

## Eligibility Guidelines

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.

### Eligibility for advice

We will provide information and/or referral to any individual or community worker within Victoria who contacts our legal advice services.

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

### Eligibility for legal casework and representation services

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.

In consideration of who we are able offer ongoing casework or representation to, SSRV will prioritise:

- persons suffering **financial disadvantage**, and
- **vulnerable** and or **disadvantaged persons**.

**Financial disadvantage** means a person who does not have the means to pay for their legal representation without incurring serious financial difficulty. It includes persons receiving a Centrelink benefit, people who do not have the means to pay for legal assistance, or cannot access their finances temporarily due to circumstances outside of their control.

Attributes and circumstances that that are considered 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
- living in a bushfire affect area or having been affected by bushfires
- affected by COVID-19 pandemic

In consideration of who we are able offer ongoing casework or representation to, SSRV 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.

### Further Information

Email: [info@ssrv.org.au](mailto:info@ssrv.org.au)

Website: [www.ssrv.org.au](http://www.ssrv.org.au)

Phone: (03) 9481 0299 (Administration Line)