

The new schemes

The NT Pensioner and Carer Concession Scheme (NTPCCS) will be replaced with two new Schemes introduced from 1 July 2018:

- Northern Territory Concession Scheme (NTCS) – assisting Territorians with cost of living expenses
- Seniors Recognition Scheme (SRS) – recognising and valuing the contribution of senior Territorians

From May 2018, application forms will be available in the Territory Families offices for new members wishing to apply for the schemes

Eligibility

You can check your eligibility for the Northern Territory Concession Scheme and Senior Recognition Scheme online at: ntconcessions.nt.gov.au.

You can also visit a Territory Families office (locations provided below) or call us on **1800 777 704** on weekdays between 8:30am - 4:00pm.

Residency requirements

To qualify for either scheme, you must be an Australian Citizen or Permanent Resident, and a Northern Territory Resident.

A Northern Territory Resident is someone who lives in the Northern Territory for at least 183 days of the financial year. The days do not need to be consecutive.

If you reside outside of the Northern Territory for longer than 183 days, you are not entitled to scheme membership. If you return to the Territory then you may be eligible to sign up to the schemes again.

Some members may be away from the Northern Territory for medical reasons. If this is the case, from July 2018, you can contact us to apply for special consideration for your membership to continue.

Annual confirmation

Both schemes will require you to confirm your details annually. This includes a declaration stating that you have resided in the Northern Territory for at least 183 days of the year and remain eligible for the schemes.

Seniors Recognition Scheme

From 1 July 2018, the Seniors Recognition Scheme (SRS) is available to all eligible senior Territorians turning 65 years

or older, providing a \$500 payment each financial year.

The new scheme provides more support to seniors and now includes intrastate travel. For members who don't travel, the \$500 can be used for electricity and water bills.

If you are already receiving a travel concession under the NTPCCS, you do not need to apply for the SRS. All current eligible members will be transitioned across to the new scheme. You will still need to confirm your details.

Choosing how to use your payment

The SRS payment can be used on travel, electricity and water. Each year, you will be asked how you would like to use the payment.

Under the scheme you will have the option to use:

\$500 on one category - Choose \$500 travel or \$500 water or \$500 electricity.

Elect to use \$250 on two categories – Choose travel/ water (\$250/\$250) or travel/ electricity (\$250/\$250) or electricity/water (\$250/\$250).

For travel, you will receive a voucher that can be used at approved businesses for travel by plane, train, bus, boat or car in the NT, interstate or overseas. You can use your travel payment for family members and friends to visit you.

If you use the payment for electricity or water, you will receive a one-off account credit. This can only be used for your primary place of residence where you are responsible for the bill. The credit cannot be refunded if you close your account. If you change your address, this can be transferred.

New travel options for NT Seniors

Territory Families will be working with travel vendors, particularly in remote areas to expand travel options available to members.

Members can still make their own arrangements and seek reimbursement after travel has occurred. This includes private vehicle travel. You must submit your claim with your travel voucher within the same financial year.

A code of practice will be established to support approved vendors to operate in the best interests of members.

Members with a travel entitlement before 30 June 2018

If you are eligible for travel before 30 June 2018, under the existing NTPCCS, you will be able to use this travel entitlement. You **must** book your return trip by 30 June 2018 and have travelled and claimed this payment by 30 September 2018.

If you will be making your own arrangements and seeking a manual reimbursement, you **must** also contact the concession unit by 30 June 2018. If you have already booked your travel through a travel agent, you will not be affected by these requirements.

Northern Territory Concession Scheme

Northern Territory residents who receive an eligible Commonwealth Pension and select DVA payments can apply for the NTCS to assist with living expenses.

Concessions available under the NTCS include:

- electricity, water, sewerage
- property rates, garbage
- motor vehicle registration
- NT Driver's Licence
- spectacles

Current members transitioning to the new schemes

If you are a current NTPCCS member, your details will be transitioned to the new scheme.

Members will be notified once the transition has occurred and given options to confirm their details. Once your details are confirmed your replacement card for the NTCS can be issued.

You must confirm your details by 31 December 2018 to continue to receive your concessions.

New member applications

You can apply at any time to become a member of the current NTPCCS and if approved you won't have to wait until 1 July 2018 to receive concessions.

From June 2018, any new members joining the scheme will receive a card for the NTCS. No membership card will be issued for the SRS.

Capped water and electricity

From 1 July 2018, electricity and water concessions will be capped making the scheme fairer for all members.

Territory Families is working with Jacana Energy and Power and Water to prepare for the introduction of capped concessions.

The capped amounts are based on average Darwin usage rates. Caps will be up to \$1,200 for electricity and up to \$800 for water annually.

How will the caps work?

Jacana Energy and Power and Water will apply the caps through their billing systems. Caps will be reset at the start of each financial year.

The electricity and water concessions will be applied on a daily rate until the cap is reached. Once the cap is reached, no further concessions will be applied.

Most members will not go beyond the caps however, some members receiving concessions beyond the caps will receive reduced NTCS concessions.

If you are eligible for the SRS, you can choose to use your \$500 payment for electricity and/or water.

If you have a medical condition that increases your consumption, you may be eligible for further concessions, subject to verification by a medical professional. This will be available from 1 July 2018.

Home Owners may be eligible for the NT Government's Smart Energy Grant which can be used to install energy efficient fixtures. You can apply for the grants online at smartenergy.nt.gov.au.

Claiming your concessions

Claims for concessions must be made within six months of the cost being incurred or within the financial year, whichever is greater.

For more information contact Territory Families on

1800 777 704 or

email: pensionconcessionunit@nt.gov.au

or visit your regional Territory Families shopfront.

Visit our shopfronts at:

Casuarina – Cascom Plaza, Building 2B1, Scaturchio St

Palmerston – Palmerston Community Care, Cnr Temple Tce and Roystonea Ave

Katherine – 5 First St

Alice Springs – 60 Hartley St, Mwerre House

Nhulunbuy – 1st Floor, Arnhem House, Endeavour Square

Tennant Creek – 72 Paterson St