

What's changed?

From 1 January 2019, the waiting periods changed for most payments.

A four year waiting period applies to:

- Newstart Allowance
- Youth Allowance
- Parenting Payment
- Austudy
- Sickness Allowance
- Mobility Allowance
- Pensioner Education Supplement
- Bereavement Allowance
- Special Benefit
- Farm Household Allowance
- Low Income Health Care Card
- Commonwealth Seniors Health Card.

A two year waiting period applies to:

- Carer Payment
- Parental Leave Pay
- Dad and Partner Pay.

A one year waiting period applies to:

- Carer Allowance
- Family Tax Benefit Part A.

There is no waiting period for Family Tax Benefit Part B. This means that new permanent migrant families where only one person earns an income, including single parent families, can access this support immediately if they are eligible.

Once the waiting period for a payment or concession card has ended, permanent residents can access that payment or concession card if they meet all the other eligibility requirements.

Who do the changes apply to?

The new waiting periods apply to all new migrants who are granted a permanent skilled or family visa on or after 1 January 2019.

People granted a permanent visa before 1 January 2019 are subject to the old rules. They have to wait two years for certain payments and can access Family Tax Benefit Part A, Parental Leave Pay, Dad and Partner Pay and Carer Allowance immediately, if they are eligible.

Some visa types are excluded from the changes and are also subject to the old rules even if their visa is granted after 1 January 2019. These visas include:

- special category visa (subclass 444)
- orphan relative visas (subclasses 117 and 837)
- remaining relative visas (subclasses 115 and 835).

Does the waiting period apply to everyone?

There are some situations where a waiting period might not apply for some or all payments. These exemptions allow people to access payments and concession cards earlier in some cases, subject to meeting all other eligibility rules.

The waiting periods do not apply to the following visa types for some or all payments:

- permanent refugee and humanitarian visas (such as subclasses 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 851 and 866)
- the referred stay (permanent) visa (subclass 852)
- some temporary humanitarian visas (subclasses 060, 070, 449, 785, 786 and 790)
- some carer visas (subclasses 836 and 116).

Exemptions also apply for family members of permanent refugee and humanitarian visa holders and for people in vulnerable situations who have experienced a change of circumstances, such as those affected by domestic violence or marital breakdown.

To find out if a person is eligible for an exemption from the waiting periods, migrants need to talk to the Department of Human Services.