



UPCOMING CHANGES TO THE MEANS TEST

PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

Victoria Legal Aid's means test is the first threshold that applicants must meet to qualify for a grant of legal aid.

This document lists the 13 changes to our means test that were developed through the Means Test Review:

1. [Financially Associated Persons and Dependants](#)
2. [Contributions, Debts and Waivers](#)
3. [Guidance and Support](#)

More details will be released closer to when the changes come into effect and we will also be offering training on our revised means test.

For more information about the Means Test Review, you can access our [Public Report](#).

FINANCIALLY ASSOCIATED PERSONS AND DEPENDANTS

Action 1

An applicant and partner will no longer be asked whether they have received, or expect to receive, a lump sum amount of money

Action 2

An applicant's spouse or de facto partner will be asked for the same information that is asked from the applicant to establish their financial circumstances

Action 3

The definition of financially associated person will be narrowed to an applicant's spouse or de facto partner

Action 4

Some spouses or de facto partners will be excluded from assessment where it is inappropriate to expect them to financially assist

CONTRIBUTIONS, DEBTS AND WAIVERS

Action 5

We will waive the need to provide documentary proof of means for applicants who are:

- experiencing homelessness
- fleeing from or experiencing family violence
- residing in remote areas; or
- identifying as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person

Action 6

Indexation in line with CPI will be imposed on future contributions that are secured over an applicant's property

Action 7

Applicants will be able to pay their asset contributions in monthly instalments instead of as a lump sum

Action 8

We will publish written guidance on how we will treat debts owed as well as introducing a clear financial hardship process to be used when people ask for their contributions to be waived or varied

GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

Action 9

We will be building an online means test tool that indicates whether a person will be eligible for a grant of legal aid

Action 10

We will publish written guidance of when our means test should be waived where an applicant is ineligible because of their income or assets

Action 11

Our means test will be rewritten in plain language

Action 12

We will provide training to support workers in the community sector about the eligibility requirements to get a grant of legal aid

Action 13

We will publish when and how often our means test is waived as well as a policy to guide how discretion should be exercised