

1. What means of improving the economic security of the unemployed are used in your country? Give an overview.

This information has primarily been gathered from ['Looking for Work? A guide to your options and our services'](#) February 2011 published by Centrelink.

[<http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/filestores/lw001\\_1102/\\$file/lw001\\_1102en.pdf>](http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/filestores/lw001_1102/$file/lw001_1102en.pdf)

Newstart provides fortnightly payments for unemployed persons aged 21 or over to provide assistance when looking for work and undertaking activities to increase employability. In addition to the allowance, unemployed persons may receive rent assistance and a concession or health care card.

Another initiative includes Youth Allowance, which provides allowances for unemployed persons aged under 21 who are undertaking full time study or an apprenticeship. The aim of the program is to help people who are training or studying. Whilst the program is available for unemployed persons, it also accommodates students with part time jobs. The amount of income receivable under the scheme is proportionate to the hours worked by the unemployed person: a person earning less than \$62 before tax per fortnight will not have their payments affected, however persons earning an income between \$62 and \$250 will have payments reduced by 50 cents in the dollar and for incomes above \$250, payments will be reduced by 60 cents in the dollar. In addition, unemployed persons on Youth Allowance may be eligible for rent assistance or a concession or health care card.

If an unemployed person is a parent or has a disability, they may be eligible for a Parenting Payment or Disability Support Pension respectively. Like Newstart, unemployed persons under the Parenting Payment scheme or Disability Support Pension will usually receive rent assistance and a health care or concession card. People on the Parent Payment scheme may also be eligible for the Large Family Supplement, Multiple Birth Allowance and the Double Orphan Pension.

The following entitlements may also be available to unemployed persons to supplement the social security programs

- Pharmaceutical allowance (if temporarily incapacitated, have a dependant child or over the age of 60 years and in continuous receipt of income support for at least nine months).
- Telephone allowance (to assist in the cost of maintaining a telephone service)
- Carer allowance
- Drought Force Supplement (for farming communities severely affected by drought)
- Education Entry Payment
- Green Corps Supplement (work experience activity to help the environment)
- Language, Literacy and Numeracy Supplement
- Training Supplement
- Work for the Dole Supplement
- Mobility allowance
- Fare allowances
- Student Start-Up Scholarship
- Relocation Scholarship
- Teen Dental Plan
- Mobility allowance (assists persons with disabilities who can't use public transport without assistance)

2. Have you got a social security system regarding unemployment?

Yes

3. Is this social security system mandatory?

Yes

4. Who pays contributions to this social security system?

As social security is paid out of consolidated revenue, the entire tax paying population contributes. There are varying tax scales depending on level of income, however no proportion of tax paid is allocated to social security. This is contrasted with the Medicare levy where a specific proportion is allocated for that purpose.

5. How high are these contributions?

See above. In 2008, social security amounted to between one-fifth and one-quarter of the Commonwealth of Australia's budget (Andre Herscovitch and David Stanton, 'History of Social Security in Australia' (2008) 80 *Family Matters*, 51)

6. What are the conditions for entitlement to unemployment benefits (time of paying contributions; availability to work; leaving the last job only with good cause...)?

Newstart allowance is for persons who are:

- Unemployed or regarded as unemployed;
- Aged 21 or over but under the age pension;
- Willing to undertake suitable paid employment,
- Participating or willing to participate in approved activities (unless exempted)
- In Australia when making a claim;
- Have been in Australia for at least 104 weeks as an Australian resident; and
- Meet the [income and assets test](#).  
<[http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/payments/newstart\\_iat.htm](http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/payments/newstart_iat.htm)>

The Parenting Payment may be available for persons who are:

- Partnered and the principal carer of a dependant child under the age of six or single and the principal carer of a dependent child aged under eight years old;
- Have been in Australia for at least 104 weeks as an Australian resident;
- In Australia when making a claim;
- Be prepared to enter into an Employment Pathway Plan and meet participation requirements when the youngest child turns six; and
- Meet the [income and assets test](#)  
<[http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/payments/newstart\\_iat.htm](http://www.centrelink.gov.au/internet/internet.nsf/payments/newstart_iat.htm)>

The amount of Youth Allowance available to an unemployed person who is either studying or training depends on:

- Age
- Whether the unemployed person is single or has a partner
- The income of the unemployed person's partner or their parents or guardians
- Whether the unemployed person has children or dependant siblings
- Whether the unemployed person lives away from home
- Whether the unemployed person is classified as 'independent' (in this case, a parental means test presents an additional barrier)
- Capacity to work

Newstart, Parenting Payment and Youth Allowance require the unemployed person to satisfy an Activity Test to indicate that they are actively seeking employment. To satisfy the Activity Test, unemployed persons will normally be required to meet the following requirements:

- Demonstrate they are actively looking for suitable paid work;
- Accept all suitable work offers;
- Attend all job interviews;
- Attend all interviews with Centrelink (Commonwealth Department responsible for the administration of Australia's social security schemes);
- Agree to attend approved training courses and programs;
- Never leave a job, training course or program, unless the person has a valid reason; and

- If required to enter into an Employment Pathway Plan, then the person must properly comply with the relevant activities. This is usually a plan to help make a person more employable.

## 7. How high are unemployment benefits (percentage of last income)?

The amount of unemployment benefits available to an unemployed person is dependent on their individual circumstances. Factors will include age, whether the person has a partner, whether the person has children and the number and age of the children, whether the person is the primary carer of the children, whether the person is home schooling children or conducting distance education, whether the person has a disability or is the primary carer of a dependant with a disability etc.

The maximum amount paid under the Newstart allowance is as follows: Payments are per fortnight.

single, no children	\$474.90
single, with a dependent child or children	\$513.80
single, aged 60 or over, after 9 continuous months on payment	\$513.80
partnered (each)	\$428.70
single principal carer granted exemption for foster caring/relative (non-parent) caring under a court order/home schooling/distance education/large family	\$625.90

The maximum amount paid under the Youth Allowance is as follows. Payments are per fortnight. Those asterisked payments indicate that the applicant may be eligible for rent assistance.

single with no children, under 18 years and living at home	\$212.70
single with no children, under 18 years and not living at home	\$388.70*
single with no children, 18 years and over and living at home	\$255.80
single with no children, 18 years and over and not living at home	\$388.70*
single with children	\$509.20*
partnered with no children	\$388.70*
partnered with children	\$426.70*
single job seeker, principal carer of a dependent child (granted an exemption for foster caring/relative (non-parent) caring under a court order/home schooling/distance education/large family)	\$611.90

Maximum rent assistance payments are as follows:

Rent assistance if no dependent children:

Family situation	Maximum payment per fortnight	No payment if your fortnightly rent is less than	Maximum payment if your fortnightly rent is more than
Single, no children	\$116.40	\$103.60	\$258.80
Single, no children, sharer	\$77.60	\$103.60	\$207.07
Couple, no children	\$109.80	\$168.60	\$315.00
One of a couple who are separated due to illness, no children*	\$116.40	\$103.60	\$258.80
One of a couple who are temporarily separated, no children	\$109.80	\$103.60	\$250.00

\* Includes respite care and partner in prison.

Rent assistance if dependent children:

<b>Family situation</b>	<b>Maximum payment per fortnight</b>	<b>No payment if your fortnightly rent is less than</b>	<b>Maximum payment if your fortnightly rent is more than</b>
Single, 1 or 2 children	\$136.78	\$136.36	\$318.73
Single, 3 or more children	\$154.56	\$136.36	\$342.44
Couple, 1 or 2 children	\$136.78	\$201.74	\$384.11
Couple, 3 or more children	\$154.56	\$201.74	\$407.82

Special rules apply if you are a single sharer, pay board and lodging or live in a retirement village.