



GlassesSA policy

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1 Purpose

Document name	GlassesSA policy	
Purpose	This policy defines the eligibility criteria and the application and payment processes for GlassesSA, a South Australian Government initiative administered by Concessions and Interpreting Services (CIS) within the Department of Human Services (DHS).	
Responsible	Minister for Human Services	
Custodian	Director, Concessions and Interpreting Services	
Scheme commenced	1983 as the South Australian Spectacles Scheme (SASS). Relaunched as GlassesSA from October 2016	
Version	2.0	
Effective date	1 January 2025	
Version comments	2.0	Eligibility expanded
	1.1	Directorate name & acronym updated
	1.0	Newly developed policy reflecting existing program

2 Definitions

- **Aboriginal Person** means a person who identifies as Aboriginal.
- **Applicant** means the person applying to GlassesSA.
- **Asylum Seeker** means a relevant asylum seeker or person eligible for a state government support package as defined in the Cost of Living Concessions Regulations 2020.
- **Centrelink or DVA Card** means a Pensioner Concession Card or Health Care Card (including Low Income Health Care Card) issued by Centrelink or the Department of Veterans' Affairs. It does not mean a DVA Gold Card.
- **Customer** means a person eligible for GlassesSA.
- **Dependant** means a person under the age of 16 years, or a full-time student between 16-21 years who attends school, college or university, or a person between 16-18 years in receipt of Youth Allowance, or Special Benefit.
- **GlassesSA Online Portal** means the online system used by Participating Optometrists and Participating Hospitals to conduct Applicant eligibility checks, register new GlassesSA Customers, and claim reimbursements from GlassesSA.
- **GlassesSA Webpages** means the page or pages within www.sa.gov.au where CIS provides information about GlassesSA.
- **Independent Child** means a person under 18 years old who has been issued a Centrelink card independently of their parents and/or is a child or young person in state care.
- **Participating Country Optometrist** means a retail outlet with a postcode greater than 5200, or a mobile retail service, as nominated in a GlassesSA service agreement or on the GlassesSA webpages, where Applicants apply to the program.
- **Participating Hospital** means Flinders Medical Centre, the Women's and Children's Hospital or the Royal Adelaide Hospital.
- **Participating Optometrist** means a retail outlet, as nominated in a GlassesSA service agreement or on the GlassesSA webpages, where Applicants may apply to the program.
- **Service Provider** means a business that has entered into a service agreement with the Minister for Human Services to supply glasses and / or contact lenses under GlassesSA.
- **Thinner Lenses** means lenses that have been thinned for people who meet the GlassesSA Thinner Lenses eligibility criteria.

3 Program overview

GlassesSA helps South Australians obtain low-cost glasses or, for those with serious eye conditions, no-cost contact lenses.

For glasses, Customers pay a contribution according to the lens type selected and GlassesSA pays the balance. GlassesSA pays the total cost of contact lenses.

2016

GlassesSA commenced, as a relaunch of the SA Spectacle Scheme.

Eligibility was extended to include people receiving a full Centrelink pension or Newstart Allowance and their dependants.

2017

Following a program review, eligibility was further extended to include people receiving Carer Payment, Parenting Payments and Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) pensioners ineligible for DVA optical services.

2020

The Minister for Human Services approved program changes:

- Free standard glasses for Aboriginal Customers
- \$50 contribution towards optional children's frame upgrades
- \$50 contribution towards optional Thinner Lenses for Customers meeting additional prescription criteria
- Optional out of pocket upgrades for all Customers.

2025

Eligibility extended to all Pensioner Concession Card and Health Care Card holders, children and young people in state care, and certain asylum seekers, replacing the assessment of specified maximum rate Centrelink payments.

4 Glasses

4.1 Eligibility

4.1.1 Eligibility for standard glasses

To be eligible for standard glasses, Applicants must be SA residents and meet one of the following criteria:

- Hold a valid Pensioner Concession Card, Health Care Card or Low Income Health Care Card issued by Centrelink or DVA (excluding people eligible for DVA optical services).

- Be a child or young person in state care (Independent Child).
- Be an eligible Asylum Seeker.
- Be the Dependant of a person eligible for standard glasses.

4.1.2 Eligibility for glasses with Thinner Lenses

Applicants who are eligible for standard glasses are also eligible for Thinner Lenses if they have a lens prescription level of +5.00 or -5.00 with up to -2.50 cylinder, but with a combined power of +/-5.00.

4.2 Applying for glasses

4.2.1 Locations

Applicants may apply for glasses at any Participating Optometrist or Participating Country Optometrist as promoted on the GlassesSA Webpages.

4.2.2 Eligibility check

To access GlassesSA, applicants must hold an eligible Centrelink or DVA Card and present this to a Participating Optometrist when required.

Adults with a Pensioner Concession Card or Health Care Card and their dependents

Applicants must hold an eligible Centrelink or DVA Card and present this or their Centrelink Customer Reference Number (CRN) to the Participating Optometrist or Participating Country Optometrist who must then obtain the Applicant's verbal consent to undertake an online eligibility check.

Dependant Applicants must be accompanied by their parent or guardian, whose Centrelink or DVA Card and consent are required for the eligibility check.

If the check confirms eligibility, the Participating Optometrist or Participating Country Optometrist may proceed to support the Customer to select their preferred glasses.

Independent children

Applicants under the age of 18 may apply as an Independent Child by:

- presenting an eligible Centrelink Card under their name as the primary cardholder, or
- an accompanying adult presenting a Carer ID card issued by the Department for Child Protection in relation to that child. This includes both the Approved Carer ID card and the Long Term Guardianship (Specified Person) carer ID card.

Asylum seekers

Applicants must show their Transport Concession Card or Interim Transport Concession Card on behalf of themselves or their dependents.

4.3 Upgrading standard glasses

GlassesSA offers optional upgrades to standard glasses. Some upgrades attract additional program contributions.

Participating Optometrists and Participating Country Optometrists must:

- ensure that the Customer understands that upgrades are optional
- not supply upgraded glasses until the Customer understands and has agreed to any additional Customer contribution.

4.3.1 General frame and lens upgrades

Customers may upgrade basic frames and standard lenses at their own expense.

Customers may also supply their own frames, subject to their suitability for the required lenses, and only receive lenses through GlassesSA.

4.3.2 Children's frame upgrades

GlassesSA will meet \$50 in additional costs for children's frames outside the standard range, for Customers aged under 18 years. Any cost above \$50 will be at the Customer's expense.

4.3.3 Thinner Lenses

GlassesSA will meet \$50 in additional costs for Thinner Lenses for Customers. Any cost above \$50 will be at the Customer's expense.

4.3.4 Use of own frames

Customers may choose to supply their own frames (which may be previously supplied GlassesSA frames) and receive only lenses through GlassesSA.

This is subject to the suitability of the frames for the required GlassesSA lenses, as assessed by the Participating Optometrist or Participating Country Optometrist.

The Customer contribution remains the same.

4.4 Paying for glasses

The accompanying parent or guardian is responsible for the Customer contribution where the Customer is a Dependant.

4.4.1 Customer contribution for standard glasses

Customers must pay a fixed amount according to the lens type chosen. The Customer contribution must be paid in full to the Participating Optometrist or Participating Country Optometrist before the glasses are supplied:

- Single vision lenses \$25
- Single vision grind lenses \$30
- Bi-focal lenses \$50
- Multi-focal lenses \$100

GlassesSA pays the Customer contribution for standard glasses for Aboriginal Customers.

4.4.2 Customer contribution for glasses upgrades

The Participating Optometrist or Participating Country Optometrist must provide the Customer with a breakdown of the cost of their upgraded glasses, showing:

- GlassesSA contribution for standard glasses
- Customer contribution for standard glasses
- any additional Customer contribution required.

Customers choosing to upgrade their standard glasses must pay their contribution in full before the glasses are supplied.

4.4.3 GlassesSA contribution for glasses

Once the supply of glasses is complete, including payment of the Customer contribution, the Participating Optometrist or Participating Country Optometrist submits a claim for the relevant GlassesSA contribution, which is the balance of the cost of the glasses. Claims are submitted using the GlassesSA Online Portal, in accordance with the terms of the GlassesSA service agreement.

4.5 Replacement glasses

Subject to remaining eligible, Customers may receive replacement glasses every three years, or sooner if the Participating Optometrist or Participating Country Optometrist assesses that:

- the Customer's glasses are lost, stolen, broken and irreparable,
- a Customer under 18 years of age has outgrown their glasses,
- the Customer needs a new prescription of at least one line change for distance or reading vision,
- the Customer needs a new prescription after cataract surgery or
- there are other circumstances or conditions that require the supply of new glasses.

5 Contact lenses

5.1 Eligibility for contact lenses

To be eligible for contact lenses, Applicants must be SA residents and meet one of the following criteria.

- Hold an active Centrelink or DVA Card (or be a person who is listed as a qualified dependant)
- Be a child or young person in state care (Independent Child)
- Be an eligible Asylum Seeker

Applicants must also be diagnosed with one of the following medical conditions:

- unilateral or bilateral aphakia
- keratoconus, post corneal graft and corneal trauma
- corneal pathology requiring therapeutic soft lens
- corneal pathology causing irregular astigmatism
- aniridia and iris coloboma
- ametropia (myopia or hypermetropia) of +/- 6 dioptries or more
- anisometropia of 4 dioptries or more
- requiring disposable lenses for use as bandage lenses or in such cases only where the use of conventional lenses may not be appropriate
- other pathology that a Participating Hospital or Participating Country Optometrist certifies necessitates the prescription of contact lenses.

5.2 Applying for contact lenses

5.2.1 Locations

Residents of metropolitan Adelaide apply for contact lenses at a Participating Hospital.

Residents of regional SA (those with a residential postcode greater than 5200) may access contact lenses at a Participating Country Optometrist or at a Participating Hospital.

GlassesSA maintains details of Participating Country Optometrists and Participating Hospitals on the GlassesSA Webpages.

5.2.2 Eligibility check

Applicants must show their eligible Centrelink or DVA card to the Participating Optometrist or Participating Hospital.

The Participating Optometrist or Participating Hospital must obtain the Applicant's verbal consent to undertake an online eligibility check.

If the check confirms eligibility, the Participating Optometrist may proceed to prescribe and supply the Customer with the appropriate contact lenses.

5.3 Upgrades to contact lenses

The Participating Hospital or Participating Country Optometrist must supply the lowest cost contact lenses suitable for the Customer's prescription.

Upgrades to different or more expensive contact lenses are not available under GlassesSA.

Customers cannot use the GlassesSA benefit as a discount against other contact lenses, products or services.

5.4 Payment for contact lenses

5.4.1 Customer contribution for contact lenses

There is no Customer contribution for contact lenses; however, GlassesSA does not fund postage of contact lenses from the Participating Hospital or Participating Country Optometrist to the Customer.

5.4.2 GlassesSA contribution for contact lenses

Once the supply of contact lenses is complete, the Participating Hospital or Participating Country Optometrist submits a claim for full reimbursement of the cost using the GlassesSA Online Portal, in accordance with the terms of their GlassesSA service agreement.

5.5 Replacement contact lenses

Subject to remaining eligible, Customers may receive new contact lenses as often as the Participating Hospital or Participating Country Optometrist deems that they are necessary.

Replacements may also be provided if the Customer's contact lenses are lost, stolen or damaged.

6 Declined applications

6.1 Failed Centrelink eligibility check

If a Centrelink eligibility check for glasses or contact lenses shows that the Applicant is not eligible, the Participating Optometrist, Participating Country Optometrist or Participating Hospital must show the Applicant the reason.

Applicants should seek to resolve the eligibility issue themselves where possible (for example, updating their residential address with Centrelink).

For any queries about eligibility that they cannot resolve themselves (for example, their Centrelink card is not eligible for GlassesSA), Applicants may contact GlassesSA.

6.2 Reviews

Applicants may request a review of a declined application by writing to GlassesSA, for consideration by the Director CIS.

Subject to any need for GlassesSA to request additional information to clarify a review request, GlassesSA will make all reasonable attempts to inform the Applicant of the outcome within five working days:

- If a review is upheld, GlassesSA will inform the applicant and the Participating Optometrist, Participating Country Optometrist or Participating Hospital immediately.
- If a review is rejected, GlassesSA will inform the Applicant, in writing if necessary, explaining the decision.

Applicants may request further action in line with the DHS Customer Feedback and Complaints Policy.

6.3 Special circumstances

The Director CIS may approve the supply of standard glasses or contact lenses where an Applicant does not meet GlassesSA eligibility criteria but there are deemed to be special circumstances. Requests are assessed on their individual merits and do not set precedents for future requests.

7 Service Providers

7.1 Glasses

Businesses interested in becoming a GlassesSA Service Provider may apply to the program at any time.

Acceptance as a Service Provider is subject to the execution of a GlassesSA service agreement with the Minister for Human Services.

Service Providers may nominate multiple retail outlets, including mobile services, to be registered as a Participating Optometrist or Participating Country Optometrist. These outlets will be listed on the GlassesSA webpages and, where practicable, specified in the Service Provider's GlassesSA service agreement.

7.2 Contact lenses

Participating Optometrists with a postcode greater than 5200 may prescribe contact lenses (a Participating Country Optometrist).

Prescribing contact lenses in metropolitan Adelaide as a Participating Hospital is by invitation from GlassesSA only.