

## SOCIAL WELFARE

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### COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

#### **Commonwealth Department of Social Security**

The Commonwealth Department of Social Security is responsible for the administration of a national income maintenance and welfare system, which involves an outlay of approximately 27 per cent of all Commonwealth departmental expenditure.

#### *Income support for individuals*

Under the Social Security Act, people in different categories of demonstrated need (the aged, invalids, sole parents, widows without children, the unemployed, and the sick) can receive income support through one of the Department's pensions or benefits.

In addition, payments are made to families with children, including extra assistance for those with certain special needs, e.g. handicapped children.

#### *Age pension*

The age pension came into operation on 1 July 1909, superseding State age pension schemes which had been introduced in NSW (1900), Victoria (1900), and Queensland (1908). It was, therefore, the first income support payment to be introduced on a national basis. Women aged 60 or more and men aged 65 or more may qualify for an age pension.

At 30 June 1985 there were 1,331,782 age pensioners in Australia, of whom 912,068 were females and 419,714 were males. The Victorian total was 352,989, which comprised 242,837 females and 110,152 males. The main reasons for the considerably higher number of women are that they generally live longer than men and the age pension is available to them five years earlier.

Approximately 80 per cent of the population of pensionable aged people receive this payment, while ex-servicemen and women may qualify for a service pension from the Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs as an alternative to the age pension.

#### *Invalid pension*

Introduced from 15 December 1910, the invalid pension is available to people aged sixteen and over if they are either permanently blind or permanently incapacitated for work. There were 259,162 Australians receiving the invalid pension at 30 June 1985, of whom 70,449 were females and 188,713 were males. The Victorian total was 72,277, being made up of 18,937 females and 53,340 males.

#### *Wife's pension*

The wife of an age or invalid pensioner may qualify for the wife's pension if she is residing with him and does not receive an age or invalid pension or unemployment, sickness, or special benefit. This payment commenced as the wife's allowance on 8 July 1943, but was changed to the wife's pension from 5 October 1972 to provide an amount equal to the married rate of pension.

#### *Carer's pension*

The carer's pension was introduced on 1 November 1985 for a person who is caring for a severely handicapped pensioner spouse or near relative at home. This payment has incorporated the spouse carer's pension, which began on 1 December 1983, as it was only available to men looking after their wives.

#### *Widow's pension*

Introduced on 30 June 1942, the widow's pension may be paid to: a *de jure* widow; a woman who is a divorcee; a woman who has been deserted by her husband without just cause for a period of not less than six months; a woman whose husband has been convicted of an offence and has been imprisoned



Statuary and paintings are displayed in views of two Victorian regional art galleries –  
(Above) Bendigo Art Gallery.  
(Below) Geelong Art Gallery.

*Victorian Tourism Commission*





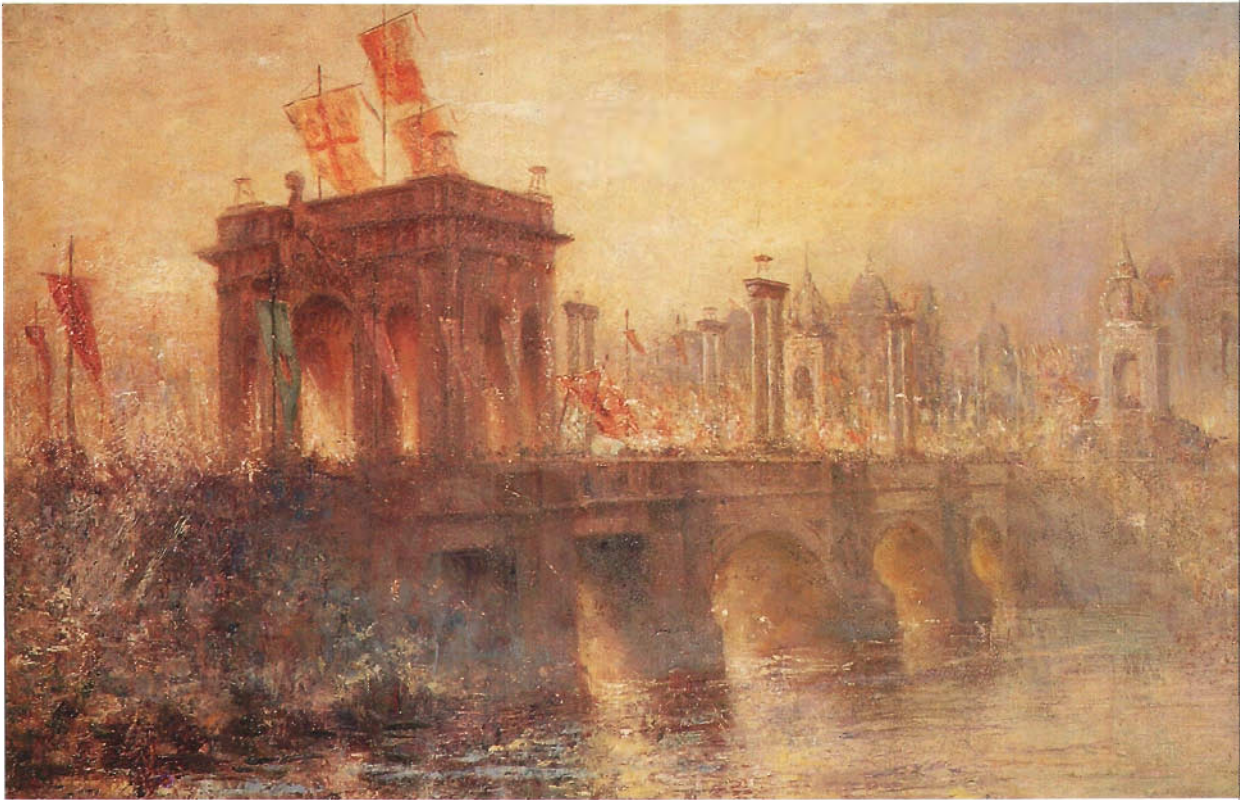
(Left) Sir Arthur Streeton 1867-1943  
Australian  
*Near Heidelberg*, 1890  
Oil on canvas, 53.5 x 43 cm.  
Felton Bequest 1943

(Right) David Davies 1864-1939  
Australian  
*Evening, Templestowe*, 1897  
Oil on canvas, 45 x 56 cm.  
Purchased with the assistance of a  
special grant from the Government of  
Victoria, 1979.

(Below left) Walter Withers 1854-1914  
Australian  
*Breezy day at Point Henry, near  
Geelong*, c. 1900  
Oil on canvas, 25.8 x 51.2 cm.  
Purchased 1958

(Below right) Frederick McCubbin  
1855-1917 Australian  
*Princes Bridge*, 1908  
Oil on canvas, 61.5 x 92.5 cm.  
Purchased with the assistance of a  
special grant from the Government of  
Victoria, 1979.

*Reproduced by permission of the  
National Gallery of Victoria*





Sporting and marine history are only two of the interests which have led to collection and preservation of records and relics –  
(Above) Melbourne Cricket Ground Museum.  
(Below) Geelong Harbor Trust Museum.

*Victorian Tourism Commission*



for a period of not less than six months; a woman who was the *de facto* wife of a man for a least three years immediately before his death; and a woman who is a victim of a bigamous marriage in certain circumstances.

The woman must come within one of the following categories: class A – a woman who has at least one qualifying child; class B – a woman aged at least 50 who has no qualifying child or a woman who was aged at least 45 when she ceased to receive a class A widow's pension because she no longer had a qualifying child; and class C – a woman aged under 50 who has no qualifying child and who, within 26 weeks of her husband's or *de facto* husband's death, is in needy circumstances.

Of the 159,915 widow pensioners in Australia at 30 June 1985, 78,278 were class A, 81,541 class B, and 96 class C. In Victoria, the 44,219 widow pensioners comprised 22,598 class A, 21,607 class B, and 14 class C.

#### *Supporting parent's benefit*

A supporting mother's benefit was introduced on 3 July 1973 to provide assistance to sole mothers who were not eligible for the widow's pension. These included single mothers, deserted *de facto* wives, women whose *de facto* husbands were in prison, and other wives separated from their husbands. These mothers qualified for a supporting mother's benefit six months after the date of the event which made them eligible, e.g. separation or the birth of a child.

On 10 November 1977, a supporting parent's benefit was introduced to allow fathers to be paid under similar conditions as applied to sole mothers. A supporting father includes a widower, a divorcee, a separated husband or *de facto* husband, a husband or *de facto* husband of a prisoner, and an unmarried father. The six months qualifying period was removed from November 1980. From 1 December 1983, eligibility for supporting parent's benefit was extended to single adoptive parents and to other sole parents with legal custody, care and control of a child, and to married parents who are unable to live with their spouse in the matrimonial home because of the spouse's illness or infirmity.

At 30 June 1985, there were 168,017 supporting parent beneficiaries throughout Australia, with 31,468 in Victoria.

#### *Portability of pensions*

Under the general portability provisions introduced in 1973, a pensioner going overseas to either live permanently or for a holiday can continue to receive his or her pension in any country in the world under the same conditions as apply in Australia. A person qualifies for an overseas payment of his or her pension only if that pension was granted before leaving Australia.

Since 1 October 1982, a person going overseas for a holiday of less than 12 months can have his or her pension paid in Australia or cancelled and restored when he or she returns to Australia.

#### *Income test and assets test*

Since 21 March 1985, people applying for a social security pension are assessed separately under the income test or the assets test. The test which produces the lower rate of pension applies. Approximately 98 per cent of social security pensions are assessed under the income test.

Blind people are paid the maximum basic rate of pension regardless of their income and assets, while a more generous income test applies to people aged 70 and over.

#### *Pension payment rates*

Social security pensions are automatically adjusted in May and November in accordance with increases in the Consumer Price Index between the previous June and December quarters, and the previous December and June quarters, respectively.

#### *Additional allowances*

Eligible pensioners may also receive: \$16 per week additional pension for each child under 16 or dependent full-time student aged between 16 and 24; \$10 per week mother's/guardian's allowance regardless of the number of dependent children and/or students; and rent assistance of up to \$15 per week if they pay rent, lodging, or board and lodging of at least \$10 per week.

#### *Pensioner fringe benefits*

In addition to their particular payment, social security pensioners and supporting parent beneficiaries can also qualify under the income test or the assets test for pensioner fringe benefits. These can include free pharmaceutical items, municipal rate rebates, telephone rental concessions, motor registration and insurance premium rebates, water and sewerage rates rebates, postal redirection fee concessions, and transport concessions.

All other pensioners, who do not qualify for fringe benefits, are entitled to a range of prescribed pharmaceutical items at a concessional rate.

#### *Funeral benefit*

Introduced on 1 July 1943, the funeral benefit provides some assistance to help meet the funeral expenses of a deceased pensioner who was eligible for fringe benefits. The sum of \$40 is payable to a pensioner with fringe benefits who pays for the funeral of another pensioner, while \$20 can be paid when any person (including a pensioner who is not entitled to fringe benefits) pays for a pensioner's funeral.

#### *Unemployment, sickness, and special benefits*

Unemployment, sickness, and special benefits commenced on 1 July 1945 as basically short-term payments for people temporarily unable to support themselves. To be eligible for unemployment benefit, a person must: be unemployed; be registered for work at an office of the Commonwealth Employment Service; be capable of undertaking and willing to undertake suitable paid work; be taking reasonable steps to obtain such work; not be unemployed due to being, or having been, engaged in industrial action; and not be unemployed due to industrial action by other members of the same trade union.

Sickness benefit is available to people who have been temporarily incapacitated for work because of an illness or injury and who lose income as a result.

Special benefit may be paid on a discretionary basis to a person who is not eligible for any other pension or benefit but who is unable to earn a sufficient livelihood for himself or herself. All of these three benefits are income-tested.

#### *Additional payments*

Eligible beneficiaries may also receive: \$16 per week additional benefit for each child under 16 and dependent full-time students aged between 16 and 24; \$10 per week mother's/guardian's allowance regardless of the number of dependent children and/or students; and rent assistance of up to \$15 per week if they have been receiving sickness benefit generally for a continuous period of six weeks and if they pay rent, lodging, or board and lodging of at least \$10 per week.

#### *Services and concessions*

Recipients of unemployment benefit and special benefit may be entitled to a Health Care Card depending on a separate income test. With this card, they may obtain discounts on some pharmaceutical items, discounts on winter electricity and gas bills, and water rate rebates. They may also obtain concessions on public transport fares.

Sickness beneficiaries may be entitled to a Health Benefits Card which is also subject to the separate income test. They are entitled to similar concessions to the holders of Health Care Cards, except they also receive a concession on telephone rental and free pharmaceutical items instead of discounted ones.

#### *Sheltered employment allowance*

Introduced on 30 June 1967, the sheltered employment allowance can be paid as an alternative to the invalid pension to males under 65 and females under 60 who work in approved sheltered employment services or would be likely to become permanently incapacitated for work if not provided with sheltered employment. A total of 9,974 people throughout Australia were receiving this payment at 30 June 1985, including 2,114 Victorians. People being paid the sheltered employment allowance are also entitled to an incentive allowance of \$15 per week in lieu of rent assistance.

#### *Rehabilitation allowance*

The rehabilitation allowance commenced on 1 March 1983 for a person who receives treatment and/or training through the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service and who would otherwise be eligible to receive a pension, benefit, or sheltered employment allowance. The rehabilitation allowance was paid to 3,444 people throughout Australia at 30 June 1985, including 768 Victorians.

#### *Mobility allowance*

Since April 1983, a mobility allowance of \$10 per week has been payable to disabled people who are employed or in vocational training for a minimum of 20 hours a week. Because of their disability, they must be unable to use public transport without substantial assistance. The allowance is not payable when a sales tax exemption on a new motor vehicle has been granted within the previous two years.

At 30 June 1985, there were 10,946 Australians in receipt of a mobility allowance, of whom 2,835 lived in Victoria.

#### *Family allowance*

Child endowment was introduced on 1 July 1941 to provide a regular flat-rate cash payment free of any means test to parents for second and subsequent children up to 16 years of age. It was extended to student children aged 16 to 20 years from 14 January 1964. From 15 June 1976, new rates and conditions applied for a combined scheme known as family allowance, which covers children under 16 years and dependent full-time students aged 16 to 24 years inclusive. Where a couple care for a child, payment is made to the woman. The rate of the allowance for each child or student depends upon his or her position in the family in relation to other eligible children or students. The monthly rate at 30 June 1985 was: first child – \$22.80; second child – \$32.55; third child – \$39.00; fourth child – \$39.00; and each subsequent child – \$45.55.

A total of 2,191,191 Australian families were paid family allowances in respect of 4,312,868 children and students at 30 June 1985. In Victoria, 575,226 families were paid for 1,138,718 children and students.

#### *Double orphan's pension*

A double orphan's pension of \$55.70 per month is payable to any person having the custody, care, and control of a child under 16 years or a full-time student under 25 years if both parents are dead or if one parent is dead and the whereabouts of the other parent is unknown. This payment can also be made where the sole surviving parent is imprisoned for at least 10 years or is a long-term patient of a mental hospital.

Introduced from 9 October 1973, the double orphan's pension is paid in addition to the family allowance. Since November 1981, this payment has been available to a person caring for a refugee child whose parents are not in Australia or whose whereabouts are unknown.

On a national basis, 4,509 guardians received this payment for 6,129 orphans at 30 June 1985. The corresponding figures for Victoria were 1,313 and 1,758, respectively.

#### *Handicapped child's allowance*

The parent or guardian of a physically or intellectually disabled child under 16 or dependent full-time student aged 16 to 24 inclusive who is being cared for in the family home may be entitled to a handicapped child's allowance. The allowance is not payable if the student is receiving an invalid pension or supporting parent's benefit.

This payment was introduced on 1 January 1975 in respect of severely handicapped children. Substantially handicapped children were included from 10 November 1977. It is paid in addition to the family allowance.

The rate of the allowance for severely handicapped children, who require constant care and attention, is \$85 a month and is free of any income test. Up to \$85 a month can be paid in respect of a substantially handicapped child who needs marginally less care and attention. The amount payable depends on the parental or guardian's income as well as the additional costs incurred in caring for the child.

At 30 June 1985, there were 28,154 allowees throughout Australia receiving the allowance for 29,562 children or students, with 7,341 allowees and 7,678 children or students living in Victoria.

#### *Family income supplement*

The family income supplement scheme was introduced on 1 May 1983 to provide financial assistance for low-income families not receiving any other pension or benefit from the Commonwealth Government. The supplement is generally paid to the person receiving family allowance for the child or student. The maximum rate is \$16 a week for each qualifying child or student if the claimant's income does not exceed the prescribed limit (at 1 January 1986 this was \$229 per week). The rate of payment is reduced by one-half of the amount by which the income exceeds this limit. There were 26,398 recipients of this allowance throughout Australia with 74,942 dependent children or students at 30 June 1985, 6,157 recipients with 17,888 dependants being in Victoria.

#### *Health Care Card for low income earners*

Families who satisfy the income test for the family income supplement may also be eligible for a Health Care Card. This entitles the holder to concessions on some pharmaceutical items, winter electricity and gas bills, and water rates. Single and married people who do not have children may also be eligible for the Health Care Card.



*Taxation of social security payments*

The following payments are classed as taxable income: age pension; invalid pension paid to a man at least 65 years of age or a woman at least 60 years of age; wife's pension if she is aged 60 or more if her husband is aged 65 or more; widow's pension; supporting parent's benefit; carer's pension if husband is at least 65 years of age or wife is at least 60 years of age; unemployment benefit; sickness benefit; and special benefit.

The following payments are non-taxable: invalid pension paid to a man under 65 or a woman under 60; wife's pension paid to the wife of an invalid pensioner if she is aged less than 60 and her husband is aged less than 65 years; additional pension for the children of pensioners or beneficiaries; mother's/guardian's allowance; rent assistance; carer's pension if husband is under 65 years of age and wife is aged under 60 years; rehabilitation allowance; sheltered employment allowance; incentive allowance; mobility allowance; family allowance; double orphan's pension; handicapped child's allowance; and family income supplement.

*Victorian administration*

In Victoria the Department has continued its policy of decentralising its payments and services by opening regional offices in suburbs or country towns. The main objective of this policy is to provide a convenient and personalised service to the local community. Between 30 June 1984 and 31 December 1985 the number of regional offices in this State increased from 38 to 46. New offices were opened at Wendouree, Springvale, Newport, St Albans, Lalor, Corio, Loddon-Campaspe, Mornington Peninsula, and Fitzroy. The former North Fitzroy office was closed when the Fitzroy office opened.

The Department had a staffing level of 3,065 at 11 December 1985, 743 staff being located in the State headquarters in Melbourne and 2,312 staff working in regional offices.

*Migrants and refugees**Migrant Services Unit*

In 1980, the Department established the Migrant Services Unit. During 1984-85 this Unit has continued to monitor the delivery of Departmental services to ensure that the necessary resources are available to allow migrants and refugees equal access to those services.

*Language services*

The Department currently employs thirty interpreters on a regular part-time basis providing services in eleven languages at twenty-two regional offices. A pool of 250 interpreters is also available to provide *ad hoc* services in thirty-five languages to areas of the Department, including some rural offices, that require interpreting services on an irregular basis.

There are 142 bilingual officers throughout the Department who regularly use their linguistic skills during the performance of their normal duties.

In addition the Department employs ethnic liaison and public contact officers to assist individuals and groups within the ethnic communities. A qualified translator pool comprising 160 translators provides a translation service in thirty-five languages to all areas of the Department.

*Migrant information*

The Department is extending its information programmes to the non-English speaking public by means of multi-lingual advertisements on radio stations 3EA, 3CR, and multi-cultural television SBS. It also provides multi-lingual leaflets and information bulletins to migrants, refugees, ethnic groups, and welfare organisations.

*Consultancy/liaison/support services*

A consultative service on migrant and refugee issues is provided within the Department and to other government authorities, community organisations, and ethnic groups, in addition to training programmes.

*Aboriginal liaison*

The Department has an Aboriginal Services Unit based in its Victorian headquarters, in addition to Aboriginal liaison officers who are located at regional offices in areas which have a significant Aboriginal population. The basic aim is to ensure appropriate access of Aboriginal individuals and communities to the full range of the Department's services.

*Appeals*

During 1983-84 the Department finalised a total of 2,687 (1,647 non-medical and 1,040 medical)

appeals from clients in Victoria; for 1984-85 the corresponding figures were 1,644 (1,117 non-medical and 527 medical) appeals.

#### *Information services*

Through the Information Services section, the Department of Social Security attempts to:

- (1) ensure that eligible individuals are aware of their rights and entitlements to the various Department of Social Security payments and services; and
- (2) provide information to agencies and other government departments concerning payments and services available.

#### *Consultative arrangements*

The Department maintains considerable involvement in a wide range of consultative mechanisms operating at the State and regional level and attempts to facilitate consultations which enable the community to participate in welfare programmes.

The Department is an active participant and foundation member of the Victorian Consultative Committee on Social Development. It is a member of the Steering Committee and most sub-committees which include Employment, Ethnic Affairs, and Information.

In 1985 the Department also established a Migrant Advisory Committee to assist the Department in developing most effective strategies and mechanisms to meet the needs of people of different cultural backgrounds.

#### *Professional welfare services*

During 1984-85, social workers and welfare officers employed in the Department's regional offices and State headquarters undertook a wide range of functions including:

- (1) the provision of direct personal services to departmental clients;
- (2) the assessment and referral of clients for assistance from other community agencies;
- (3) assistance with the assessment of claims for pensions and benefits where social factors require consideration;
- (4) contribution to the development of departmental policies and procedures to more effectively meet the needs of clients;
- (5) liaison and information services to community agencies to facilitate the access of clients to the Department's services;
- (6) monitoring the effectiveness of the Department's services with particular attention to the needs of disadvantaged groups;
- (7) assistance with the interpersonal skills training of administrative staff; and
- (8) the provision of field work training for social work and welfare officer students.

A welfare service is provided in all regional offices in Victoria with welfare staffing numbers varying from one to three depending on the size of the regional office. The majority of offices have two welfare positions. Over 90 professional welfare staff were employed by the Department in Victoria during 1984-85.

### **Commonwealth Department of Community Services**

The Commonwealth Department of Community Services was created on 13 December 1984. Its broad objectives include the co-ordination of health, welfare, income security, and community services policies. It has taken over the responsibility of various functions previously located in other departments, namely the Department of Health and the Department of Social Security.

The Department's main function is to provide funding for services for the aged, homeless, people with disabilities, for children, and others in special need. The Department also provides services direct to client groups, as in the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service.

#### *Child Care Program*

Programmes in this area provide care for pre-school aged children through day care services, and for other young children through after school and vacation care schemes. These services make available a range of developmental and social activities, under appropriate supervision, which meet the children's and parents' needs. A major focus of the day care strategy is the development of services in co-operation with State governments and in Victoria, local government. Funding is provided in two forms, capital and/or recurrent grants, including the relief provided to day care services to assist access for low to moderate income families.

In 1984-85 the Commonwealth Government, through the Department of Community Services

provided \$155m for capital and recurrent funding for the establishment and operation of a wide range of children's services throughout Australia. The expenditure in Victoria for the year was \$38m.

#### *Disability Services Program*

Grants may be made to organisations to subsidise the cost of providing services for disabled people. These services may include; vocational training; adult training; sheltered employment; residential accommodation; recreation services; holiday accommodation; and rehabilitation services.

This programme administers funding to 144 approved organisations, providing 281 services to over 12,000 persons with various physical, sensory, and intellectual disabilities. The 281 services funded are categorised as follows: residential accommodation, 129; sheltered employment, 44; adult training, 81; other training, 18; administration, 7; and recreation/rehabilitation, 2.

Additional benefits payable under this programme are:

- (1) Handicapped children's benefit – paid in respect of children under the age of sixteen years attending approved residential facilities;
- (2) Training fee – \$500 is payable for each disabled person who completes twelve months normal employment after six months sheltered employment. The fee is payable to the organisation providing the sheltered employment; and
- (3) An 'open employment incentive bonus' of \$500, introduced in October 1983, may be paid to a disabled person who completes twelve months normal employment after six months sheltered employment.

Total expenditure on the programme in Victoria during 1984-85 was in excess of \$23m, comprising: new services, \$5m; salaries, \$16m; equipment, \$1m; rent, \$0.5m; and maintenance, \$0.5m.

In early 1985, a major national review of all Commonwealth Government programmes for disabled people (including the Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service) was completed. Basic to the Review was the Commonwealth Government's stated policy of the 'least restrictive alternative' for services for people with disabilities, by opting for that approach which, in providing support for people with disabilities, develops and enhances their personal freedom.

The review has identified the need for a major revision of existing Commonwealth Government legislation to allow for significant changes and improvements in the provision of services. Recommendations resulting from the review have stressed that services should respond more flexibly to individual needs, and promote better integration of people with disabilities into mainstream community activities.

In the light of certain recommendations made by the Handicapped Programs Review, a series of demonstration projects are planned. The projects will explore alternative and innovative service options for people with disabilities, and are expected to cover one of the three broad areas: employment programmes; residential services; and individual client planning processes.

#### *Home and Community Care Program*

The Home and Community Care Program, which became operational on 1 July 1985, is a cost-shared programme in Victoria between the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments. Community groups will be given the opportunity to participate in the planning and direction of the programme.

The aim of this programme is to promote the provision of a comprehensive and integrated range of home and community care designed to provide basic maintenance and support services, both directly and through their carers, to frail or at risk aged persons and younger disabled persons, thereby promoting their independence in the community and avoiding their premature or inappropriate admission to long-term residential care.

The emphasis of this programme is on support services in the community that augment home care. Services may include home help, delivered meals, home maintenance, home nursing and paramedical services. Subsidy may also be given to fund additional services, such as transport, linen and laundry services, and community-based respite care.

The estimated expenditure in respect of this programme in Victoria during 1985-86 was as follows: Commonwealth Government \$6.56m; and State Government \$2.17m.

#### *Supported Accommodation Assistance Program*

This programme, operational from 1 January 1985, is jointly funded and administered by the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments. The programme is aimed at improving the assessment of need, and involving service providers in advising on programme needs and priorities. The programme consists of three separate sub-programmes, in recognition of the different needs of users

of these services. Details of the programmes and number of services funded in Victoria are: the Youth Supported Accommodation Programme, 52; Women's Emergency Services Programme, 20; and the General Supported Accommodation Programme, 12.

Non-housing capital and recurrent funds are available for eligible organisations (including local government), that provide supported accommodation and related support services to men, women, young people, and their dependants, who are either permanently homeless or temporarily homeless as a result of crisis, and who need such assistance to move towards independent living where possible and appropriate.

During the period 1 January to 30 June 1985, \$12.2m of Commonwealth funds was allocated to this programme nationally. Of this amount \$3.5m relates to Victoria. The Victorian Government contributed \$1.6m to the programme.

#### *Emergency Relief Program*

Funds are paid to community welfare agencies that provide emergency relief services to people in financial crisis. Emergency 'relief' may include food vouchers, vouchers or cash to pay bills (especially statutory charges and medical expenses), or to make certain essential purchases, such as children's clothes or school uniforms. Expenditure in respect of this programme in Victoria during 1984-85 was \$1.2m.

#### *Residential Subsidies Program*

This programme facilitates the payment of subsidies to eligible organisations for the construction of accommodation for the aged or disabled. Organisations must be non-profit making, and usually fall into one of the following categories – charitable, religious, or local government.

One of the main aims of the programme is to provide accommodation as near as possible to normal domestic living. Three types of accommodation are involved – self-contained units, hostels, and nursing homes.

#### *Hostel Subsidies Program*

This programme provides subsidies according to the assessed needs of residents and the provision of specific services to residents. Organisations are required to enter into an agreement which sets out the terms and conditions under which hostel subsidies are paid. These conditions aim to improve the standards of accommodation, to ensure equal access to hostels for financially disadvantaged people, and to protect the rights of hostel residents.

There are three different types of subsidy – hostel care, personal care, and respite care.

#### *Domiciliary Nursing Care Benefit*

The Department of Community Services administers this scheme, whereby a fortnightly benefit is paid (by the Department of Social Security) to people looking after an invalid, usually a close relative and occasionally a friend. Both parties must live together in a private residence. The invalid should be receiving the type of care normally provided in a nursing home.

#### *Nursing Homes Deficit Financing Programs*

This programme provides for nursing homes conducted by religious, charitable, and other non-profit organisations to be funded under deficit financing arrangements. Alternatively, these organisations may operate their nursing homes under the fee control system provided under the National Health Act.

Under the deficit financing arrangements, the Commonwealth Government meets the approved operating deficits and the cost of approved asset replacements of nursing homes. Financial assistance is provided by way of monthly advances based on a budget approved by the Department. A final settlement for a financial year is made after audited accounts are received by the Department.

Organisations seeking financial assistance for nursing homes under the deficit financing arrangements as provided for under the Nursing Homes Assistance Act are required to enter into a legally binding agreement with the Commonwealth Government.

#### *Nursing Home Fees Control and Benefits Program*

Applications for fee increases submitted by nursing home proprietors are examined to determine the scale of fees which the nursing home is permitted to charge qualified nursing home patients. The applications are varied in nature and complexity. They may be based on factors such as hours increases, rent increase, award variations, annual statement of income and expenditure, and contract services.

The applications submitted by proprietors are subject to validation by the Department to ensure that the costs claimed have been incurred in the provision of nursing home care to qualified nursing home patients.

The following are two forms of Commonwealth Government benefit payable in respect of patients accommodated in premises approved as nursing homes under the National Health Act.

#### *Basic Nursing Home Benefit*

The Commonwealth pays basic nursing home benefits in respect of all qualified nursing home patients other than those who are entitled to damages or compensation. At 1 November 1985, the maximum amount of basic nursing home benefit payable per day in Victoria was \$48.50.

#### *Commonwealth Extensive Care Benefit*

The Commonwealth extensive care benefit is payable at the rate of \$6 per day, in addition to the Commonwealth basic benefit, in respect of eligible patients who need and receive 'extensive care' as defined in the National Health Act.

#### *Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service*

The Commonwealth Rehabilitation Service (CRS) aims to provide high quality, accessible rehabilitation services to people with disabilities in the broad working age group throughout Australia. The CRS is committed to plan and deliver these services in a manner which is consistent with the principle of 'normalisation.' This entails a recognition that all people with disabilities are individuals who are capable of development, and are entitled to the same human and civil rights as every other person.

People who have a disability may apply directly for rehabilitation assistance, or they may be referred by a doctor, social worker, employer, friend, or relative.

People taking part in a rehabilitation programme may be paid a rehabilitation allowance, which is paid at the same rate as an invalid pension. In some cases they may be eligible for a training allowance and a living-away-from-home allowance also.

During 1984-85, 959 people completed programmes of assistance with the Victorian CRS. Of these, 318 successfully obtained open employment, 195 were assisted to lead more fully independent lives in the community, and the remainder entered sheltered workshops, obtained part-time employment, or returned to household duties.

Expenditure of the CRS during 1984-85 included the following: aids and appliances, \$110,000; books, equipment, training, \$58,000; mobility training for the blind, \$69,000; client transport, \$209,000; medical and paramedical services, \$109,000; and rehabilitation, training, and living-away-from-home allowances, \$5,870,000.

### SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMMES, VICTORIA

Programme	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85
Age pensions —						
Number of pensioners	355,913	361,918	367,345	373,341	362,103	352,989
Wife's/spouse carer's pensioners	7,950	7,849	7,338	7,009	6,390	6,144
Amount paid (\$'000) (a)	931,738	1,041,745	1,183,830	1,278,127	1,386,289	1,461,326
Invalid pensions —						
Number of pensioners	57,863	57,464	57,603	60,551	66,887	72,277
Wife's/spouse carer's pensioners	16,095	15,616	15,385	16,706	20,022	22,751
Amount paid (\$'000) (a)	192,646	217,767	246,069	277,770	337,225	398,918
Widow's pensions —						
Number of pensioners	45,327	45,663	45,824	46,406	45,660	44,219
Amount paid (\$'000) (b)	149,630	172,138	195,675	209,614	230,741	243,076
Sheltered employment allowances —						
Amount paid (\$'000) (c)	4,507	5,442	6,580	7,984	9,370	10,848
Funeral benefits —						
Number of claims granted	12,623	12,876	12,291	12,808	12,302	12,202
Amount paid (\$'000)	379	392	379	405	386	381
Unemployment benefits —						
Number of benefits granted	(d)178,900	(d)177,900	(d)186,100	241,959	208,668	178,775
Amount paid (\$'000) (e)	204,665	234,169	(d)281,600	485,440	612,148	583,993
Sickness benefits —						
Number of benefits granted	(d)30,600	(d)30,900	(d)33,900	33,182	31,824	31,216
Amount paid (\$'000) (f)	31,206	40,544	54,929	64,940	76,702	84,035
Special benefits —						
Number of benefits granted	(d)15,250	(d)15,100	(d)13,500	12,895	16,807	16,490
Amount paid (\$'000) (g)	14,416	17,854	16,762	20,349	21,171	22,036
States Grants (Deserted Wives) Act —						
Amount paid (\$'000)	4,967	(h)194	—	—	—	—
Supporting parent's benefit —						
Number of beneficiaries	14,004	20,660	23,347	26,003	28,836	31,468
Amount paid (\$'000) (f)	51,666	80,499	114,767	134,432	164,115	197,134

SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMMES, VICTORIA – *continued*

Programme	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85
Family allowance –						
Number of families	560,636	561,524	564,431	570,441	574,813	575,226
Number of approved institutions	139	185	139	139	139	164
Number of children and students in –						
Families	1,149,859	1,144,344	1,142,101	1,145,230	1,146,115	1,138,718
Institutions	2,580	2,541	2,411	2,527	2,060	1,880
Total amount paid (\$'000)	283,162	258,358	282,959	366,469	401,531	398,679
Double orphan's pension –						
Number of guardians	767	807	1,111	1,319	1,381	1,313
Number of institutions	21	21	21	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Number of orphans	1,076	1,106	1,502	1,781	1,847	1,758
Amount paid (\$'000)	503	628	859	1,066	1,168	1,177
Handicapped child's allowances –						
Number of families	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	7,391	7,344	7,341
Number of children	7,794	7,838	7,855	7,735	7,699	7,678
Amount paid (\$'000)	5,805	5,759	6,379	7,283	7,508	7,304
Family Income Supplement (i) –						
Number of families	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	4,106	5,934	6,157
Number of children	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	11,287	16,986	17,888
Amount paid (\$'000)	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	493	8,483	9,398

(a) Amount comprises payment for pensioners, and pensioners in benevolent homes, pensions for wives and spouse carers, additional pension/allowance for children, and supplementary assistance.

(b) Amount comprises payment for pensioners, and pensioners in benevolent homes, additional pension/allowance for children, and supplementary assistance.

(c) Amount comprises payment for allowees, pensions for wives, additional pension/allowance for children, and incentive assistance.

(d) Estimate.

(e) Amount comprises payment for beneficiaries and additional benefit for children.

(f) Amount comprises payment for beneficiaries, additional benefit for children, and supplementary allowance.

(g) As for (e), but excludes Special benefits to migrants in accommodation centres.

(h) Payment of this allowance ceased on 1 January 1980.

(i) Introduced on 1 May 1983.

## Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs

### Introduction

The Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs is responsible for the care and welfare of veterans and the dependants of deceased veterans as designated by relevant legislation. Benefits are provided in the form of pensions, medical treatment, assistance in the education of eligible children, and a variety of associated allowances.

### Disability and dependants' pensions

Disability pensions provide compensation for veterans who have suffered incapacity related to war service. The amount payable varies in accordance with the degree of disablement and is not taxable nor income tested. The term 'disablement' includes physical or mental incapacity, pain and discomfort, a lowered standard of health, and inability to participate in normal recreation.

Dependants' pensions are payable in two forms:

- (1) A set rate of pension, linked to the veteran's rate, payable to the wife and for each child under twenty-five undergoing full-time education; and
- (2) If the death of the veteran is accepted as service-related or if he was in receipt of a special rate pension at the time of his death, a war widow's pension is paid to his widow. Pensions are also paid to children under twenty-five undergoing full-time education.

At 30 June 1985 there were 408,321 disability pensions paid to veterans, miscellaneous personnel, and their dependants. Of these, 99,216 were payable in Victoria at the cost of \$209.5m, out of an Australia wide annual expenditure of \$837.2m.

Medical treatment is provided for repatriation beneficiaries for any service-related disabilities and, subject to certain conditions, for non-service-related disabilities.

### Service pensions

A service pension is payable to a veteran who has served in a theatre of war, and has either attained sixty years of age (fifty-five for a female veteran) or is permanently unemployable. Unlike a disability pension, a service pension is subject to an income assets test in the same way as the social security age or invalid pensions. The wife of a service pensioner may be eligible to receive a service pension (regardless of age) provided she is not in receipt of any income tested pension from the Department of Social Security.

Subject to the legislation and certain conditions some service pensioners are eligible to receive a wide range of medical benefits, at Departmental expense, for any disability or disease whether related to service or not. Service pensioners will qualify to receive a pensioner Health Benefits Card from the

Department of Health and the full range of fringe benefits, if they satisfy the usual income test.

In Australia at 30 June 1985, 227,705 veterans and 164,794 wives were receiving service pensions, and in Victoria 55,374 veterans and 40,216 wives.

#### *Other assistance*

Education assistance is available for dependent children of deceased veterans where the veterans' death, was service-related or he was in receipt of a special rate pension at the time of his death, whether or not the death was service-related.

The assistance includes children who have lost both parents (or where the veteran is deceased and the child is not being cared for by the remaining parent, step-parent, or adoptive parent) and the veteran served in a theatre of war. This provision does not depend on rate of pension at death nor the relationship between death and service.

Other benefits available, subject to eligibility, include gift cars and driving devices for severely disabled veterans, funeral benefits, immediate financial assistance, and recreation transport allowance.

### VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

#### **Community Services Victoria**

##### *Role and functions*

The Victorian Department of Community Services, known as Community Services Victoria (CSV), is a department formed from the former Department of Community Welfare Services and a number of significant functions of the former Health Commission of Victoria.

The broad objectives of CSV are to: maximise opportunities for all Victorians by promoting, delivering, and co-ordinating programmes to meet community needs; redress social and economic inequities, especially those affecting disadvantaged groups; and promote maximum participation by individuals in decisions which affect their lives.

The establishment of the new Department aims to improve the planning, co-ordination, and delivery of community services. These services are provided directly by the Department, by non-government agencies, and with the support of community organisations. Their organisation and delivery is on a programme basis.

##### *Programmes*

The programmes of CSV are delivered in an environment that brings its staff into close contact with the Commonwealth Government, many other Victorian Government departments, local government, non-government organisations, and the community.

These programmes include: services for intellectually disabled people; developmental, health and support services for infants, the young, and their families; domiciliary and related services to families, youth, and the aged; family planning; services to physically and sensorily disabled people; extended family care for children – including adoption and substitute care (foster care); major financial grants to local government and non-government service providers; concessions to pensioners, beneficiaries, and low income groups; care and control of young offenders; protection of children in danger or at risk; and services to Aboriginal and ethnic communities.

##### *Priorities*

The major priorities of CSV are to: develop an integrated network of community services for the Victorian community; provide services for those groups in greatest need; ensure the quality of services provided or promoted by the Department; ensure the accessibility of services – particularly to disabled and non-English speaking people; provide policies and programmes that are sensitive to the needs of the ethnic and Aboriginal communities; ensure the capacity of regional and local areas to develop and manage appropriate services; ensure the devolution of decision-making to a level as close as possible to service users; reduce reliance on large institutions; increase responsiveness of services to their users, particularly those with different cultural backgrounds; and ensure a more equitable distribution of resources to the people of Victoria through allocations to regions, localities, and community groups.

##### *Organisational structure*

Community Services Victoria has five major areas:

(1) *Office of Intellectual Disability Services*. Is responsible for the delivery of regional and facility-

based services for intellectually disabled people, and undertaking policy and programme development in relation to those services;

(2) *Program Direction Division*. Is responsible for direction, development, and effectiveness of programme areas;

(3) *Policy Development Division*. Is responsible particularly for strategic policy development and policy consultation with local government, Regional Consultative Councils, and specific interest groups;

(4) *Operations Division*. Is responsible for the effective provision of services through regions and institutions; and

(5) *Resources Division*. Provides for the whole Department a range of administrative functions including personnel management, administrative services, budget finance and planning, executive co-ordination, and effectiveness review.

#### *Concessions for pensioners and beneficiaries*

The range of concessions for pensioners, beneficiaries, and low income earners funded by the Victorian Government is provided via this Department's budget. The Department has responsibility for policy formulation, co-ordination and the monitoring of the State concessions system, and the establishment of information systems in relation to concessions.

#### COMMUNITY SERVICES VICTORIA, CLIENT SUMMARY STATISTICS

Particulars	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85
Adoptions –			
Children placed with a view to adoption	301	228	203
Adoption finalised	300	271	234
Child probation –			
Children placed on probation	1,757	1,453	1,215
Child protection –			
School exemptions issued	268	234	122
Employment permits issued	1,960	1,983	2,430
Street trading licences granted	39	25	26
Referrals accepted by Children's Protection Society	n.a.	1,035	1,269
Court advisory services –			
Pre-sentence reports prepared	672	664	837
Foster care –			
Children placed in foster care	2,026	2,134	3,335
Placements discharged	2,644	1,969	3,256
Children in emergency foster care at end of year	58	81	76
Children in reception foster care at end of year	5	10	24
Children in pre-adoptive foster care at end of year	22	24	30
Children in short-term and long-term foster care at end of year	338	247	272
Children in extended family placement at end of year	n.a.	185	247
Non-parent assistance –			
Payments for refugee children at end of year	} 2,425	413	417
Payments for non-refugee children at end of year		1,084	1,070
Reception centres –			
Young persons in Departmental Reception Centres at end of year	218	194	225
Residential child care –			
Children in care at 30 June located in Children's Homes –			
Departmental	330	312	215
Voluntary	1,506	1,330	998
Early adolescent units	69	96	94
Temporary emergency care	84	58	60
Refugee and migrant children –			
Placement supervision at 30 June	84	84	80
Supervision orders –			
Placed on supervision	654	683	778
Wards –			
Admitted	789	722	771
Discharged	1,133	966	906
In placement at 30 June	(a)3,490	3,053	2,918
Women's refugees –			
Accommodation requests received	1,567	2,524	2,562
Accommodation requests met	670	1,312	682
Youth training centres (YTC) –			
Youth trainees referred from Adult Courts	348	518	507



COMMUNITY SERVICES VICTORIA, CLIENT SUMMARY STATISTICS – *continued*

Particulars	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85
Youth training centres (YTC) – <i>continued</i>			
Youth trainees referred from Childrens Courts	325	458	500
Young persons in Departmental YTCs at end of year	369	339	322
Young persons in Voluntary YTCs at end of year	43	42	33
Youth hostels –			
Young persons supported by Departmental hostels at end of year	22	21	15
Young persons supported by voluntary hostels at end of year	195	202	221
Youth welfare services (YWS) –			
Young persons in Departmental YWSs at end of year	280	263	302
Young persons in voluntary YWSs at end of year	34	46	44
Youth parole –			
On parole at beginning of year	154	140	117
Released	213	235	232
Cancelled	58	53	64
Completed parole	169	204	162
On parole at end of year	140	118	123

(a) Figures for 1982-83 should be treated with caution due to reconciliation of manual and computer records for 1983-84.

## VOLUNTARY SOCIAL WELFARE AGENCIES

**Australian Red Cross Society, Victorian Division**

The Victorian Division of the Australian Red Cross Society is a link in the network of International Red Cross and is responsible for all its traditional activities, based on preventing and alleviating human suffering wherever it may be found. The Division maintains flexibility to try to meet the changing needs of the disadvantaged and handicapped in the community not met by government or other voluntary agencies.

The organisation is maintained by donations, subscriptions, and bequests. Its annual appeal for funds is headed by 'Red Cross Calling', a weekend door-knock in March, when volunteers call on residents throughout Victoria. In the year 1984-85 over \$15.9m was spent, mainly on services in Victoria, of which the Blood Bank used \$11.1m.

Many hundreds of Red Cross volunteers, supported by a small professional staff, provide a wide range of services throughout the Melbourne metropolitan and country areas. These include:

(1) *Counter disaster services.* Red Cross plays a major role in times of bushfires and other disasters and emergencies, and is part of the State Disaster Plan. Teams of volunteers are trained to establish Red Cross posts whenever the need arises to feed and look after firefighters, rescue workers, and evacuees. Disaster trailers are ready, packed with food to feed 200 people and with other supplies, to be sent quickly to the scene of a disaster.

In individual emergencies such as house fires, essential items, including new clothing and shoes for each member of the burnt-out family, blankets, pillows, linen, toiletries, and groceries are provided.

(2) *First aid instruction.* Trained instructors conduct a variety of courses in first aid in schools, industry, and for the general public.

(3) *Health and hospital services.* Book and picture libraries and personal services such as letterwriting, shopping, banking, and taking patients on outings are provided in many hospitals, nursing homes, and elderly citizens' homes. A library service for the homebound is available in many municipalities. Music therapy is provided mainly for psychiatric and geriatric patients in some hospitals and centres and boxes containing records and cassettes with annotated programmes are sent to hospitals and institutions to assist them to provide this type of therapy.

(4) *Transport.* Volunteer drivers, using a fleet of Red Cross cars or their own vehicles, travel over two million kilometres each year taking handicapped and disadvantaged children and adults to hospitals, clinics, day centres, and special schools, and taking elderly persons out on outings, etc.

(5) *Occupational therapy.* This service teaches handicrafts and other skills, aims at improving the quality of life, morale, and self confidence of disabled clients as well as their integration into the community.

(6) *Home nursing equipment.* The loan of home nursing equipment such as wheelchairs, walking aids, bed pans, etc., is available free of charge from Red Cross headquarters and volunteer custodians of the equipment throughout Victoria.

(7) *Tracing agency.* This is a link in the international tracing service of the Red Cross which handles

inquiries for news of relatives displaced by war, political disturbances, or large-scale disasters. Trained Red Cross volunteers are ready in the event of a wide-scale disaster in Australia to register victims and handle inquiries from relatives.

(8) *Blood transfusion service.* This service is administered by professional staff with volunteers carrying out non-professional duties as required. Whole blood and blood derivatives are supplied free of charge to all persons in need of them. There is an ever-growing demand for blood despite the use of fractionisation and more donors are always needed.

The Central Blood Bank, located in Balston Street, South Melbourne was specially designed for this purpose. Mobile units visit municipalities, universities, and industry at regular intervals.

#### RED CROSS SOCIETY, BLOOD BANK OPERATIONS, VICTORIA

Particulars		1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85
Blood donors on metropolitan rolls	number	146,841	150,650	186,099	143,410	136,653	142,235
Blood donations collected	number	236,963	248,760	251,081	240,996	240,878	235,479
Blood distributed	units	127,991	139,861	139,734	156,987	160,982	148,901
Stable plasma protein solution (SPPS)	units	27,787	30,302	29,494	32,885	34,856	36,517

#### Friendly societies

The *Friendly Societies Act* 1958 regulates the operations of friendly societies in Victoria. These societies provide one or more of the benefits set out in section 5 of the Act, namely, periodical payments during sickness, old age, and infirmity; lump sum payments on death or on the attainment of a specified age (endowment benefits); and payments for hospital, medical, medicinal, and dental expenses. The societies also offer investment assurance contracts.

The following tables provide a summary of friendly societies' activities for the years 1977-78 to 1982-83. For further details, reference may be made to the Report of the Government Statist on Friendly Societies, printed annually by the Victorian Government Printer, Melbourne.

#### FRIENDLY SOCIETIES, DETAILS OF ACTIVITIES, VICTORIA

Particulars	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83
Number of societies –						
Ordinary	35	34	41	41	41	44
Dividing	60	60	58	59	57	54
Dispensaries	29	25	24	22	23	22
Specially authorised	4	4	4	4	4	4
Number of branches of ordinary societies	961	944	931	877	859	847
Membership – ordinary and dividing societies (a) –						
Contributors for sick and funeral benefits	130,508	124,753	124,246	125,732	122,800	123,342
Contributors for medical benefits	247,191	228,145	238,655	235,586	273,871	264,724
Contributors for hospital benefits	280,345	260,560	264,407	246,473	338,137	317,105
Contributors for ancillary benefits	148,933	156,840	143,972	127,948	129,470	125,348
Benefit contracts in force for whole of life and endowment benefits	39,536	38,020	36,609	42,644	35,800	44,500
Investment assurance policies	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	34,929	100,451
Members affiliated with dispensaries	48,783	44,993	47,841	45,805	45,678	46,985
Membership – specially authorised societies	166	173	181	157	175	186

(a) A member may contribute for any number or all of these benefits and is entered in the table in each benefit for which he contributes.

#### Provision of welfare services by volunteers

A survey conducted in November 1982 investigated the amount of volunteer work undertaken in Victoria. Details relating to this survey can be found on page 685 of the *Victorian Year Book* 1985.

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