

# What do I do if Centrelink does not respond?

Options when Centrelink fails to make a decision.

## This fact sheet may assist if:

- Centrelink hasn't decided upon an initial application or request within a reasonable timeframe;
- Centrelink hasn't decided upon an internal review request within a reasonable timeframe; or
- Centrelink hasn't implemented a decision of the Tribunal.

## When Centrelink fails to make an original decision (eg. fails to decide upon an application)

### 1. Lodge a complaint with Centrelink

- If Centrelink has not decided upon an initial application or request within 13 weeks, we recommend calling Centrelink's complaints line and making a complaint about the lack of response. Make clear the resolution you are seeking is a timely decision on the application.

### 2. Consider requesting an internal review

- If Centrelink has not made a decision within 13 weeks, this can be considered a 'deemed refusal'. A deemed refusal can be reviewed by an Authorised Review Officer on internal review.
- There is generally a long wait time for internal review decisions so, whilst this may prompt Centrelink to take action, it may not result in a fast resolution.

### 3. Consider contacting your local Federal Member of Parliament.

- They may have a Centrelink liaison who can assist with obtaining the decision. You can find your local Federal Member [here](#).

## Worker Help Line

**03 9481 0655**

Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm, community lawyers and workers can contact us for information or secondary consultation with an SSRV lawyer.

## Legal Assistance Line

**03 9481 0355**

Monday to Thursday, 9am–4.30pm for Victorians experiencing a Centrelink issue.

**More help overleaf →**

## Who are we?

Social Security Rights Victoria (SSRV) is a community legal centre that provides free legal advice and assistance for Social Security, family assistance and Centrelink matters to people who live in Victoria, helping with:

- understanding rights of review of Centrelink decisions
- refusal, suspension or cancellation of payments
- management and review of debts
- Disability Support Pension eligibility
- review of Centrelink decisions where clients are impacted by family violence
- secondary consultations for social, community and health workers (such as financial counsellors, disability advocates, social workers, doctors and community lawyers) to help with clients.

## When Centrelink fails to make an Authorised Review Officer - Internal review decision

### 1. Lodge a complaint with Centrelink

- There is no required timeframe for an internal review decision, however Centrelink aims for internal reviews to be finalised within 49 days. Complex reviews will take longer.
- If an internal review decision has been outstanding for an unreasonable length of time, you can call Centrelink's complaints line or make a [complaint online via this link](#). This may resolve this issue.

### 2. Lodge a further complaint with the Commonwealth Ombudsman

- You can lodge a further complaint with the Commonwealth Ombudsman if Centrelink does not respond to your complaint within 10 days, or if your complaint to Centrelink does not resolve your issue.
- The Ombudsman may investigate your complaint and make recommendations to resolve it.
- The Ombudsman may also give you a Certificate of Unreasonable Delay. You can use this Certificate to lodge a review request with the Administrative Review Tribunal – skipping Centrelink's internal review decision.

### 3. Consider contacting your local Federal Member of Parliament.

- They may have a Centrelink liaison who can assist with obtaining the decision. You can find your local Federal Member [here](#).

## When Centrelink fails to implement a decision of the Tribunal

### 1. Seek legal advice.

- Failure to implement a Tribunal decision can be complicated, SSRV can provide advice and discuss the most suitable options for your situation.

### 2. Speak with the lawyer who represented Centrelink at the Tribunal (if applicable).

### 3. Lodge a complaint with Centrelink

- In your complaint, make clear what resolution you are seeking eg. the Tribunal said you were eligible for back payment for a number of months but Centrelink did not provide this.

### 4. Submit an Authorised Review Officer review request

- You may be able to seek internal review of the implementation decision. We recommend seeking legal advice before doing so.



**Holstep  
Health**

Worker Help Line  
**03 9481 0655**

Legal Assistance Line  
**03 9481 0355**

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

If you have any questions or client queries about the above content, [please call us to discuss](#). SSRV welcomes contact and queries from workers and clients. This factsheet has been designed as general information and should not be relied upon as legal advice. Current May 2026.