



We speak your language 📞 13 1202

Assurance of Support

The Assurance of Support scheme enables certain people to migrate to Australia who wouldn't normally qualify. This is possible because a person has agreed to support the new migrant (and their family) for a period after they arrive in Australia.

An Assurance of Support (AoS) is a legally binding agreement between an Australian resident (the assurer) and the Commonwealth Government. The assurer agrees to financially support the assured person (the assuree) and repay to the Commonwealth certain social security payments if they are paid to the assuree during the period of the AoS. Depending on the type of visa that the migrant is granted, this can be for a period of 2 or 10 years.

The Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) decides when an AoS is required and whether an AoS bond must be lodged for a particular AoS case.

DIMIA decides who can be an assurer, and determines an assurer's financial capacity to provide support to the assuree. DIMIA sends details of all assurers and assurees to Centrelink.

Period of coverage

The AoS period starts from the date the assuree arrives in Australia, or the date the relevant visa is granted, whichever is later. If the assuree needs support, the assurer is required to provide the support for the full 2 or 10 year AoS period. Even if there is no contact or there is a breakdown in the relationship between the assurer and the assuree, the AoS remains in force for the full period. If the assuree receives one of the following payments from Centrelink during the AoS period, the assurer will have to repay Centrelink the total amount paid:

- Special Benefit

- Newstart Allowance
- Youth Allowance
- Austudy Payment
- Widow Allowance
- Mature Age Allowance
- Partner Allowance
- Crisis Payment
- Parenting Payment (Partnered).

Eligibility for all other Centrelink payments is not affected by an AoS.

Once DIMIA approves the AoS application and issues the assuree's visa, the assurance cannot be cancelled or withdrawn. The agreement to support an assuree can also include supporting dependent children.

Information for the assurer

- Make sure the assuree knows how to contact you in case they need assistance.
- If you cannot support your assurees, it is possible that Centrelink will provide the necessary financial support to them. You will still be required to repay to Centrelink the total amount that your assurees receive during the AoS period.
- You should come to Centrelink if your assuree or any dependent children claim a payment so it can be confirmed that you cannot provide support.
- Centrelink will ask you to repay the debt once the AoS period has ended, however, you can voluntarily repay money at any time.

- DIMIA may require a bond to be lodged with the Commonwealth Bank in relation to the assurance. The bond will only be returned to the depositor after the AoS period expires, if your assuree has not received payments from Centrelink during that time.
 - For a 2-year AoS, the bond amount is \$3 500, or \$5 000 for a couple.
 - For a 10-year AoS, the bond amount is \$10 000, or \$14 000 for a couple.
- If a bond was lodged in relation to your assurance, Centrelink will deduct the debt amount from the bond held at the Commonwealth Bank.
- If your AoS debts are less than the bond amount at the end of the AoS period, Centrelink will authorise the bank to release the balance. If your AoS debts are greater than the bond amount, the bond will be forfeited to Centrelink to be credited towards your debt.
- Centrelink will not claim the interest that may have accrued in a bond account; the bank should make it available to the account holder.
- The amount of the debt will be the same as the amount of money paid to your assuree and/or any dependent children during the AoS period.

Information for the Assuree

- Before Centrelink can pay you during the AoS period, we will need to speak to your assurer to see whether he/she can support you.
- If your assurer is willing and able to support you, and if Centrelink believes that it is reasonable for you to accept your assurer's support, then Centrelink will not pay you.
- If your assurer cannot support you, Centrelink may be able to pay you, if you meet the other qualifications.
- Centrelink will require your assurer to repay all the money that Centrelink pays to you during the AoS period. We will use any bonds that were lodged with the Commonwealth Bank in

relation to your assurance, for the purpose of recovering your assurer's debt.

- You may be covered by an AoS agreement if you applied to come to Australia at the same time as other family members who had an AoS agreement signed for them.

For more information:

DIMIA 13 1881 www.immi.gov.au

Centrelink 13 2850 www.centrelink.gov.au

For more information in languages other than English, call **13 1202***.

Visit our website at **www.centrelink.gov.au**

* Calls to 13 numbers cost 25 cents from anywhere within Australia.

Calls to 1800 numbers are free of charge.

Calls from public pay phones or mobile phones will be charged at a higher rate.