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Commonwealth Department of Social Services

benefits available to girls in
homes for unmarried mothers

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Anyone over the age of 16 years may apply for a Benefit. If an application has not been made before entering the Home, this may be done after admission. The principal benefits payable are Unemployment Benefit and Special Benefit. Basically Unemployment Benefit is payable in respect of the period from the date of cessation of work until the twelfth week prior to the expected date of confinement. Special Benefit is payable in respect of the period of 12 weeks before the expected date of confinement and for a further 6 weeks after the actual date of confinement.

Unemployment Benefit

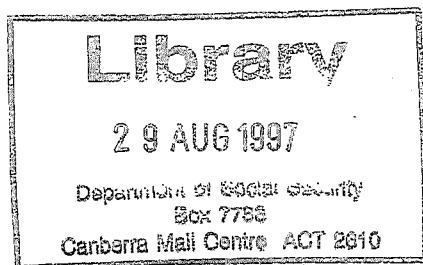
If you wish to lodge a claim for Unemployment Benefit you should register for employment at the nearest District Employment Office and complete an Unemployment Benefit application. (If you live at "Koinoina", "St Mary's" or "Women's Shelter" you should register at 99 Charlotte Street, City; if you live at "Boothville" or "Holy Cross" you should register at 106 Alfred Street, Valley and if you live at "Koolkuna" you should register at 132 Sutton Street, Redcliffe). When registering at the Employment Office you should indicate that you ceased work because of your pregnancy. You will be required to supply a medical certificate giving the expected date of your confinement within two weeks of registering at the Employment Office. The Employment Officer will hand you a form which has to be completed and returned to the Employment Office on the date indicated. Every seventh day after this you must forward a Weekly Income Statement to the Employment Office. A supply of weekly income statements is held by the Matron at the Home. It is your own responsibility to request one of these forms and to ensure that it is lodged on the due date. If you fail to forward your weekly income statement, you will not receive a cheque.

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Special Benefit

(a) If you are already receiving Unemployment Benefit payment of Special Benefit in lieu of your Unemployment Benefit will commence automatically 12 weeks before the expected date of your confinement. Once you have been advised of the grant of your Special Benefit, no further weekly income statements are required.

The Department of Social Services pays Unemployment Benefit, Sickness Benefit, Special Benefit and Maternity Allowance to many girls in Homes for unmarried mothers. This leaflet is designed to give you information about these payments.



(b) If you are within twelve (12) weeks of the expected date of your confinement and have not applied for Unemployment Benefit you need only apply for Special Benefit. The necessary application form can be obtained from the Matron and should be forwarded to the Director of Social Services, Prudential Building, 6 Queen Street, Brisbane. You should also forward a medical certificate showing the expected date of your confinement, either with the claim or soon afterwards.

(c) Payment of Special Benefit normally continues for six (6) weeks after the date of birth of your baby, unless you commence work or marry during this period. At the end of this period you may register for work and claim Unemployment Benefit provided you are available for and actively seeking employment.

(d) If, because of medical complications, you are unable to return to work when Special Benefit ceases, you may apply for Sickness Benefit. In addition to the claim you will be required to furnish a medical certificate showing the nature of your illness and the period for which you will be unfit for work.

Sickness Benefit

If there are medical complications in connection with your pregnancy or you are sick in some way you may apply for Sickness Benefit as soon as you cease work, instead of claiming Unemployment Benefit. However to qualify for Sickness Benefit you must produce a medical certificate from a doctor which states:-

- (a) the expected date of your confinement;
- (b) the nature of the illness or complications associated with your pregnancy;
- (c) the period during which you will be totally unfit for work.

Payment of benefit

Once your eligibility has been established you will be paid weekly by cheque. The first Unemployment Benefit cheque should normally arrive during the third week after you register for employment. If your cheque does not arrive and you have sent in your Weekly Income Statement you should notify Matron immediately.

queries about Benefits

If you have any queries about your Unemployment, Sickness or Special Benefit you may if you wish discuss the matter with Matron. She will telephone the Department of Social Services on your behalf. Alternatively you may if you prefer, telephone the Department yourself. The number is 32 0491 (extension 326).

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

When you leave the Home, either during your pregnancy or after your confinement, it is your responsibility to notify the Department of Social Services of your change of address. This can be done by telephone. If you are then living privately and still receiving Unemployment Benefit your weekly income statements must be lodged in person each week at the District Employment Office nearest your home.

LIVE-IN EMPLOYMENT

If you take a live-in position, whether you receive wages or not, you MAY NOT BE eligible for Unemployment Benefit. However, you may still be eligible for Special Benefit and should test your eligibility, by lodging a claim for Special Benefit about thirteen (13) weeks before the expected date of your confinement. If you are interested in obtaining a live-in position you should contact Miss Jack of the Commonwealth Employment Service, 99 Charlotte Street, (Telephone 31 0101 extension 497).

RATES OF BENEFIT

If you have no other income of any kind, the maximum weekly rates of benefit are as follows:-

Unemployment Benefit

16 and under 18 years of age	\$ 7.50
18 and under 21 years of age	\$11.00
21 years of age and over	\$17.00

Special Benefit

During the first six weeks Special Benefit is payable at the rate shown above according to your age. After the sixth week all girls under the age of 21 are paid at the rate of \$11.00 per week. Payment at this rate continues for six weeks after the birth of the baby. Should you keep your baby you will

receive a further \$4.50 a week during the last six weeks.

Sickness Benefit

Sickness Benefit rates are as shown above for the first six weeks. After the sixth week, if you still qualify for sickness benefit, the rate will be increased as follows:-

Under 21 years of age	\$12.00 per week
21 years of age and over	\$18.25 per week

Girls under the age of 16 may be eligible for Special Benefit in special circumstances. Further details may be obtained from the Department.

INCOME

The rate of payment of Unemployment or Special Benefit may be affected by any income (including maintenance) which you receive. If you are under 21 years of age, you may receive income of \$3.00 a week without affecting your benefit; if you are over 21 years of age you may receive \$6.00 a week.

If you are receiving maintenance payments from the father of your baby they will be treated as income. However should he pay maintenance to the Matron for your board, it will be disregarded.

SUBSIDISED HEALTH BENEFITS

While you are in receipt of Unemployment, Sickness or Special Benefit you are entitled to Subsidised Health Benefits. Two entitlement certificates will be issued to you automatically. One certificate will entitle you to receive approved pharmaceutical benefits at the reduced rate of 50 cents for each item. The other exempts you from the payment of medical contributions to an approved health benefit fund, for the period shown on the certificate. It does not cover you for hospital benefits in an intermediate or private hospital. You should take this certificate to the fund of which you are a member and your contributions will be credited without charge. If you are not a member of a health benefit fund you may use the certificate to join a fund of your choice but there will be a 14 day waiting period before you are eligible for benefits. Continuation certificates will be issued as required whilst you receive a benefit. Eligibility will continue for 28 days after the date of termination of your benefit.

MATERNITY ALLOWANCE

An Allowance of \$30 is payable in respect of the birth of your baby, whether you keep the baby or not. In some Homes this allowance is used to help pay for the costs of your confinement. Matron will advise you about this. It is possible for you to claim part of this Maternity Allowance, \$20.00 during the month preceding the date of your confinement. The necessary form, which is called a Pre-Natal Allowance Claim, may be obtained from your Pre-Natal Clinic. The balance of \$10.00 is then claimed after the birth of your baby, by completing a Maternity Allowance claim. These forms should be forwarded to the Director, Department of Social Services, 6 Queen Street, Brisbane.

PLANS FOR YOUR BABY

If you are experiencing difficulty in reaching a decision about the future of your baby, or wish to talk over your plans with someone, do not hesitate to contact the Social Work Section of this Department, telephone number 32 0491, extension 347. The receptionist will arrange an appointment for you with a Social Worker.