

Updated Disability Support Pension Impairment Tables

Media Release, The Hon Jenny Macklin MP. Minister for Family, Housing
Community Services and Indigenous Affairs, 21 November 2011

The Impairment Tables used to assess people's eligibility for the Disability Support Pension will be able to be updated for the first time in more than ten years, as a result of legislation passed through Parliament today.

People who apply for the Disability Support Pension from the 1st January 2012 will be assessed under the new Impairment Tables.

The legislation will ensure the Impairment Tables are able to be updated regularly and enable the introduction of new Tables that are consistent with modern medical and rehabilitation practice. The Impairment Tables are used in Disability Support Pension assessments to measure how a person's impairment affects their ability to work.

They were last reviewed in 1993 and contain anomalies and inconsistencies which have distorted the assessment process. For example, when hearing impairment is assessed, a person with a hearing aid is not required to wear it but someone who is having their sight impairment assessed must wear their glasses.

An Advisory Committee consisting of medical, allied health and rehabilitation experts, representatives of people with disability, mental health advocates and relevant Government agencies was established in April 2010. Following a thorough review and extensive consultation, the Advisory Committee found the current Impairment Tables are longer consistent with contemporary medical and rehabilitation practice, and recommended new Impairment Tables.

The Government has been continuing to consult with disability stakeholders and medical experts to ensure the recommended new Tables are implemented fairly and effectively from 1 January next year. The new Impairment Tables focus on what people are able to do, rather than what they can't do.

From 1 July 2012 we are introducing a range of reforms to encourage greater participation by DSP recipients.

- Introduce new participation requirements for disability support pensioners under the age of 35 with some capacity to work to build their capacity
- Provide more generous rules for existing disability pensioners to encourage them to work more hours
- Support employers to take on more disability pensioners through new financial incentives

The Advisory Committee's review of the Disability Support Pension Impairment Tables and recommended new Tables can be viewed at:

http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/disability/payments/Pages/dsp_impairment_tables.aspx

To read the full media release, visit:

http://www.jennymacklin.fahcsia.gov.au/mediareleases/2011/pages/updated_disability_support_pension_tables_21nov11.aspx