

Tips on dealing with Centrelink

Most things can be done online

Save time by using Centrelink's online service to apply for a claim, report your income, update your address, change your relationship status, and most other tasks. If you can't find what you need online, you might have to phone them. Be prepared to wait a long time to speak to someone.

[Find the right phone number](#) for the service you need. For help with payments for students call 132 490.

Get all your documentation before making a claim

When you submit a claim for any payment, you need to provide documentation. This could include a birth certificate, passport, pay slips, bank statements, medical evidence, or separation certificates. **If you want to get your claim assessed as quickly as possible, make sure you submit everything they have requested as soon as possible.**

Never send anything to Centrelink by post

It will very likely get lost. It might be tempting to put forms in the mail, rather than going into a Centrelink office or dealing with their online submission process, but don't do it!

Don't go into a Centrelink office to apply for a payment

You will just have to wait in a queue for a long time to speak to someone, who will then assign you to a computer, to complete the form online. This is only useful if you don't have other access to a computer (even then, you don't have to wait in line to use the Centrelink computers).

Take a buddy with you

If you have a complicated situation, take a support person with you. They might understand things that you miss, and they can be helpful if you're feeling nervous.

Take notes of what you are told

Keep notes on any information you get from Centrelink staff (including their names and the date and time). This can help if you end up following incorrect advice – especially if you're facing a penalty for doing so.

Contact a Centrelink social worker

Dealing with Centrelink can be stressful. If you are feeling vulnerable and confused, speaking with a social worker can help. When you phone or attend a Centrelink office you can ask for a social worker.

Contact Centrelink and request to speak to a social worker: 132 850.

Written by SUPRA Postgraduate Advocacy Service March 2023