



Australian Government



Household Assistance Scheme

Between 2010 and 2013, Australia is switching off the analog TV signals and converting to digital TV. If you are eligible, the Australian Government's Household Assistance Scheme is available to help you get ready.

What is the Household Assistance Scheme?

The Household Assistance Scheme is a program run by the Australian Government. It provides assistance to eligible elderly people, carers, people with disabilities and veterans to convert to digital television in circumstances where they have not converted and need help to do so.

What if I have already converted?

Many of these individuals and households have already found it relatively easy to convert - either by themselves or with the help of family or friends. If you have converted already, you do not need to do anything else and you will not need to access the Household Assistance Scheme.

The scheme is there to help those who will find it more difficult to make the switch—or who do not have the support of family or friends.

Only households that have not converted any of their TVs to digital TV are eligible for the scheme.

How does the scheme work?

The Government will appoint major companies to supply the Household Assistance Scheme in a particular region (next up will be Regional Queensland). This will be done through an open tender process so that we can ensure value for money and get the best possible deal for households.

People that may be eligible will receive a letter from Centrelink around 6 months before the switchover date in their area. The letter will invite individuals to contact Centrelink to check their eligibility.

People will need to respond to the Centrelink letter and advise if they need to access the Household Assistance Scheme. They can do this any time after they have received the Centrelink letter, even up to one month after the switchover has taken place.

You will not be called about the scheme or visited at your home until you have contacted Centrelink to apply. To find out when your region is due to switchover, see the timetable on the

back of this fact sheet.

After you have contacted Centrelink and opted into the scheme, a service contractor will then call you to make an appointment for a qualified installer to come to your home and provide the installation. The service contractor or installer will not charge you for this service; it is completely free of charge and the installers are not allowed to accept any money, not even for additional services. If you have any doubts about the identity of the installer, please call 1800 20 10 13.

What does the scheme provide?

If you are eligible, the scheme provides the following package free of charge:

- a high definition set-top box
- installation of the set-top box by a contracted technician
- a demonstration of your new equipment and instructions on how to use it
- 12 months service and technical support.

If you live in an area that cannot receive terrestrial TV, equipment to receive free-to-air TV via satellite is provided.

If you also own your home, you may be eligible for any necessary upgrades to cabling and external antenna systems, although both owners and occupiers are entitled to internal antenna.

Please note that the demonstration of the set-top box by the installer and the reference material that they leave behind will be in English. You can download a range of quick reference guides and user manuals from the HAS section of the brochures and info sheets page on the digitalready.gov.au website or call the information line on 1800 20 10 13.

If you are vision impaired, we can also send you information on your new equipment in an accessible format .

Am I eligible?

If you don't already have access to digital TV, you may be eligible for help if you have a working TV and you receive the maximum rate of one of the following payments:

- Age Pension
- Disability Support Pension
- Carer Payment
- DVA Service Pension
- DVA Income Support Supplement

What if I need an antenna?

If you own your house, the installer can make any necessary changes to your cabling and external antenna, free of charge.

If you do not own your home, or you live in an apartment with a shared antenna system, the installer will be able to install the set-top box and upgrade an indoor antenna or cabling. However, the installer cannot make changes to your external antenna or cabling. Any changes will need to be discussed with your landlord, the property owner or body corporate.

Can I get more than one set-top box?

The scheme will provide one set-top box package for each eligible person or couple living in a household.

How can I trust that the installation will be ok and the contractors will not rip me off?

The government recognises that people who need help from the Household Assistance Scheme may be particularly vulnerable to unscrupulous businesses touting for work.

That is why it is contracting with major companies, so that it can ensure a quality, safe, reliable service that delivers the most appropriate solution for households – from a simple set-top box through to new antenna installation or even a satellite TV set-top box and dish.

The companies delivering the scheme are subject to strict service standards and conditions. They are also required to provide a 12-month warranty on all equipment and work and to provide a special help line for any issues that may arise.

The Household Assistance Scheme does not employ door-to-door salespeople. You will only be contacted by our contractor after you have received your letter from Centrelink and applied to receive assistance.

All installers used for the Household Assistance Scheme are subject to a police check and are especially trained to ensure the safety and quality of their installations. Their work is subject to checks to ensure quality.

You should not pay any money to the suppliers that will install equipment for you under the Household Assistance Scheme.

I saw in the paper that the average cost to install is \$350, why? I have heard that a set-top box only costs \$40.

Under the scheme, a special set-top box must be provided which is easy-to-use for older Australian or people with disabilities. It has been especially purchased for people with accessibility needs. But that is only a small part of the service provided.

Every installation is different. Some households will only need a new set-top box and live in metropolitan areas with easy access to installers. Others may have old or out of date antennas and wiring, or need to switch to a satellite TV service if they cannot receive digital signals any

other way. Many others live in very remote locations where travel is both time-consuming and expensive. Therefore, there is no 'standard' cost for an installation.

Under the Household Assistance Scheme, the conversion costs for each home will be covered in full, whether that means a set-top box, wiring and a new antenna, or, in some cases a new satellite dish and associated equipment—irrespective of where the household is located.

In addition, an in-home warranty service will be provided so that, if anything happens, the installer will return to your home to fix the problem.

Where can I find out more?

For more information about the Household Assistance Scheme, look out for your letter from Centrelink about six months before your region switches to digital TV.

To find out more about the switch to digital TV, visit www.digitalready.gov.au or call the Digital Ready Information Line 1800 20 10 13.

TTY service: Users who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment can call 1800 55 56 77 and ask for 1800 20 10 13.

Speak and Listen (speech-to-speech relay) users can call 1300 55 57 27.

For translation services, call Translating and Interpreting Services National on 131 450.

SWITCHOVER TIMETABLE

Mildura	Switchover complete
Areas of regional SA & Broken Hill	Switchover complete
Areas of regional VIC	Switchover complete
Areas of regional Queensland	6 December 2011
Areas of Southern NSW & ACT	1st half 2012
Areas of Northern NSW	2nd half 2012
Tasmania, Perth & Brisbane	1st half 2013
Melbourne, Adelaide Darwin & Sydney	2nd half 2013
Remote Central and Eastern Australia, Regional and Remote WA and all other areas	2nd half 2013