Victorian concessions
A guide to discounts and services for eligible households in Victoria
Introduction

The Victorian Government offers a number of concessions designed to assist and improve the affordability of essential services for low-income Victorian households.

This guide outlines how household concessions can help you pay your rates, water, energy and gas bills.

You will find details on which programs you may be eligible for and how to apply. Useful information on other government concessions and assistance programs is also included.

For further information on Victorian Concessions please visit the Department of Human Services website www.dhs.vic.gov.au/concessions or contact the Concessions Information Line on 1800 658 521 (toll-free).
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Eligible cards for Department of Human Services concessions

Centrelink Health Care Card*

*Holders of a Health Care Card for Carer Allowance and Foster Care issued in the name of the child are not eligible.

Centrelink Pensioner Concession Card
DVA Gold Card For All Conditions

DVA Gold Card War Widow
DVA Gold Card TPI

Repatriation Health Card
Totally & Permanently Incapacitated

04 06 005110 00 5
ANTHONY J COOPER
File No. QS H 5110
TPI - For all conditions Card expires or on recall 12/10

DVA Gold Card POW & EDA

Repatriation Health Card
For All Conditions

06 02 046785 00 2
SYDNEY JONES
File No. W X 46785
POW (J) & EDA Card expires or on recall 12/10
Energy

**Annual electricity concession**

The Annual Electricity Concession is available to help ease cost of living pressures by providing concession cardholders with a discount of 17.5 per cent off household electricity bills. The program was expanded from 1 March 2011 to provide eligible Victorians with 17.5 per cent off their electricity bills right throughout the year, rather than just during winter.

From 1 July 2012, a threshold for gas and electricity concessions was introduced to take into account the Commonwealth’s carbon tax compensation. This is so that households are not compensated by two levels of government for the same expense.

The Commonwealth compensation represents a subsidy of $171.60 for electricity across the year. So for a concession card holder’s annual electricity bill, the State Government concession will not apply to the first $171.60.

**This change does not affect the average net position of those Victorians receiving energy concessions.**

The Commonwealth Government estimates that the new carbon price will increase electricity bills by 10 per cent. In dollar terms this equates to an average of $3.30 per week or $171.60 per annum.

If the Commonwealth Government’s projections of the impost of the carbon tax are incorrect and rises in electricity prices are greater than anticipated and compensated, the Victorian Government’s ongoing concession arrangements will ensure State Government concessions are available to cover the extra costs above those compensated by the Commonwealth.

For more information about the Commonwealth Government’s carbon price package, see the Household Assistance Package section on page 28 of this brochure.
How to apply
Phone your electricity retailer and give your concession card details over the phone.
Your electricity retailer will check your concession card details with Centrelink and apply the discount to your bill.

Electricity transfer fee waiver
This concession waive the fee that is normally payable to electricity retailers when cardholders move house.

How to apply
Phone your electricity retailer and give your concession card details over the phone.
Your electricity retailer will check your concession card details with Centrelink and apply the discount to your bill.

Life support concession
This concession provides a quarterly discount on electricity and/or water bills where a household member uses an eligible life support machine. This concession is available to both renters and homeowners all year round.

For electricity bills, the discount is equal to the cost of 1,880 kilowatt (470 kilowatt per quarter) hours of electricity used each year, calculated using the general domestic tariff of your retailer.
For water bills, the discount is equal to the cost of 168 kilolitres (42 kilolitres per quarter) of water used each year. This discount is only applicable for haemodialysis machines.

Qualifying machines are those that use at least 1,880 kilowatt hours per annum.

Machines already approved are:

- intermittent peritoneal dialysis machines (electricity)
- oxygen concentrators (electricity)
- haemodialysis machines (electricity and water).

Most continuous positive airways pressure (CPAP) machines do not meet this threshold.

For other machines, please contact the Concessions Information Line on 1800 658 521 (toll-free) to discuss your application.

**How to apply**

Phone your electricity retailer and/or water corporation for an application form or call your hospital supplying the life support machine or contact the Concessions Information Line on 1800 658 521 (toll-free).

Application forms need to be completed and signed by your doctor confirming your use of a life support machine. Once completed, forward to your electricity retailer and/or water corporation.

Your electricity retailer and/or water corporation will check your concession card details with Centrelink and apply the discount to your bill.
Medical cooling concession

This concession provides a 17.5 per cent discount on summer electricity costs for cardholders where a member of the family has a medical condition that affects the body’s ability to regulate temperature. There are many qualifying conditions which include:

- Multiple sclerosis
- Lymphoedema
- Parkinson’s disease
- Fibromyalgia
- Post-polio syndrome/poliomyelitis
- Motor neurone disease
- Scleroderma
- Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE).
This concession is available from 1 November to 30 April each year, with applications accepted throughout the year. The concession is given in addition to the Annual Electricity Concession.

**How to apply**

Phone your electricity retailer for an application form or contact the Concessions Information Line on 1800 658 521 (toll-free).

For all other conditions and to assess your eligibility, contact the Concessions Information Line.

Application forms need to be completed and signed by your doctor confirming your medical condition. Once completed, forward to your electricity retailer.

Your electricity retailer will check your concession card details with Centrelink and apply the discount to your bill.
Non-mains energy concession

This concession assists cardholders who rely on Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG), firewood or heating oil for domestic heating, cooking or hot water, or who access non-mains electricity via an embedded network, or who rely on a generator. Special conditions apply for firewood.
The amount of the rebate depends on the annual amount of each non-mains energy purchased.

The rebate amount for 2012 on each utility is as follows:

- $43 rebate if you spend from $100 to $242.99
- $128 rebate if you spend from $243 to $729.99
- $213 rebate if you spend from $730 to $1,214.99
- $304 rebate if you spend $1,215 or more

Rebates are reviewed each year.

All non-mains energy costs are covered from 1 January to 31 December each year.

**How to apply**

Application forms are available from LPG suppliers, local councils, caravan park proprietors or by contacting the Concessions Information Line on 1800 658 521 (toll-free). Applications close 31 January 2013.

The Department of Human Services may accept late applications.
Off-peak electricity concession

This concession provides a 13 per cent discount on the off-peak tariff on electricity bills. The off-peak tariff applies to households that have separately metered electric hot water or slab heating. This concession is available all year round.

The off-peak electricity concession community service benefit is not available in relation to the flexible or time-of-use tariffs enabled by a smart electricity meter or similar technology.

How to apply

Phone your electricity retailer and give your concession card details over the phone.

Your electricity retailer will check your concession card details with Centrelink and apply the discount to your bill.
Service to property charge concession

This concession provides a discount on the electricity service charge where a household has very low electricity usage. The usage charge must be less than the service charge. The discount reduces the service charge to the cost of the total electricity usage for the billing period. This concession is available all year round, but only covers bills where the customer is eligible. Applications are accepted throughout the year.

How to apply

Phone your electricity retailer and give your concession card details over the phone.

Your electricity retailer will check your concession card details with Centrelink and apply the discount to your bill.

Winter energy concession

The Winter Energy Concession on gas is available to help ease cost of living pressures by providing concession card holders with a discount of 17.5 per cent off mains gas bills from 1 May to 31 October of each year.

From 1 July 2012, a threshold for gas and electricity concessions was introduced to take into account the Commonwealth’s carbon tax.
compensation. This is so that households are not compensated by two levels of government for the same expense.

The Commonwealth compensation represents a subsidy of $62.40 for gas across the six winter months of the year. So for a concession card holder’s winter gas bill, the State Government concession will not apply to the first $62.40.

This change does not affect the average net position of those Victorians receiving energy concessions.

The Commonwealth Government estimates that the new carbon price will increase gas bills by nine per cent. In dollar terms this equates to an average of $1.50 per week or $78 per annum. Approximately 80 per cent of the cost of gas is incurred during the six winter months. The increase in gas bills during this six month period is therefore equal to $62.40.

If the Commonwealth Government’s projections of the impost of the carbon tax are incorrect and rises in gas prices are greater than anticipated and compensated, the Victorian Government’s ongoing concession arrangements will ensure State Government concessions are available to cover the extra costs above those compensated by the Commonwealth.

For more information about the Commonwealth Government’s carbon price package, see the Household Assistance Package section on page 28 of this brochure.

How to apply
Phone your gas retailer and give your concession card details over the phone.
Your gas retailer will check your concession card details with Centrelink and apply the discount to your bill.
Hardship

Utility relief grant scheme (mains)

This grant is for cardholders who are unable to pay their mains electricity, gas or water bill due to a temporary financial crisis. The amount of the grant is based on the balance owing at the time of application and is capped at six months worth of usage, up to a maximum of $500. This does not have to be paid back.

This grant is available to both private renters and home owners who hold a current concession card and/or when the account holder is registered with their utility company’s hardship program and is part of a low-income household with an outstanding mains electricity, gas or water debt.

How to apply

Application forms can be obtained from your gas and electricity retailers and water corporations. Applicants must address and meet one of the five following eligibility criteria:

- a substantial increase in usage
- a recent decrease in income, for example, loss of employment
- high unexpected expenses on essential items
- the cost of shelter is more than 30 per cent of the household income
- the cost of utility usage is more than 10 per cent of the household income.
Utility relief grant scheme (non-mains)

This grant is for cardholders who are unable to pay their non-mains electricity, gas or water bills due to a temporary financial crisis. This can include: LPG, diesel and petrol (for a generator), heating oil and carted water. The amount of the grant is based on the balance owing at the time of application and is capped at six months worth of usage, up to a maximum of $500. This does not have to be paid back.

Grant assistance may also be provided to those who do not have an existing non-mains electricity, LP gas or carted water debt, but who are unable to afford their next supply load.

How to apply

Application forms are available by contacting the Concessions Information Line on 1800 658 521 (toll-free).

Applicants must address and meet one of the five following eligibility criteria:

- a substantial increase in electricity, LP gas or carted water usage
- a recent decrease in income, for example, loss of employment
- high, unexpected expenses on essential items and services
- the cost of shelter is more than 30 per cent of the household income
- the cost of electricity, LP gas or carted water is more than 10 per cent of the household income.
Water and sewerage connection scheme

This grant is for cardholders who are required to connect to a mains water and sewerage service under the Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program. Applicants must be home owners and have no savings to cover the cost of connection. The grant covers the full cost of connection.

How to apply

Your water corporation will provide cardholders with an application form after issuing a ‘notice to connect’ compulsory order.

Completed applications can be sent to:

Concessions Unit
GPO Box 4057
Melbourne VIC 3001

Applications are accepted throughout the year and the grant is a one-off payment.
Rates and property

Municipal rates concession

This concession provides a 50 per cent discount on council rates up to a yearly maximum of $198.00 for 2012–2013. This concession is available to homeowners and must be for their principal place of residency. The concession is available from 1 July to 30 June with applications accepted throughout the year.

The concession is available to ratepayers who hold one of the following cards:

- Pensioner concession card
- Department of Veterans’ Affairs Gold Card (marked TPI, War Widow, EDA or POW).

How to apply

Pensioners and holders of Veterans’ Affairs TPI and War Widow cards should contact your local council for an application form. Once completed, mail or hand deliver your application form to your local council.

Your local council will check your concession card details with Centrelink and apply the discount to your bill.

Holders of Veterans’ Affairs EDA or POW cards should apply by contacting the Concessions Information Line on 1800 658 521 (toll-free).

The Department of Human Services will check your concession card details with Centrelink and provide the concession as a rebate.
Non-mains water concession

This concession assists cardholders who are not connected to mains water with the costs of purchasing non-mains water for domestic usage, for example, when buying carted water for rainwater tanks, or buying water via a billing agent or water cooperative. This concession is available from 1 July to 30 June each year, with applications accepted throughout the year.

The rebate is $103 in 2012–2013, and cardholders can apply for up to three rebates each financial year, depending on how much is spent on non-mains water. The rebate is indexed each year.

How to apply

Phone your non-mains water supplier for an application form or contact the Concessions Information Line on 1800 658 521 (toll-free).

You will need to include copies of your non-mains water receipts.
Water and sewerage concession

This concession provides a 50 per cent discount on water and sewerage charges up to an annual maximum of $277.00 for 2012–2013. Customers who are billed for a single service, for example, water only, will receive 50 per cent off water charges up to a maximum of $138.50. This concession is available from 1 July to 30 June each year, with applications accepted throughout the year.

How to apply

Phone your water corporation for an application form or contact the Concessions Information Line on 1800 658 521 (toll-free).

Your water corporation will check your concession card details with Centrelink and apply the discount to your bill.
Other concessions and services

The following section provides information on other State and Commonwealth concessions, and services available to eligible concession cardholders.

Household Assistance Package
The Household Assistance Package is part of the Australian Government’s plan for a clean energy future. Around 500 of the biggest polluters in Australia will pay for their pollution under the carbon pricing mechanism, which will be used to assist households to meet price impacts, support jobs in the most affected industries and build a clean energy future.

Clean Energy Advance
An initial, tax-exempt payment was paid automatically to pensioners, other income support recipients, families receiving Family Tax Benefit payments, and Seniors Supplement recipients, providing they met eligibility requirements. This was paid in May and June 2012.

- Family Tax Benefit Part A recipients were paid up to $110 for each child.
- Family Tax Benefit Part B recipients were paid up to $69 per family.
- Students were paid up to $240.
- Jobseekers and other income support recipients were paid up to $180.
- Pensioners and Seniors Supplement recipients were paid $250 for singles and $380 for couples combined.
- War widows were paid $250 and DVA disability pensioners were paid up to $380
Clean Energy Supplement

A new payment, the Clean Energy Supplement, will automatically be paid with regular payments for pensioners and most other income support recipients commencing from March 2013 to early 2014, depending on the payment type. It is permanent, indexed assistance.

How to apply

Eligible pensioners and income support recipients will automatically receive the Clean Energy Supplement with their payment from Centrelink or Veterans’ Affairs. For more information, visit the Australian Government Department of Human Services website at www.humanservices.gov.au or call 132 468.

Members of the defence or veterans community should contact the Department of Veterans’ Affairs on 1800 555 254 or visit www.dva.gov.au/householdassistance
Low Income Supplement

The Low Income Supplement is a $300 payment to assist people in low income households, including some self-funded retirees, who miss out on the full benefit of tax cuts and increases to government payments delivered through the Household Assistance Package.

You may be eligible to receive the Low Income Supplement if your assessed taxable income was below $30,000 if you are single, $45,000 combined if you are a member of a couple and $60,000 for singles and couples with a dependent child in the 2011–12 financial year.

How to apply

Claims for the Low Income Supplement can be lodged from 1 July 2012. Further information on how to claim will be available from the Australian Government Department of Human Services website from 1 July 2012. To self-assess your eligibility, or for more information, please go to www.humanservices.gov.au or call 132 468.

Essential Medical Equipment Payment

The Essential Medical Equipment Payment of $140 per year will assist eligible people who experience additional increases in home energy costs under a carbon price as a result of the need to operate essential medical equipment or medically required heating/cooling, at home, to manage their disability or medical condition.

To receive the Essential Medical Equipment Payment, the person with medical needs or their carer must:

- be covered by a Commonwealth Government concession card or a Department of Veterans’ Affairs Gold or White Card, and
• use certain essential medical equipment, or have certain medical conditions that require the use of additional heating and/or cooling at home, and

• contribute to the payment of the energy account.

How to apply
For further information about eligibility and how to apply for the Essential Medical Equipment Payment, visit www.australia.gov.au/householdassistance or contact 13 2468. Members of the defence or veterans community can call 1800 555 254.

Single Income Family Supplement
The Single Income Family Supplement will be paid to middle income families with one primary earner whose income is between $68,000 and $150,000. Payments will be available from 1 July 2013.

How to apply
Eligible customers who are in receipt of Family Tax Benefit will not need to apply for the Single Income Family Supplement as the payment will be calculated based on circumstances known for Family Tax Benefit purposes and will be included in their entitlement at the end of the year.

Eligible customers who are not in receipt of Family Tax Benefit should apply online at www.humanservices.gov.au or call 132 468.
Tax Reforms

As part of the Household Assistance Package, the tax-free threshold increases from $6,000 to $18,200 from 1 July 2012:

- If you earn less than $18,200 per year you don’t need to pay income tax, and
- If you earn more than $18,200 per year you will only pay income tax on earnings over $18,200.

This means that individuals with a taxable income of less than $80,000 will receive a tax cut. Most will receive a tax cut of around $300 a year.

How to apply

Tax cuts will be delivered via the Australian Tax Office. Contact the Australian Tax Office on 13 28 65 or visit www.ato.gov.au

Further information

For information about the Household Assistance Package visit www.australia.gov.au/householdassistance or contact 13 2468.

If you are a member of the defence or veterans community, contact the Department of Veterans’ Affairs on 1800 555 254 or visit www.dva.gov.au/householdassistance for further information about eligibility and payment details.

The Household Assistance Package is part of the Australian Government’s plan for a Clean Energy Future. For information about this plan, visit www.cleanenergyfuture.gov.au
Communication

Mail redirection

Australia Post provides a 50 per cent reduction in the cost of redirecting all postal articles to a new mailing address for a maximum period of up to 12 months. Centrelink and Department of Veterans’ Affairs Pensioner and Centrelink Health Care (Sickness Allowance only) cardholders are eligible for this concession.

How to apply

Apply in person at the Post Office, or contact Australia Post Customer Service on 13 13 18 or visit www.auspost.com.au

Telephone allowance

This allowance assists with the costs of maintaining a phone and home internet service. Eligibility for the telephone allowance is assessed when eligibility for a Centrelink benefit is assessed.

From 20 March 2012, the allowance payment increased to $25.20 per quarter. To qualify for the higher rate of $37.80 conditions apply. The allowance is included with your pension payment.

How to apply

For further information contact Centrelink on 13 27 17 or visit www.centrelink.gov.au
Telstra pensioner concession discounts

Telstra provides a range of discounts to Centrelink and DVA Pensioner cardholders, including discounts on new telephone connections and monthly rebates.

How to apply

Contact Telstra Customer Service on 13 22 00.
Education

Centre for Adult Education (CAE) fees

The CAE provides concessions on course fees. The level of the concession varies between courses.

How to apply

Contact the Centre for Adult Education on (03) 9652 0611 or visit www.cae.edu.au

Education conveyance allowance

This allowance assists eligible students with the cost of travel to school. The allowance is available to eligible students attending government or non-government schools in rural and regional Victoria. It applies to travel by public transport, private bus and private car.

The allowance is available to school aged students who live 4.8 km or more, by the shortest practicable route, from the nearest appropriate school and do not have access to the free school bus service.

How to apply

Contact the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development on 1800 809 834 or visit www.education.vic.gov.au
Education maintenance allowance (EMA)

This allowance assists low-income parents or guardians with the costs of schooling. The allowance is paid in two instalments each year and is divided equally between the parents and the school. The 2012 rates for the allowance are $235 for primary students and $467 for secondary students up to their 16th birthday.

The allowance is available to parents or guardians who hold one of the following cards;

- Health Care Card
- Pensioner Concession Card
- Department of Veterans’ Affairs Gold Card

Temporary foster carers and Bridging Visa holders may also apply under the special consideration category.

How to apply

Contact your school office for further details and for an application form or contact the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development on 1800 809 834 or visit www.education.vic.gov.au
Early Start Kindergarten

The Early Start Kindergarten grant provides eligible three-year-old children access to an additional early year of quality kindergarten program per week free of charge or at minimal cost. From 2013 the grant will be available for up to 15 hours per week.

The Early Start Kindergarten grant is available in all licensed services, where a kindergarten program is being planned and delivered by a degree qualified early childhood teacher (including Child Care Centres and standalone kindergartens). An early start kindergarten program can be offered in the context of a mixed age group program which combines three- and four-year-old children.

To be eligible children must be

- aged three years by 30 April in the year that they attend kindergarten AND
- be an Aboriginal and or Torres Strait Islander OR
- be known to Child Protection (including children referred from Child Protection to Child FIRST).

The Early Start Kindergarten grant is paid directly to the early childhood service.

How to apply

Families with an eligible child can tell the early childhood program that they are eligible when they enrol their child, or at any time during the year. In addition services that become aware of eligible children can apply at any time.

For more information contact your local kindergarten, call the Education Information and Referral Service on 1800 809 834 or visit the Department [www.education.vic.gov.au/earlychildhood/careandkinder/earlystart.htm](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/earlychildhood/careandkinder/earlystart.htm)
Kindergarten fee subsidy

The kindergarten fee subsidy provides eligible families with access to a high quality kindergarten program of at least 10 hours and 45 minutes (10.75 hours) per week free of charge. From 2013, the subsidy will be available for programs of 15 hours per week.

The kindergarten fee subsidy is paid to kindergarten services for children who will be aged at least four years by 30 April in the year they will be attending a funded kindergarten program.

It is available for families who hold one of the following cards, visas or documents:

- Health Care Card
- Pensioner Concession Card
- Department of Veterans’ Affairs Gold Card
- Temporary Protection/Humanitarian Visa 447, 451, 785 or 786
- Resolution of Status (RoS) visa, Class CD, subclass 851
- Refugee/Special Humanitarian Visa 200 – 217
- Asylum Seeker Bridging Visa A–F

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are also eligible for the subsidy and so are families with triplets and quadruplets attending kindergarten in the same year.
How to apply

Eligible families should tell the early childhood program that they are eligible when they enrol their child, or at any time during the year if they become eligible.

The kindergarten service must meet the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development’s service eligibility criteria.

The fee subsidy does not apply where children attend kindergarten in long day care and the family receives the Commonwealth Child Care Benefit.

To find a kindergarten service in your area visit

For more information about the kindergarten fee subsidy and how to enrol your child, contact your local kindergarten, call the Education Information and Referral Service on 1800 809 834 or visit the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development website at

Technical and Further Education (TAFE) fees

TAFEs may offer concessions on enrolment fees for cardholders and their dependent spouses.

How to apply

Contact the Technical and Further Education Course Line on 13 18 23 or visit www.tafe.vic.gov.au
Health

Ambulance travel

Concession cardholders are eligible for free ambulance and air ambulance travel anywhere in Australia in an emergency or on the recommendation of a doctor.

Eligibility for ambulance concessions:
- Pensioner cardholders
- Health Care cardholders (Carer Allowance and Foster Care Health Care cards are accepted for ambulance travel by the named child only)
- DVA Gold cardholders (except dependent).

How to apply

If possible, advise the ambulance paramedic of your concession card or contact Ambulance Victoria on (03) 9840 3500 or visit www.ambulance.vic.gov.au

Dental services

Dental Health Services Victoria provides emergency and general dental care for adult concession cardholders through public dental clinics in community health centres, rural hospitals and the Royal Dental Hospital Melbourne. Waiting lists apply for general dental care. Emergency relief of pain is generally available within 24 hours.

For most concession cardholders a $25.00 co-payment is payable at each visit, up to a maximum of $100.00, for general dental care. More advanced dental treatments may be provided but fees above the $100.00 maximum will apply. A $25.00 co-payment is also required for an emergency dental visit.
Free treatment for public dental services applies to the following people:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- Homeless people and people at risk of homelessness
- Refugees and Asylum Seekers
- Children and young people aged 0–17 years who are Health Care or Pensioner Concession Card holders or dependants of concession cardholders
- All children and young people up to 18 years of age, who are in Residential Care provided by the Children Youth and Families Division of the Department of Human Services
- All youth justice clients up to 18 years of age in custodial care
- Registered clients of mental health and disability services, supported by a letter of recommendation from their case manager or staff of special developmental schools
- Those receiving care from undergraduate students
- Those experiencing financial hardship

**How to apply**

Eligible cardholders should contact Dental Health Services Victoria on **1300 360 054** for their nearest adult dental clinic or visit [www.dhsv.org.au](http://www.dhsv.org.au)
Eye care and glasses

Free eye examinations and low-cost glasses are available for concession cardholders and their dependants under the age of 16 who are listed on the concession card.

Eligibility for optometry concessions:

- Pensioner cardholders
- Health Care cardholders (except Carer Allowance and Foster Care)
- DVA Gold cardholders
- DVA White cardholders

How to apply

Metropolitan residents requiring eye care due to an eye condition or disease should contact the Victorian Eye and Ear Hospital on (03) 9929 8666.

Metropolitan residents requiring glasses should contact the Victorian College of Optometry on (03) 9349 7455.

Rural residents should contact the Victorian Eye Care Service on (03) 9349 7434.

Please note all Pensioner and Health Care cardholders must have held their concession card for at least six months to be eligible for low-cost glasses through the Victorian Eye Care Service.
Hearing services

A wide range of hearing rehabilitation services are available to Pensioner cardholders, Health Care cardholders (Sickness Allowance recipients only), DVA Gold cardholders (except dependant) and DVA White cardholders (issued specifically for hearing reasons). These services include hearing assessments and the provision of hearing aids.

How to apply

Eligible cardholders should contact the Office of Hearing Services on 1800 555 013 or 1800 500 496 (TTY) or visit www.health.gov.au/hear

Multi-purpose taxi program

The Victorian Taxi Directorate provides a 50 per cent discount on taxi fares, up to a maximum of $60 per trip (annual limit $2,180), for permanently and severely disabled people. To be eligible for the program, members must be permanent Victorian residents and have a disability that affects their ability to use public transport independently. Cards cost $16.50 and are valid for six years.

How to apply

Contact the Victorian Taxi Directorate on (03) 9320 4360 or 1800 638 802 for an application form or visit www.taxi.vic.gov.au
Patient travel

The Victorian Patient Transport Assistance Scheme subsidises the travel and accommodation costs incurred by rural Victorians, and if appropriate their escorts, who have no option but to travel a long distance to receive approved medical specialists services.

How to apply

Application forms can be obtained from local doctors, hospital social workers or contact the Department of Health rural regional offices on 1300 737 073 (local call rates).

Pharmaceuticals benefits scheme

Eligible concession cardholders are entitled to purchase most prescription medicines for $5.80.

Most medicines are free after eligible individuals and families have spent $348.00 per year (conditions apply).

Eligibility for pharmaceutical concessions are:

- Pensioner cardholders
- Health Care cardholders
- DVA White, Gold or Orange Card cardholders
- Commonwealth Seniors Health Care cardholders.

How to apply

Apply at your local chemist or contact the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme on 1800 020 613 or visit www.medicareaustralia.gov.au
School dental service

Free dental treatment is available for all primary and some secondary school-aged children of a concession cardholder. All other primary school students may access the service, but a fee is payable if the parent is not a concession cardholder.

How to apply
Contact Dental Health Services Victoria on 1300 360 054 or visit www.dhsv.org.au

Rates and property
Stamp duty concession

This concession provides an exemption from stamp duty for cardholders purchasing property up to $330,000 in value. A sliding scale of partial exemptions is available for properties with a value of more than $330,000, but not more than $750,000 (effective 1 July 2011).

How to apply
An application form is available from the State Revenue Office on 13 21 61 or visit www.sro.vic.gov.au
Recognition program

Victorian Carer Card

The Carer Card is a Victorian Government initiative recognising primary unpaid carers in Victoria.

This card is a free discount and benefits card for a range of products and services provided by government and private businesses.

Additional benefits of the card are free public transport on Sundays with a free Sunday pass and two return off-peak travel vouchers for travel anywhere in Victoria. Carer Card holders will be advised of any change in requirements following the changeover to the new myki ticketing system.

Carer cardholders can also enjoy discounted entries to many State Government venues such as zoos, museums and various festivals.

The applicant must be a resident of Victoria and meet one of the four following criteria:

- be a recipient of Centrelink Carer Allowance or Carer Payment
- be a primary unpaid carer of a person with a disability, a severe medical condition, a mental illness, a person who is frail aged or who is in need of palliative care. This care must be provided in the home of the person requiring care.
- be a foster, respite or permanent carer in receipt of a Department of Human Services reimbursement payment
- be a kinship carer.

How to apply

Phone the Carer Card team on 1800 901 958 for an application form or visit www.carercard.vic.gov.au

Applications may take four to six weeks to process.
Recreation

Pet registration

Concessions are available on cat and dog registrations (concession varies between councils).

Pensioner cardholders are eligible for pet registration concessions and some councils also provide the concession to Health Care cardholders.

How to apply

Contact your local council.

Recreation facilities

Discounts are available to various recreation facilities such as the zoo, National Gallery of Victoria, State galleries and the museum. Some private organisations such as cinemas and the Australian Football League (AFL) may also offer concessions on admission prices. Discounts are generally available to holders of Pensioner and Health Care Cards and the Victorian Seniors Card.

How to apply

Contact the individual recreation facility.
Recreational fishing licences

Certain groups may be exempt from having to purchase a fishing licence (the exemption does not apply to inland amateur netting licences).

Eligibility for concessions on recreational fishing licenses apply to the following Pensioner cardholders:

- Aged, Disability Support, Carer and Blind Pensioners only
- Department of Veterans’ Affairs Pensioners and Gold cardholders (TPI only)
- Victorian Seniors cardholders
- All Victorians under 18 years old and those aged 70 years and over.

How to apply
Contact the Department of Primary Industries on 13 61 86 or visit www.dpi.vic.gov.au

Transport
Motor vehicle registration fee

This concession provides a 50 per cent reduction on the motor vehicle registration fee component of the registration bill, where the cardholder or their spouse is the registered operator of the vehicle. There is a limit of one vehicle per concession card. For holders of the DVA Gold Card (TPI or EDA) a 100 per cent reduction on the motor vehicle registration fee applies.

How to apply
Present your concession card when paying your registration or contact VicRoads on 13 11 71 or visit www.vicroads.vic.gov.au
Public transport concessions

Concession fares are available on train, tram and bus services within metropolitan Melbourne, regional town bus services and V/Line ticketed train and coach services operating within Victoria.

Eligibility for public transport concessions:

- Pensioner Card
- Health Care Card
- Victorian Seniors Card
- War Veteran/War Widow Concession Card (issued by Metlink Central Pass Office)
- Victorian Public Transport Student Concession Card (issued at staffed railway stations or The MetShop)
- Companion Card (issued by the Department of Planning and Community Development).

Infants and children under 17 years of age are also eligible for concession fares (no concession card is required).

If you are listed on a Health Care Card or Pensioner Card as a dependant (including spouse), you are not eligible for concession fares unless you have another concession card issued in your own name or you are under 17 years of age.

If you are listed as a dependant, are over 17 and do not have another concession card, you may be able to apply for a Centrelink Health Care Card in your own name. To find out if you are eligible contact Centrelink’s Family Assistance Office on 13 61 50.

How to apply

Present your eligible card when purchasing a ticket or on request or contact Metlink on 13 16 38 or visit www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au

For information on the Companion Card contact the Companion Card Information Line on 1800 650 611 or visit www.vic.companioncard.org.au
Victorian pensioner free travel voucher and exchange coupon

Each year, Centrelink issues Victorian Pensioners with a Victorian Pensioner Free Travel Voucher and a Victorian Pensioner Voucher Exchange Coupon. These can be exchanged for tickets according to the following conditions:

**Metcard ticketed services**

Vouchers can be exchanged for a concession daily ticket at any premium station or the MetShop.

**V/Line services**

V/Line vouchers can be exchanged at V/Line stations for either a day return or two single tickets. Vouchers are valid only for economy class travel, but may be upgraded to first class by paying the change of class upgrade.

**CountryLink/Great Southern Railway services**

Passengers can use vouchers for interstate travel on these services by paying the appropriate fare from the Victorian border to their interstate destination as well as for any change of class. Passengers must present the pass when booking their ticket at a V/Line station or agent.

**Lost or damaged vouchers**

Pensioners who have lost or damaged their vouchers should contact the Centrelink Teleservice Centre on 13 23 00.

How to apply

Present your eligible card when purchasing a ticket or contact Metlink on 13 16 38 or visit www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au
Victorian Seniors Card

The Seniors Card is a Victorian Government initiative in partnership with the private sector to encourage people who have retired or who are working part-time to continue to engage with the community. Cardholders are able to obtain a wide range of discounted goods and services from participating businesses including travel, accommodation, hospitality, entertainment and leisure.

Cardholders are entitled to a wide range of benefits on public transport services within Victoria.

This card is issued by the Department of Planning and Community Development and is available to permanent residents of Victoria aged 60 or over and who work less than 35 hours a week.

Seniors cardholders can receive the following discounts on public transport services:

**Metropolitan concessions**

Victorian Seniors cardholders are entitled to concession fares on trains, trams and buses across Zones 1 and 2.

**Sunday pass**

Victorian Seniors cardholders are eligible for a Sunday Pass, which allows free travel on Sundays on metropolitan trains, trams and buses within Zones 1 and 2. The pass is also valid for travel in selected regional cities.

**Off-peak free travel vouchers**

Victorian Seniors cardholders also receive two off-peak travel vouchers in the mail each year. These can be used anywhere in Victoria and can be exchanged for V/Line tickets or a Seniors Daily Metcard. Vouchers are only valid for economy travel.
V/Line concessions for Victorian Seniors

Victorian Seniors cardholders are able to travel on concession fares on V/Line train and coach services at all times. This new benefit means peak hour fares for seniors are generally halved on weekdays and fares are significantly reduced on weekends.

How to apply

To apply for the Victorian Seniors Card, contact the Seniors Card team, Department of Planning and Communities on 1300 797 210 or visit www.seniorscard.vic.gov.au

Application forms for the Seniors Sunday Pass are available from any premium station, staffed V/Line station, or at Metcard retail outlets across Melbourne or visit www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au

Seniors Daily tickets can be purchased at all the usual Metcard outlets.
Transport Accident Commission (TAC) insurance charge concession

This concession provides a 50 per cent reduction on the TAC charge in your registration bill. There is a limit of one vehicle per concession card.

How to apply

Contact VicRoads on 13 11 71 or visit www.vicroads.vic.gov.au
# Essential contacts

## Commonwealth Government

**Centrelink**  
- Retirement Services: 13 23 00  
- Disability, Sickness and Carers: 13 27 17  
- Employment Services: 13 28 50  
- Youth and Student Services: 13 24 90  
- ABSTUDY: 13 23 17  
- Family Assistance Office: 13 61 50  
- Speak to a Centrelink social worker: 13 17 94  
- Multilingual Service: 13 12 02  
- Customer Relations: 1800 050 004  

**Department of Veterans’ Affairs**  
- 13 32 54

## Victorian Government

**Department of Human Services**  
- 1300 650 172  
- Victorian Carer Card  
- 1800 901 958  
- Concessions Information Line  
- 1800 658 521  
- Victorian Seniors Card  
- 1300 797 210
### Emergency assistance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emergency services (Police, Fire, Ambulance)</td>
<td>000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homeground</td>
<td>1800 825 955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne Youth Support Services <em>(reversed charge calls accepted)</em></td>
<td>9614 3688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Salvation Army Crisis Service</td>
<td>1800 627 727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St.Vincent de Paul</td>
<td>1300 350 330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Domestic Violence Crisis Service <em>(available 24 hours)</em></td>
<td>1800 015 188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victorian Bushfire Information Line</td>
<td>1800 240 667</td>
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</table>

### Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medicare</td>
<td>13 20 11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pharmaceuticals Benefits Scheme Information Line</td>
<td>1800 020 613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dental Health Services Victoria</td>
<td>1300 360 054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(country callers)</td>
<td>1800 833 039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambulance Victoria</td>
<td>(03) 9840 3500</td>
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### Interpreter and translating services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ONCALL</td>
<td>(03) 9867 3788</td>
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<tr>
<td>TIS National</td>
<td>13 14 50</td>
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### Transport

**Public Transport Providers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metlink</td>
<td>13 16 38</td>
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<tr>
<td>V/Line Information (Viclink)</td>
<td>13 61 96</td>
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### Energy retailers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Energy Provider</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGL</td>
<td>13 12 45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alinta Energy</td>
<td>13 37 02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian Power and Gas</td>
<td>13 32 98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Click Energy</td>
<td>1800 775 929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Energy</td>
<td>13 23 56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Australia</td>
<td>13 15 02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diamond Energy</td>
<td>1300 838 009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dodo Power and Gas</td>
<td>13 36 36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lumo Energy</td>
<td>1300 115 8 66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Momentum Energy</td>
<td>1300 662 778</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood Energy</td>
<td>1300 764 860</td>
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<tr>
<td>Origin Energy</td>
<td>13 24 61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Energy</td>
<td>13 18 06</td>
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<tr>
<td>Simply Energy</td>
<td>13 88 08</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRUenergy</td>
<td>13 34 66</td>
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<tr>
<td>Victoria Electricity</td>
<td>1300 136 749</td>
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### Water corporations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corporation</th>
<th>Contact Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barwon Water</td>
<td>1300 656 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Gippsland Water</td>
<td>1800 066 401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Highlands Water</td>
<td>(03) 5320 3100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City West Water</td>
<td>13 16 91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coliban Water</td>
<td>1300 363 200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Gippsland Water</td>
<td>1300 720 700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goulburn Valley Water</td>
<td>1300 360 007</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grampians Wimmera Mallee Water</td>
<td>1300 659 961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Murray Water</td>
<td>(03) 5051 3400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East Water</td>
<td>1300 361 622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East Water</td>
<td>13 16 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Gippsland Water</td>
<td>(03) 5682 0444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wannon Water</td>
<td>1300 926 666</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Water</td>
<td>1300 650 422</td>
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<tr>
<td>Westernport Water</td>
<td>1300 720 711</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yarra Valley Water</td>
<td>13 17 21</td>
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