



Australian Government
Attorney-General's Department

Administrative Appeals Tribunal scheme

Legal financial assistance information sheet

What is legal financial assistance?

The Attorney-General's Department administers the Administrative Appeals Tribunal scheme to provide funding to people who could not otherwise afford to pay for legal costs incurred in appearing before the Administrative Appeals Tribunal. The scheme is established under sections 30A and 69 of the *Administrative Appeals Tribunals Act 1975* (the AAT Act).

What assistance may be available

Disbursement costs

The department may provide funding to cover the cost of disbursements.

Disbursements include, but are not limited to, photocopying, printing, telephone calls, faxes, postage, expert reports, counsel opinion and title searches. The cost of filing fees will not be paid if you qualify for a fee reduction.

The amount provided for some disbursements is capped.

Legal representation costs

The department may also provide funding to cover the cost of legal representation.

Assistance for legal representation costs is only available if you are appearing before a court in respect of a matter arising under the AAT Act, or if the Commonwealth Attorney-General has intervened in your legal action.

Am I eligible for legal financial assistance?

You may be eligible for assistance if you are a party:

- to a legal action before the Administrative Appeals Tribunal, or
- appealing an Administrative Appeals Tribunal decision in a court (for example, the Federal Circuit Court of Australia, the Federal Court of Australia or the High Court of Australia).

The department will not generally grant funding:

- if you can meet your legal costs without incurring serious financial hardship
- for costs incurred before an application is made (that is, retrospective costs), or
- if you are receiving assistance from a legal aid commission.

How do I apply?

There are two ways to apply for assistance.

You can:

1. apply online at the Attorney-General's Department's [website](http://www.ag.gov.au) (www.ag.gov.au), or
2. download an application form from the Attorney-General's Department's website and email a completed copy to finass@ag.gov.au with the required attachments.

There are no application fees for applying for legal financial assistance.

Further information

Further information is available on the Attorney-General's Department's [website](http://www.ag.gov.au) (www.ag.gov.au).

You can also contact the department on (02) 6141 4770 or email finass@ag.gov.au.

If your matter relates to a Disability Care Australia decision, you should contact a National Disability Advocacy Program provider at the [Department of Social Services' website](http://www.dss.gov.au) (www.dss.gov.au).