

Factsheet for caseworkers

Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA)

September 2025

The Transition to Independent Living Allowance (TILA) is a one-off allowance of up to \$1,500 per person designed to help young people aged 15–25 years who are leaving statutory out-of-home care (OOHC) to make a successful transition to independent living.

To be eligible for TILA, the young person must have a leaving care plan.

Procedures for caseworkers

Caseworkers assisting the young person must:

- Ensure the young person has a leaving care plan
 - Assess whether the young person is eligible for TILA (see below)
 - Complete the application form and email it to DCJ at TILA@dcj.nsw.gov.au
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TILA administration

TILA is provided by the Australian Government Department of Social Services (DSS) and is administered by the DCJ Care Leavers Line (CLL).

When the DCJ CLL receives the application, they will:

- Check the details and gain approval for the TILA expenditure from DSS
- Provide to DSS the information in Parts 1, 3 and 4 of the application form
- Send the payment to the account specified on the application form (DCJ or agency/supplier).

NB Payments are generally made within two weeks. TILA is not intended to be an emergency payment.

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for TILA, the claimant must meet **all** the following criteria:

- Be an Australian citizen or permanent Australian resident who resides in Australia at the time of application for TILA
- Be aged 15-25 years at the time of the application
- Have been in, or is currently in, statutory OOHC on a court order
- Have left the care of the state Department* after the age of 15 years and was last in the Department's care for a continuous period of at least six months

- Either be getting ready to leave (within 12 weeks of applying), be currently in the process of leaving, or have already left statutory OOHC
- Have a leaving care plan
- Have not received the full amount of TILA assistance previously (total is \$1,500)
- Have agreed with the caseworker that the proposed use and timing of TILA is appropriate.

* NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) or NGO OOHC provider authorised by DCJ.

Appropriate use of TILA

TILA is used to support the needs and goals identified in the young person’s leaving care plan. It can be used for a range of things, including:

- white goods – fridge, washing machine
- kitchen appliances – microwave, toaster, blender, mixer
- furniture – lounge room and dining room suites, coffee table, TV stand/entertainment unit, bed and bedroom furniture
- bedding and linen – mattress, sheets, pillows, doona, rugs, towels
- food and clothing
- one-off transport expenses – driving lessons, car or motorcycle purchase, registration, insurance, car/motorcycle repairs to make it roadworthy, push-bike
- educational expenses – laptop or desktop computer, clothing for school, textbooks, enrolment fees for school, TAFE or University, broadband connection
- employment expenses – work tools, interview and work clothes
- bus and train passes
- utility connection fees – phone, electricity and gas connections.

To note:

- TILA is **not** designed to be used on an ad hoc basis for crisis assistance.
- Unspent TILA funds must be returned, so ensure the young person knows how much they have left and discuss when that will be used.

Contacts
DCJ Care Leavers Line T: 1800 994 686 E: careleavers@dcj.nsw.gov.au
Australian Government Department of Social Services E: TILA@dss.gov.au W: dss.gov.au/tila