

What changes can I expect when I leave prison that may affect my money and finances?

If you have been in prison for a while you may find that life has changed, but things can also change even over shorter periods.

Cost of living

Prices may have gone up and the cost of living may have gotten a lot more expensive - money will not go as far as it used to and the costs of things like groceries, housing and transport will have gone up, even over a year. You may find that you need extra support with budgeting and making your money go further.

Changes to banking

You may also find that major changes to banking have happened. This may even be the case if you have only been in prison for a short period!

There are a lot more choices to make and technologies like the internet, telephone, Smartphone apps, and ATMs are now commonly used to access your money rather than going to the bank in person. All these new ways to do banking have also meant an increase in security measures.

If you feel overwhelmed by any of these changes you can go into your banking branch and ask for help from the staff. They are there to help customers feel confident with banking.

Changes to Centrelink and government support payments

The government can make changes to Centrelink support payments in areas like eligibility, ways to report and ways to keep in touch with Centrelink. You may find that you are no longer eligible for a payment you received before or that there are additional requirements for you to be on a certain payment. You also may find that the reporting system is more complex increasingly requires the use of internet and phones to report on your circumstances.

When you talk with a Centrelink Prison Liaison Officer, as well Centrelink officers outside the prison, they will help you find out about these changes. They will also make sure you are able to get the payments that suit your needs.

Changes to accessing services in Canberra

Canberra is growing in size, some services have closed in some locations, and some essential services may only be accessed by a central phone line or at one main centralised location. This will mean you need to find access to maps and transport to

places you want to go, especially for important appointments so it's a good idea to find out where they are and to plan how you are going to get there well in advance.

Transport costs

Transport can be expensive and cars are costly to run now due to increased costs for registration, insurance, repairs, and petrol. While buses are cheaper, access to concession fares will make them cheaper but you will need access to a Centrelink.

Rise in the use of mobile phone and internet

The use of mobile phones and internet are common, and used to keep in touch or find out information. Keep reading to find out more about mobile phones and internet in the section 'Staying Connected: Phones and internet access'.