



20 NOV 2014

Beneficiaries Advice Mt Albert
fyi-request-2116-f020cdaa@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Beneficiaries

Thank you for your request of 21 October 2014 via the FYI website. You ask if a beneficiary's Disability Allowance is reduced on account of the earnings of a partner. The Chief Executive has asked me to reply on his behalf.

First I'd like to explain that to qualify for a benefit the combined income of a couple is taken into account whether they are married or living in the nature of marriage. This is a longstanding principle underpinning New Zealand's social security legislation and is in line with the general approach taken by most other countries. This is based on the notion that spouses and de facto partners owe primary obligations of support to each other, and that the State's support obligations are secondary. It also reflects the idea that the State should only provide support when no other legitimate means of support is available. Accordingly, legislation requires that Work and Income take all income received by either spouse into account when assessing the rate of benefit.

Disability Allowance is income tested. However with this benefit there is an annual income limit. Here are the limits at this link www.workandincome.govt.nz/manuals-and-procedures/deskfile/extra_help_information/disability_allowance_tables/disability_allowance_rates-18.htm.

If a beneficiary's partner has income that does not take the combined income above the limit, the beneficiary will still qualify for Disability Allowance.

Thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely

Pat Thomas
Manager
Ministerial and Executive Correspondence