



Social Security Agreement between Australia and Latvia

Australia's social security system

Australia's social security system is different to most other developed countries. Each person's pension is paid by the Australian Government out of general funds, rather than through contributions paid by individuals and employers into a social insurance fund. For this reason, Australian pensions are income and asset tested.

The Department of Human Services delivers Australian social security payments to individuals.

You will have to tell us about all of your, and in some instances, your partner's¹ income and assets if you want to claim an Australian pension.

How does the agreement help you?

The agreement generally allows you to lodge a claim for payment from either country. It also allows you to add together your periods of residence in Australia and periods of social security coverage in Latvia, so you can meet the minimum requirements for payment.

Who can get an Australian payment?

If you live in Australia or Latvia, you can lodge a claim for the Australian Age Pension in either country.

To qualify under the agreement, you need to meet the following basic requirements*:

Age Pension

You may be able to get Age Pension if:

- you are over the qualifying age (refer to humanservices.gov.au for details), and
- the total period of time you have lived in Australia and/or your periods of coverage in Latvia add up to more than 10 years.

Note: if you live outside Australia when you claim, you generally need at least 12 months Australian Working Life Residence² of which six months must be continuous.

*There may be additional requirements you need to meet before you can be paid.



Who can get a Latvian payment?

Under the agreement, you can add periods of Australian Working Life Residence² to your periods of coverage in Latvia to meet the minimum requirement for the Latvian Old Age and Survivor's Pensions.

The Latvian pension authorities make all decisions about Latvian payments. For more information about Latvian payments, you should contact the Latvian pension authorities³.

How do I claim?

If you are in Australia, to claim:

- an Australian payment under the agreement, go to **humanservices.gov.au**
- a Latvian payment, contact the department⁴. You can also lodge your claim at your nearest Centrelink Service Centre.

If you are in Latvia, to claim:

- a Latvian payment, contact your local Latvian social insurance office
- an Australian payment:
 - contact your local Latvian social insurance office
 - the department, or
 - download the claim forms from **humanservices.gov.au**

You can also lodge your claim at any local Latvian social insurance office.

Claims for Australian payments can be lodged up to 13 weeks early. You must lodge your claim and all supporting documents at the same time. If you do not do this your claim may not be accepted.

For more information

If you would like more detailed information you should contact us⁴ for free help and advice.

Disclaimer

The information contained in this publication is intended only as a guide to payments and services available.

The information in this factsheet is accurate as at July 2019. If you use this publication after that date, please check with us that the details are up to date.

Should I lodge a claim?

We can't be sure if you will get a payment, until you lodge a claim and your circumstances are taken into account. It is your responsibility to decide whether you lodge a claim for payment or not.

From what date are the payments available?

Most government payments are paid from, or after, the date on which the application is made so the sooner you lodge your application, the quicker you may be paid.

For Australian payments, you must lodge your claim and all supporting documents at the same time. If you don't your claim may not be accepted.

What do you need to do when dealing with a third party?

You may deal with a third party who is not a member of our staff. If you do so, please remember that we have not authorised any third parties to provide information or advice to you about payments.

Notes

1. Definition of a partner	<p>For our purposes, a person is considered to be your partner if you and the person are living together, or usually live together; and are married, in a registered relationship (opposite or same-sex), or in a de facto relationship (opposite or same-sex).</p> <p>The department considers a person to be in a de facto relationship from the time they start living with another person as a member of a couple.</p> <p>The department recognises all couples, opposite-sex and same-sex.</p>
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<p>2. Australian residence</p>	<p>‘Australian residence’ means periods when you were residing in Australia as an Australian citizen or Australian permanent visa holder.</p> <p>Australian residence at any time is used to qualify for an Australian payment.</p> <p>‘Working Life Residence’ is period/s of Australian residence between the ages of 16 and Australian age pension age only.</p>
<p>3. Latvian social insurance contact details</p>	<p>State Social Security Agency (VSAA) Citadeles street 7/ 69, Riga, LV-1010</p> <p>Call +371 6709 5100 Fax +371 6702 7808 Go to vsaa.lv</p>
<p>4. Department of Human Services contact details</p>	<p>Go to humanservices.gov.au</p> <p>Call 131 673 from within Australia. Note: call charges apply—calls from mobile phones may be charged at a higher rate.</p> <p>Call +61 3 6222 3455 from outside Australia. Note: call charges apply—calls from mobile phones may be charged at a higher rate.</p> <p>Email international.services@humanservices.gov.au Note: email is not a secure communication medium.</p> <p>Fax +61 3 6222 2799</p> <p>Write to PO Box 7809, Canberra BC ACT 2610, Australia.</p>