

## Eligibility for Assistance

We will provide information and/or referral to any person or worker who contacts our legal advice services.

We can only provide advice, ongoing assistance or representation where:

- the person with the enquiry lives in Victoria; and
- the enquiry relates to a social security law problem that we can provide advice about.

We can provide advice regarding social security issues and Centrelink decisions, such as about:

- eligibility for pensions and allowances
- variation, suspension or cancellation of payments
- overpayments and debts raised by Centrelink
- appealing Centrelink decisions.

We have limited resources and we have obligations under funding agreements, so we must prioritise the provision of more intensive assistance, such as legal casework or representation services. Casework Guidelines are used to assist us to balance need for our services and maximising the impact of our limited resources.

We will generally prioritise providing more intensive assistance to people who are vulnerable and disadvantaged and to workers who are assisting people who are vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Attributes and circumstances that we may consider in assessing whether a person is vulnerable and/or disadvantaged include:

- age
- self-identification as an Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander
- whether the person is a victim/survivor of family violence
- level of education
- confidence in speaking, reading and writing in English
- homeless or at risk of homelessness
- if the person is in custody
- if the person lives in regional or rural Victoria
- whether the person comes from a culturally and linguistically diverse background
- disability or significant health issues, including mental illness
- if the person is a single parent
- source and level of income.

We also consider:

- the amount of any debt
- whether Centrelink has made a decision and if the decision has been reviewed by Centrelink
- whether we think that the matter has legal merit and that our assistance may make a difference to the outcome
- if the matter has been referred by a worker or partner organisation
- whether the matter raises a systemic issue
- whether the matter would benefit from financial counsellor assistance.