligible adults, teenagers and children through the government-funded SA Dental Service. Services include routine and emergency treatment and dentures. Waiting lists apply (except for emergencies). Phone 8222 8222 (TTY 8222 8390) or visit <http://www.sadental.sa.gov.au> for a list of clinics.

Hearing services

People with pensioner concession cards and their dependents may be eligible for free or reduced-cost services through the Office of Hearing Services. This service offers hearing assessments, hearing aids/devices, maintenance of devices and batteries. Phone 1800 500 726 (TTY 1800 500 496) or visit <http://www.health.gov.au/hear>.

Medical and pharmacy costs

There are two safety-net schemes that may help if you or your family need a lot of medical services or medicines. Both these schemes operate by reducing the cost or providing free services or products once you reach a certain amount of total expenses for either medical services or medicines. The schemes are:

- ▶ **Medicare Safety Net:** helps with the cost of medical services (for example, visits to doctors and specialists, various tests, scans and so on). Phone 132 011 for more information or to register for the scheme.
- ▶ **Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS):** Phone 1800 020 613 for more information.

You also can inquire about either scheme at your local Medicare office, or visit <http://www.medicareaustralia.gov.au>.

Tax offset (refund)

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) allows for a tax offset on net medical expenses over the threshold amount. If you spend above the threshold amount on eligible health care expenses, you might get a refund at tax time. You can claim a tax offset of 20 per cent (20 cents in the dollar) of your net medical expenses over \$2,000. There is no upper limit on the amount you can claim.

Full details about qualifying for the refund, are on the ATO's website at <http://www.ato.gov.au> and enter *T9 medical cost refunds* in the search box.

Tax matters can be complex. You might find it useful to get advice from a taxation specialist if you are unsure about whether or not you qualify.

Private Allied Health Professionals

People with disability may be eligible for substantial reductions to the costs of some private allied health services. Eligible people include those who have chronic medical conditions, complex care needs, mental health conditions, or children with autism. Professional services can include Aboriginal health workers, audiologists, chiropractors, osteopaths, dietitians, mental health workers, psychologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, podiatrists and speech pathologists, among others.

Find out more about this help through your general practitioner (GP). You will need a referral from your GP to these services, and he or she will coordinate the services.

See the separate Disability Services information sheet, *Medicare—getting the most out of it*. Phone the Disability Information Service on 1300 786 117 or download the information sheet from <http://www.sa.gov.au/disability> (select *Disability information and Publications*).

Refer to the Medicare website for more information about what is available through Medicare. Visit <http://www.mbsonline.gov.au>.

Spectacles

People with a Pensioner concession card or Centrelink Health Care Card may be eligible for reduced costs for spectacles through the SA Spectacle Scheme. Phone 1300 762 577 (TTY 8226 6789) or visit <http://www.sa.gov.au/concessions>.

Housing and accommodation

Centrelink Rent Assistance

Details about how to contact Centrelink are included on page one.

Housing SA Rental Assistance

This program helps people on low incomes, and others, who are in housing crisis. Eligible people can get help with rent and bonds in various ways. Phone 131 299 or visit any Housing SA office for more information.



Homestart Finance

Homestart is a South Australian Government backed lender providing home loans for low to moderate income earners. Loans are provided to eligible adults, from young first home buyers through to seniors. Phone 8203 4000 (metropolitan) or 1300 636 878 (regional and interstate) for more information or visit <http://www.homestart.com.au>

Legal and Mediation

Legal Services Commission of SA

The Legal Services Commission of SA has a free legal advice help line. Phone 1300 366 424 Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm or visit <http://www.lsc.sa.gov.au>.

Law Society of South Australia

This society has information about private lawyers who offer lower rates in certain situations; for example, pensioner discounts. They also have a list of Community Legal and Legal Support Services that provide low-cost or free legal advice. Phone 8229 0222 or visit <http://www.lawsocietysa.asn.au>—select *Legal Portal*, then *Community Legal and Legal Support Services*.

Community Legal Centres

Community Legal Centres are independent, non-profit organisations that provide free legal advice, casework and, in some cases, legal representation and referral. Centres are located throughout metropolitan and rural South Australia. Visit <http://www.saccls.org.au>.

▶ **Central Community Legal Service**

The Central Community Legal Service is a community organisation set up to provide free legal information, advice, representation, referral and assistance, including on matters around disability discrimination. Phone them on 8342 1800 or country callers 1300 886 220 or visit <http://www.ucwesleyadelaide.org.au/ccls>.

▶ **Women's Information Service (WIS)**

The Women's Information Service provides a free legal link-up where you can discuss pending court issues with a female lawyer on Tuesdays from 6pm to 8pm. Phone 8303 0590 or toll free 1800 188 158 for the free legal link-up, or visit www.wis.sa.gov.au—select *Community Services*, then *Free Legal Link-up*.

▶ **Welfare Rights Centre**

This centre is located at Level 5, 97 Pirie Street, Adelaide and provides free independent information, advice and help on Centrelink problems. Staff can:

- help you over the phone or in writing
- negotiate with Centrelink for you
- help you make an appeal about a Centrelink decision that affects you.

Phone 8223 1338 or 1800 246 287 (country callers toll free) or visit <http://www.wrcsa.org.au>.

Public Trustee—Assistance With Wills

You can make a will through the Public Trustee. Public Trustee does not charge you a fee, but instead takes a defined share of your estate. There are lower costs for people with smaller estates. Help is also available to manage a person's affairs after death. Phone 8226 9200 or 1800 673 119 (country areas toll free), or visit <http://www.publictrustee.sa.gov.au>.

Red Cross—Assistance With Wills

The Red Cross has a list of solicitors (including some in the country) who offer low-cost help to make a simple will, or make changes to an existing will. They also run Wills Days that are held periodically in various community locations. You do not need to leave a bequest to Red Cross to use this service. Phone Red Cross in Adelaide on 8100 4500, or visit <http://www.redcross.org.au/sa>

Low-Cost Or Free Mediation Services

Mediation is a confidential and informal way to resolve a dispute with the help of a neutral third person (mediator). The mediator helps people find a mutually agreeable solution to their differences. Low-cost or free mediation is available through:

▶ **The Southern Community Justice Centre**

Phone 1300 850 650 or visit <http://www.scjc.com.au>

▶ **Relationships Australia SA**

Phone 1300 364 277 or 8223 4566 or visit <http://www.rasa.org.au>

▶ **Centacare**

Phone 8210 8200 or visit <http://www.centacare.org.au>.

▶ **Anglicare**

KidsAreFirst works with separated parents in high conflict, their children (5–17 years) and/or extended family members. Phone 8301 4200 or visit <http://www.anglicare-sa.org.au/kids-are-first/>

Other

Red Cross phone calls

The Red Cross provides reassurance and support phone calls for vulnerable and/or socially isolated people.

- ▶ **Telecross** offers daily phone calls. Phone 8100 4697 or free call 1300 885 698 or visit <http://www.redcross.org.au/sa/>
- ▶ **TelecrossREDi**—up to three phone calls a day can be made to check on a person’s wellbeing during an extreme weather event such as a heat wave. Phone 8100 4500 or 1800 188 071 for more information.



Funeral Assistance

You may be able to receive financial assistance to cover the costs of a basic funeral and other related expenses if you’ve recently experienced the death of a family member and you’re facing financial hardship. This service is provided through the Department for Families and Communities. Phone 1300 762 577 (TTY 8226 6789).

Specialised smoke alarm scheme

This scheme is provided by the South Australian Government for people with a profound hearing impairment. A specialised smoke alarm with modified alarms is available free to eligible people (if the person receives a pension or is on a low income, and he/she is an owner-occupier of the home).

Phone the Hearing Solutions section within Guide Dogs SA.NT on 8203 8390 or 1800 738 855 (TTY 8203 8391).

Note: A similar service is available to people with hearing impairment who are tenants in a Housing SA property. Tenants should phone Housing SA on 131 299.

Phone and Internet

ONEseniors

Low-cost home phone and internet connections are available to people with disability, pensioners and other low income groups. The service is available Australia-wide. Phone 131 001 or visit <http://www.oneseniors.com.au>.

Telstra Services

- ▶ **Telstra Disability Products and Services**
This guide is a free online tool listing solutions for various difficulties that elderly people, or people with disability, may have when using standard phones. Visit <http://www.telstra.com.au/disability> and go to the *View More* button under *Disability Products & Services*.
- ▶ **Telstra Disability Equipment Program**
Eligible Telstra customers can rent modified phones and other equipment (to overcome disability-related difficulties) for the same price as a standard handset. Phone the Telstra Disability Hotline on free call 1800 068 424 (TTY 1800 808 981).

Transport And Parking

Adelaide Metro

▶ **Adelaide Metro Infoline and Infocentre**

Adelaide Metro gives free information about travelling by public transport. Plan your journey by phoning the Infoline on 1300 311 108 or 8210 1000 or 1800 182 160 (TTY 8303 0844). Visit the Infocentre on the corner of King William Street and Currie Street in Adelaide or visit <http://www.adelaidemetro.com.au> to use the online journey planner tool.

Get more information about Adelaide Metro's accessible transport by calling the Infoline numbers above or downloading brochures from the website address above—select *Accessible Transport*, then *Helping People with Disabilities*.

▶ **Mobility Pass**

This pass is available to people with disability who cannot manage ticket validating machines. Visit the website as described above.

▶ **Travel Pass—vision impairment**

The Travel Pass for a Person with Vision Impairment entitles the holder to unlimited free travel on Adelaide Metro regular bus, train and tram services. Visit the website as described above.

▶ **Companion Card**

People with a permanent disability may be eligible for this card if they need a carer to attend recreational/leisure events with them. See page 3.

Air travel

The Qantas Carer Concession Card is for people with disability requiring full-time assistance from a carer whilst on a plane. Cardholders and their carers can receive a discount on flights.

Phone NICAN (a national disability information service) for more information and an application form on (02) 6241 1220 (free call/TTY 1800 806 769).

Australian Disability Parking Permit

You may be eligible for an Australian Disability Parking Permit if it is very difficult for you to use public transport.

You can have a temporary Disability Parking Permit if your disability is likely to last for more than six months but is not permanent.

An application form is available from <http://www.sa.gov.au/disability/parking>. A general practitioner (GP) is required to fill in some parts of the form. Send the completed form to Service SA (GPO Box 1533, Adelaide SA 5001) with the required fee.

Phone 13 10 84 if you have any questions about the permit.



Local Councils

Most local councils have community services, primarily for their elderly residents. Services may include community bus services, transport to/from medical appointments, or someone to transport you and help with shopping. Phone your local council or visit the Local Government Association website at <http://www.lga.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=210>.

Patient Assistance Transport Scheme

The South Australian Patient Assistance Transport Scheme (PATS) provides financial reimbursement to country patients and approved escorts. The scheme covers some of the cost of travel and accommodation when travel is over 100 kilometres (each way) to receive specialist medical treatment unavailable at the nearest health centre. Contact your Regional Health Service or ask your GP for more information. The forms and more information are available on the website at <http://www.countryhealthsa.sa.gov.au>, go to *Services* and select *Patient Assistance Transport Scheme*.

Rail travel

People with a Commonwealth Pension Card or a Seniors Health Card are eligible for substantial discounts with Great Southern Rail (that is, The Ghan, The Indian Pacific and The Overland trains). People with a South Australian Seniors Card are eligible for other discounts. Phone 132 147 or visit <http://www.gsr.com.au>.

South Australian Transport Service

The Australian Red Cross provides transport to and from medical appointments for people unable to use any other means of transport; this covers people with disability, those who are frail aged and their carers. There is an annual \$25 fee and passengers are asked to make a donation of \$8 for one zone transport to \$12–15 for two zones transport. Phone 8100 4583 (metro) or 1800 246 850 (free call) for more information.

Taxi Fare Subsidy Scheme

To apply for this service you will need a form called "Application for Transport Assistance". This form is available from all doctors' surgeries or visit <http://www.sa.gov.au> (search for "taxi fare").

Ask your doctor to fill out this form and sign it. When it's filled in correctly, send it along with two signed passport-sized photos of yourself to SATSS Data Processing (GPO Box 2830, Adelaide SA 5001). For assistance, phone 1300 360 840.

The taxi voucher saves you money but doesn't pay for all of your fare.

