

Finance facts: Teens and financial admin

Becoming an adult comes with a surprising amount of administration. From tax records to healthcare accounts, managing these responsibilities can feel overwhelming if unprepared. Setting up key government-related accounts early—while you're still in your teenage years—will save time, avoid last-minute stress, and give you confidence in handling important life admin.

There are two essential steps to set up your government-related accounts.

Step 1: Set up communication methods for official correspondence

Email: Using a single email address for official communication helps keep important information organised and easily accessible. Government agencies often email essential updates, deadlines and security alerts. A single address reduces the risk of missing important messages and makes it easier to manage accounts, reset passwords, and track correspondence. It also adds a layer of professionalism and consistency when dealing with official matters.

Top tip: Avoid using nicknames, numbers or special characters in your email address unless necessary. Keep it easy to pronounce and remember.

Mobile number: Government agencies often ask for mobile numbers to be added to an account profile as a form of communication and as part of multi-factor authentication to verify that the right person is using the account.

Password manager: It's important to have a place to record your login details to various accounts. There are apps available to help you with this—read through the reviews and the subscription costs before downloading. Alternatively, a password-protected document will do the same job! Remember to update the details every time you set up a new account or change the password for an account. This will save you time in the future.

Step 2: Identification (ID) documents

You will be asked to produce key documents to verify your identity and address. Each application may vary in the documents required. It can be challenging for young people to acquire the appropriate ID, as it can be costly (a passport costs \$208 or more) or require the cooperation of parents (child passports require parental consent).

An essential step in getting life admin "sorted" is knowing where original documents are and whether you can access them.

The following documents are considered 'primary' documents because they often contain a photo, a current address and are verified by the issuer:

- Birth certificate
- Australian passport or overseas passport
- Naturalisation, citizenship or immigration certificate
- Driver's license (after age 16)
- Identity card issued by your State or Territory.

Top tip: To order a birth certificate, contact the Register of Births, Deaths & Marriages in the State or Territory where you were born.

The following is a selection of what may be considered 'secondary' identity documents:

- Student identity document
- School or other educational report
- Centrelink Concession card
- Medicare card
- Private health provider ID card
- Electoral enrolment document (after age 16)
- Bills with your current address (i.e. electricity bill, rent or lease agreement, rates notice, vehicle registration, insurance policy)
- Bank or credit card statements.



Did you know?

The government has an app called myID. Once your ID is verified through the app, the number of times you are asked to produce your identity documents to access government services should be reduced.

Setting up important accounts

The accounts you can set up depend on your age. Below, we have made it easy to see what you can start to set up depending on your age.

Any age

myGov: myGov is a government-run digital platform that allows you to access various government services such as Medicare, Centrelink and the Australian Tax Office (ATO). You need an email address and a mobile number to set up an account.

Customer Reference Number (CRN): is a number used to identify you in the government's welfare payment system

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facilitated by Centrelink. If your parent claimed a benefit when you were young you will already have a CRN, so ask them to give you your number. If you don't have one, you must obtain a CRN before receiving a payment.

From Age 12

Bank account: Each bank is different in terms of the age at which you can open an account independently, so check the eligibility requirements of your preferred financial institution. You will likely be required to present ID documents in the branch and sign a consistent, satisfactory signature. For children under 12, a parent or guardian will need to open an account. When earning money or receiving government support payments, you must have a bank account to be paid into.

From Age 13

Tax File Number (TFN): Young people can apply for a TFN once they turn 13, and parents can apply for their child's TFN at any age. Check the website for the ID requirements and the application process. Once you start earning money, you will need a TFN to facilitate the collection of taxes from the ATO.

From Age 14

My Health Record: From age 14, you control your My Health Record. My Health Record is a government-run digital platform that manages health information, including vaccination records, allergy information and prescribed medicines.

Parents can create a My Health Record for children under the age of 14 years and who appear on their Medicare card. Parents' status as the authorised representative is removed at age 14. If a child chooses to, they can give their parent or guardian access as a nominated representative. Use the 'my health' app to view the information contained in your My Health Record.

Immunisation History Statement: From age 14, you have control over your Immunisation History Statement. Parents will need your consent to access it. The Immunisation History Statement provides a record of past vaccinations and is helpful to see if vaccinations are due and up to date.

From Age 15

Medicare Card: You may currently be on your parent's Medicare card. You can get your own Medicare card and number if you're 15 or older. A Medicare card proves you're covered by Australia's public health system, and allows you to access cheap or free health services, including doctor's visits, medicines and hospital care. When you are ready, discuss with your parents a plan to apply for your own card and be removed from their card. Details are on the Services Australia website.

Work: The age at which you can start work varies by State and Territory, so you must check your local laws. Generally, from age 11 to 15, you can engage in supervised light activities, like delivering newspapers, which is an old-fashioned example! From the age of 15, you can work in fast food outlets or shops, but there are restrictions on the number of hours and not interfering with school attendance until 17. There are exceptions if you want to leave school between ages 15 to 17 to work (at least 25 hours a week) or for specific industries like acting.

Once you earn an income, you need a superannuation account and to submit annual tax returns, even if you have not earned enough to pay tax. You can view your superannuation balance through myGov if you have linked the ATO to your account.

From Age 16

Enrol to vote: From age 16 you can enrol to vote so you are already registered when you turn 18. It is compulsory for all eligible Australian citizens to enrol and vote in federal, state and local elections, by-elections and referendums.

Driver's license: You can begin obtaining your driver's license at age 16 (except for the ACT, which is 15 years and 9 months). Obtaining a driver's license is helpful for ID purposes and building your independence. Check the requirements in your state or territory.

Register as an organ donor: There is a national register for organ and tissue donation. You can register for organ donation through Medicare or the DonateLife website.

Related Talk Money fact sheets

- Starting a job
- Tax
- Superannuation
- Identity theft

About Talk Money with Ecstra Foundation:

Talk Money with Ecstra Foundation is designed to help Australian students learn money lessons for life, to be confident talking about money and to make informed financial decisions. We offer facilitator led workshops for Years 5-10 students and additional resources to reinforce learnings. The program is provided at no cost to schools, enabling more students across Australia to access financial education at key life stages.

About Ecstra: Ecstra Foundation is an independent charitable foundation committed to building the financial wellbeing of Australians within a fair financial system. Ecstra launched Talk Money in February 2022.

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