



Accessing financial support and advisory services

icare recognises that icare scheme participants and their family members may experience a change in their financial circumstances following a serious injury or illness and can benefit from accessing financial support and advisory services.

This information sheet identifies several not-for-profit community based financial services providers, government based services, and links to financial web based tools. These organisations and tools can assist you to better manage your financial circumstances and enable you to develop sound financial habits.

Why should I get financial support and advice?

Money problems can happen to anyone. Whilst you might feel reluctant to seek help, financial counsellors aren't judgmental about people's circumstances – they are there to offer free, confidential and independent advice which can help you to:

- increase your confidence to manage your day-to-day financial affairs
- increase understanding of your financial options so that you can make the best decisions for you (such as whether you want to save or invest your money)
- make decisions related to compensation payments
- explore whether you may have entitlements to disability insurance benefits through either your superannuation fund or a retail insurance policy
- consider when you may require assistance to manage your financial affairs
- navigate complex financial matters and explore any possible entitlements to Centrelink payments.

Where can I get support?

Government financial supports

Centrelink

Australian Government (Department of Human Services)

Website: www.humanservices.gov.au Go to: Individuals > Services > Financial Information Service

Phone: 132 300

Centrelink offers a free Financial Information Service to help you:

- make informed financial decisions
- understand your own financial affairs and options
- understand financial planners and how to use their advice
- how to use credit sensibly
- save and plan through investing
- plan for your retirement
- understand what happens if you move into aged care.

Centrelink also provides information related to severe financial hardship and can provide access to a financial information services officer.

Financial Wellbeing and Capability

Australian Government (Department of Social Services)

Website: www.dss.gov.au Go to: Communities and vulnerable people > Programs & Services > Financial Wellbeing and Capability

Phone: 1300 653 227

The Australian Government, in partnership with community organisations, provides support to individuals and families experiencing financial difficulty. Through the '*Financial Wellbeing and Capability Activity*' you can acquire budgeting and financial skills to help you navigate through debt and learn strategies to better manage your money.

Commonwealth Financial Counselling services are delivered by community and local government organisations to help people in personal financial difficulty to address their financial problems, manage debt and make informed choices about their money in the future.

These services are voluntary, free and confidential and may include:

- access to Commonwealth Financial Counsellors to discuss financial circumstances
- developing a budgeting plan to suit your circumstances and to help gain financial management skills to enable you to take control of your finances
- negotiation with creditors if you are having difficulty maintaining your loan, mortgage or credit card repayments
- explaining options when you are not able to pay bills
- explaining the debt recovery process if you are unable to pay a bill and are not sure what to do next
- advocating with government or non-government organisations.

These services can be accessed through the National Debt Hotline (see information under not-for-profit financial supports).

NSW Trustee & Guardian (TAG)

NSW Government

Website: www.tag.nsw.gov.au

Phone: 1300 364 103

The NSW Trustee & Guardian's role is to act as an independent and impartial Executor, Administrator, Attorney and Trustee for the people of NSW. It also provides direct financial management services and authorisation and direction to private financial managers.

They will provide assistance with:

- Wills
- Powers of Attorney
- Enduring Guardianship
- trusts
- estate administration
- financial management.

Carer Gateway

Australian Government

Website: www.carergateway.gov.au Go to: Caring for someone > Money matters > Financial support and disability

Phone: 1800 422 737

Carer Gateway is a national online and telephone service that provides practical information and financial planning resources to carers. The interactive service finder helps carers connect to local support services.

Not-for-profit financial supports

National Debt Hotline

Not-for-profit with support and funding from Australian Government (Department of Social Services) and state governments of Victoria and NSW

Website: www.ndh.org.au

Phone: 1800 007 007 or 1800 686 175 (rural financial counsellors)

The free hotline is open from 9:30am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday. When you call you'll be automatically transferred to the phone service in your state/territory. You can speak to one of the many financial advisors over the phone or be referred to financial counsellors who work in community organisations across Australia.

Salvation Army

Website: www.salvos.org.au Go to: Need help > Financial assistance

Phone: 137 258

The Salvation Army offers free financial coaching, counselling and assistance. They can help you plan to pay essential expenses such as food and rent, or deal with non-complex debts such as electricity or phone bills, and rental arrears. They can also assist you to access the No Interest Loan Scheme (see following pages).

The Salvation Army's financial counselling service (*Moneycare*) provides information and support to help people create a money plan and review their financial position. Financial Counsellors can assess your financial situation and give you information about credit and debt issues.

St Vincent de Paul Society

Website: www.vinnies.org.au Go to: Find help – then choose your state to find financial support services available

Phone: (02) 9568 0262

The St Vincent de Paul Society provides financial assistance and advice to people in need. They help people through difficult times with the goal of eventually taking back control of their finances. Assistance can range from a one-off bill utility payment; providing vouchers for food, goods and unexpected expenses; and, in some states they provide access to special loan schemes as well as financial programs for individuals and families to help them create budgets and stick to them.

They can also assist you to access the No Interest Loan Scheme and StepUP loans and can lend up to \$1200 to low income earners with low repayments from \$20 per fortnight.

Wesley Mission

Website: www.wesleymission.org.au Go to: Find a service > Mental health and hospitals > Counselling > Financial counselling

Phone: (02) 9623 5555 (head office) or 1300 827 638 (Financial Counselling Services)

Wesley Mission offers intervention-based programs that help individuals and families who are experiencing financial hardship to better manage their finances. Wesley Financial Counselling Services provides free, independent and confidential face-to-face counselling. This service provides:

- support in times of crisis
- both short-term crisis management and long-term prevention strategies
- counselling, education, analysis, personalised options, negotiation, advocacy, mediation and referrals where needed
- assistance with options and help to negotiate with credit providers.

Anglicare

Website: www.anglicare.org.au Go to: What we offer > Food and financial assistance

Phone: (02) 9612 3900

Anglicare provides financial assistance including immediate practical assistance and longer-term solutions, such as help with food and bills, financial counselling and support to access the No Interest Loan Scheme and StepUP loans.

Financial Counselling is a free service provided by qualified professionals. Depending on your individual circumstances, Financial Counselling can:

- help you assess your financial situation
- provide information about credit and debt issues
- design a personal money management plan
- if appropriate, act as an advocate for you and negotiate with credit providers, government agencies and businesses
- provide information on credit laws, debt recovery processes, bankruptcy and other areas of legislation
- refer you to other services.

Seniors Rights Service

Website: www.seniorsrightsservice.org.au

Phone: 1800 424 079

The Seniors Rights Service is a specialised community legal service for older people. Their 'Older Persons Legal Service' provides legal advice, assistance, referral and education for older people throughout NSW including rural, regional and remote areas on areas such as:

- debt management
- financial abuse, including by relatives and carers
- alternate decision making, including issues involving the capacity to make financial decisions
- Powers of Attorney and Enduring Guardianship.

No Interest Loan Scheme and StepUP loan

The No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS) provides people on low income with access to safe, fair and affordable credit. NILS loans are for amounts up to \$1,500 for essential household items and services. Repayments are set up at an affordable amount over 12 to 18 months. See www.nils.com.au for more information.

StepUP is a low interest loan for people on low income who have difficulty accessing credit from a bank. You can borrow from \$800 and \$3000 for major items such as second-hand cars, car maintenance and house repairs. These are bank loans with a low interest rate and up to three years to pay it back. See www.stepup.org.au for more information.

NILS and StepUP are offered by local community organisations across Australia (including some of the not-for-profits listed in this information sheet).

Web based financial toolkits

MoneySmart

Australian Securities and Investment Commission (ASIC)

Website: www.moneysmart.gov.au

Phone: (02) 9911 2000

If you're not ready to speak to someone yet but would still like to get some information, the ASIC *MoneySmart* website has free and impartial financial guidance and a range of financial tools and calculators to help you manage your finances.

Personal superannuation funds and income protection

You may have entitlements through your superannuation fund and/or a private insurance policy, such as a TPD (Total and Permanent Disability) benefit and/or income protection benefits. It's important to contact your superannuation fund and check any of your insurance policy documents to see what additional financial supports you are entitled to.

If you're in hospital, there may be a social worker who can assist you with this. You can also seek advice from your legal representative and/or your financial advisor if you have one.

Contact icare

If you require any additional support, please contact icare between 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday:

Lifetime Care and the Workers Care Program

Phone: 1300 738 586

Fax: 1300 738 583

Lifetime Care email: enquiries.lifetimecare@icare.nsw.gov.au

Workers Care email: enquiries.workers-care@icare.nsw.gov.au

Dust Diseases Care

Phone: (02) 8223 6600

Toll Free: 1800 550 027

Fax: (02) 9279 1520

Email: DDAenquiries@icare.nsw.gov.au