

# Program of Support

In order to qualify for the Disability Support Pension (DSP), you may need to have participated in a Program of Support.

The Program of Support requirement applies if you applied for the Disability Support Pension after 3 September 2011. However, it does NOT apply to you if your disability rated at least 20 points under a *single* impairment table. If you have not actively participated in a Program of Support at the time of your next review, DHS may decide you no longer qualify for DSP.

## What is a Program of Support?

A Program of Support means a program, funded by the government, designed to assist you to prepare for, find or maintain work (eg jobactive, a Disability Employment Service or the Community Development Program). A Program of Support may also include occupational and vocational rehabilitation and injury management programs.

## How will a Program of Support Help Me?

The Program of Support should be tailored to address your disability or impairment so that you can develop skills to help you prepare for, find or maintain employment.

Your Program of Support should include activities that help you look for and prepare for jobs, work experience, return to work, or education and training.

The *Social Security Act* does not list specific activities but current Centrelink

guidelines say the Program of Support must include one of the following:

*Job search, job preparation, education and training, work experience, employment, return to work, vocational and occupational rehabilitation, injury management or an activity designed to assist you to prepare for, find or maintain work.*

## How do I show that I have participated in a Program of Support?

You will need to get information about your current and previous participation in a Program of Support. You should use the Centrelink form, *Information about participation in a Program of Support* available on its website at:

<http://www.humanservices.gov.au/spw/customer/forms/resources/sa437-1403en.pdf>

You will meet the Program of Support Requirements if, in the three years before your claim, you:

- attended a Program of Support for at least 18 months, OR
- completed a course that counted as a Program of Support even if it is less than 18 months; OR
- were attending appointments with a Program of Support provider when you claimed DSP, but you have evidence (eg: medical evidence or evidence from your employment provider) that continuing the program would not help improve your capacity to prepare for, find or maintain work.



If you were exited from the program because your disability meant that you could not improve your capacity to find, get or stay in work, make sure you ask your provider to write that clearly in their answer to question 7 on the Centrelink form.

If you are still registered with your program but your provider considers that your disability means that you could not improve your capacity to find, get or stay in work, ask your provider to mark this somewhere on the form, or ask them to attach a letter to the form to explain this clearly.

**Tip:** Any time that you spend on an exemption from your activity requirements (eg: with medical certificates) will not count towards your participation in a Program of Support. This means that temporary exemptions can actually delay your eligibility for DSP.

If you attended all the appointments and activities that you were told to, but Centrelink says those activities were not enough, contact the Welfare Rights service near you for advice as soon as possible.

## Appeal Rights

If your DSP Claim has been rejected, you have 13 weeks to appeal the decision. To appeal simply tell Centrelink that you wish to appeal the decision to the Authorised Review Officer (ARO). If you have already had a decision by an Authorised Review Officer (ARO), you have the right to appeal further, to the AAT (Social Services and Child Support Division), and you need to do this within 13 weeks of the ARO decision.

For more information on appealing see the Factsheet **“Appeals – how to appeal against a Centrelink decision”**.

## For more information

### Fact Sheets

[www.welfarerights.org.au/factsheets](http://www.welfarerights.org.au/factsheets)

[www.brq.org.au/resources-and-education](http://www.brq.org.au/resources-and-education)

### Please Note:

This Fact Sheet is a collaboration between the National Welfare Rights Network (NWRN) and Basic Rights Queensland (BRQ). It contains general information only and does not constitute legal advice.

NWRN members are community legal centres, which provide specialist advocacy and legal services in Social Security law, administration and policy. We are independent of Centrelink. All assistance is free. If you need legal advice please contact the NWRN member closest to you:

	Metropolitan	Regional
Adelaide:	(08) 8223 1338	1800 246 287
Brisbane:	(07) 3421 2510	1800 358 511
Canberra:	(02) 6218 7977	
Darwin:	(08) 8982 1111	1800 812 953
Freemantle:	(08) 9432 9790	1300 430 599
Geelong:	(03) 5221 4744	
Hobart:	(03) 6223 2500	1800 066 019
Launceston:	(03) 6334 1577	1800 094 164
Melbourne:	(03) 9481 0355	
Perth (Nth):	(08) 9328 1751	1800 642 791
(Sth):	(08) 6253 9500	
Sydney:	(02) 9211 5300	1800 226 028
Townsville:	(07) 4721 5511	
Wollongong:	(02) 4276 1939	

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[www.welfarerights.org.au](http://www.welfarerights.org.au)  
[www.brq.org.au](http://www.brq.org.au)