

Minister for Industrial Relations Directive: Domestic Travelling and Relieving Expenses

This text box does not form part of the directive

Under the *Human Rights Act 2019* decision makers have an obligation to act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights, and when making a decision under this directive, to give proper consideration to human rights.

1. Purpose:

To compensate employees for expenses incurred when required to travel within Australia on official duty or to relieve another employee or to perform special duty away from the employee's usual place of work.

2. Effective date: 3 February 2023

3. Legislative authority:

Section 54(1) of the *Public Service Act 2008*.

Sections 51 and 52 of the *Public Service Act 2008* apply if there is a conflict with an Act, subordinate legislation or industrial instrument.

4. Application:

This directive applies to –

- public service officers; and
- fixed term temporary employees engaged under section 148 of the *Public Service Act 2008*.

This directive does not apply to –

- general employees engaged under section 147(2)(a) of the *Public Service Act 2008*; and
- employees engaged on a casual basis under sections 147(2)(b) and 148A(1) of the *Public Service Act 2008*.

5. Previous references:

- Directive 9/11, 15/10, 9/09, 9/08, 7/07, 10/06, 8/05: "Domestic Travelling and Relieving Expenses"
- Directive 3/04, 1/02, 3/00: "Travelling and Relieving Expenses"
- Directive 17/99, 11/97: "Travelling and Relieving Allowances"
- Sections 63 and 66 of the Public Service Management and Employment Regulation 1988
- Determination No. 10
- Circular letters 2/90, 7/90, 6/91, 2/92
- Administrative Instruction Nos 1 | 10, 1 | 94.

SCHEDULE A – GENERAL CONDITIONS

1. Entitlement

1.1 A public service officer or temporary employee engaged under section 148(2)(a) of the *Public Service Act 2008* (referred to as “employee” in this directive) who is required to –

(a) travel on official duty; or

(b) to take up duty away from the employee’s usual place of work to relieve another employee or to perform special duty

shall be allowed actual and reasonable expenses or allowances for accommodation, meals and incidental expenses necessarily incurred by the employee as provided in this directive.

2. Options for payment

2.1 The chief executive may determine the method of payment of travelling and relieving expenses or allowances for employees within his or her department.

2.2 The determination may be made from the following options –

(a) payment direct to the supplier through the use of corporate credit cards;

(b) payment direct to the supplier by contractual arrangement or billing system;

(c) reimbursement to the employee for actual, reasonable costs incurred by the employee;

(d) payment of travelling and relieving allowances as prescribed in this directive.

A combination of any of these options may be used.

2.3 If an employee has specific reasons or believes that they will be financially disadvantaged by a particular method of payment, they may apply as a special case to the chief executive for payment by a different method.

3. Minimum standard of accommodation

3.1 Employees are to be provided with reasonable accommodation in well appointed establishments offering a comfortable standard of accommodation, including individual sleeping quarters and ensuite except where this standard is not available at a particular centre.

3.2 Departments may offer their employees a higher standard of accommodation where appropriate (e.g. conference venue, location of hotel in relation to work site, competitive rates negotiated with a higher rated establishment).

4. Limit on meals

4.1 The actual and reasonable costs allowed for meals are not to exceed the standard meal allowances as prescribed in this schedule unless otherwise approved by the chief executive.

5. Application of allowances

5.1 The allowances contained in this schedule apply in situations where the accommodation, meals or incidentals are not paid directly by the department or reimbursed to the employee.

5.2 Payment of meal allowances shall be based on the prescribed rates for the particular centre where the employee incurred the expense.

6. Meals during overnight absences

6.1 On the first and last day of an employee’s overnight absence from usual place of work or home, the employee is entitled to the payment of meal expenses or meal allowances in accordance with the following departure and return times.

6.2 Departure from or return to usual place of work or home

Lunch – the employee departs earlier than 1.30 pm or returns later than 1.30 pm.

Dinner – the employee departs earlier than 6.30 pm or returns later than 6.30 pm.

Breakfast – an employee is not eligible for payment of expenses or a meal allowance upon departure except in situations where the employee has to depart from their usual place of work or home before 6.00 am and it is not practicable for the employee to have breakfast before leaving and must purchase it during the journey.

7. Deduction of meal expenses or allowances

7.1 An employee is not entitled to expenses or a meal allowance for a meal that is provided at departmental expense or as part of a fare.

Provided that such meal is of reasonable quantity and quality in the relevant circumstances.

8. Not payable during leave

8.1 An employee who takes leave while travelling on official duty or while absent from their usual place of work on relieving or special duty is not entitled to the payment of travelling or relieving expenses or allowances during the period of the leave except in the case of illness or any other case determined by the chief executive.

9. Telephone calls, facsimiles and postage

9.1 Official telephone calls, facsimiles, etc. and postage costs are to be paid by the department concerned.

10. Incidental expenses or allowance

10.1 Incidental expenses or the incidental allowance are paid to employees to cover expenditure of the following nature –

- newspapers, magazines;
- snacks including coffee, tea or drinks, etc;
- private telephone calls;
- personal items necessary for the travel.

11. Cost of conveyance

11.1 Travelling and relieving expenses and allowances are in addition to the cost of conveyance of the employee.

12. Locality allowance

12.1 Where an employee is in receipt of travelling or relieving expenses or allowances under this schedule, the arrangements for locality allowance applicable at the employee's usual place of work are to continue during the first 42 days of absence at a particular centre of duty. Thereafter the arrangements for locality allowance, if any, applicable to that centre shall apply as long as the employee remains at that centre.

12.2 The payment of locality allowance should not be taken into account in determining an employee's entitlement to travelling or relieving expenses or allowances.

13. Advances

13.1 Where the employee is to be paid travelling or relieving allowances or will be claiming reimbursement of actual expenses, the employee may be granted an advance up to 100% of the estimated costs.

14. Certification after overnight absence

- 14.1 At the conclusion of the journey, the employee is required to certify that the official travel was undertaken in accordance with the approved itinerary.
- 14.2 Any change to the itinerary resulting in variation of payments or changed costs (e.g. claiming actual expenses instead of meal allowances) should be appropriately acquitted.

15. Documentary evidence

- 15.1 Before an expense is paid, the employee may be required to produce documentary evidence as determined by the chief executive. This evidence may include –
- receipts,
 - itemised statements,
 - certifications, etc.

16. Time limit on claim

- 16.1 Without the approval of the chief executive, a claim shall not be paid unless it is submitted within 12 months of –
- the date of completion of the work; or
 - incurring of the expense; or
 - the conclusion of the circumstances leading to the claim.

17. Other Issues

- 17.1 It is a requirement that employees abide by all regulations outlined for the given locality (e.g. alcohol management plans).

18. Adjustment of allowances set out in Schedule B of this directive

18.1 Other than special allowance

From 1 September each year, the allowances set out in Schedule B of this directive (excluding the special allowance) will be commensurate with rates set out in the most recently published Australian Taxation Office 'Taxation Determination' that provides for reasonable travel expense amounts, specifically, Table 1 and the tables referred to therein.

18.2 Special allowance

From 1 September each year, the special allowance will be adjusted by the 'percentage change from corresponding quarter of previous year' weighted average of the Eight Capital Cities Consumer Price Index (June quarter) published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics, with the first adjustment to occur on 1 September 2023. The dollar value of the allowance is to be rounded to the nearest five (5) cents.

SCHEDULE B – TRAVELLING AND RELIEVING ALLOWANCES

IMPORTANT

Note 1: Clause 18 in Schedule A provides for how the rates in Schedule B are to be adjusted from time to time.

Note 2: Despite the inclusion of a country centre under 'high cost' or 'tier 2' headings in this directive at the time of publishing, the actual designation as a high cost country centre, tier two country centre or otherwise and the associated rate is to be as prescribed by the Australian Taxation Determination that provides for reasonable travel allowance expense amounts applicable from 1 September each year.

1. Absences not extending overnight

(a) Absence from headquarters or home is at least 12 hours

An employee shall be paid allowances for costs incurred in purchasing lunch and dinner.

	Country Centre		
	Capital Cities & High Cost	Tier 2	Other
Lunch	\$33.65	\$30.60	\$30.60
Dinner	\$57.30	\$52.75	\$52.75

(b) Absence from headquarters or home is less than 12 hours

No allowance is payable except in the following circumstances:

- (i) an employee is required to purchase an expensive meal as an integral part of travel (eg. catered lunch during a 1 day conference)

	Country Centre		
	Capital Cities & High Cost	Tier 2	Other
Lunch	\$33.65	\$30.60	\$30.60
Dinner	\$57.30	\$52.75	\$52.75

- (ii) an employee returns after 6.30pm and incurs the cost of purchasing a meal

	Country Centre		
	Capital Cities & High Cost	Tier 2	Other
Dinner	\$57.30	\$52.75	\$52.75

(c) Breakfast allowance

Breakfast allowance will be payable where the employee has to depart from home before 6.00am and it is not practicable for the employee to have breakfast at home and must purchase it during the journey.

	Country Centre		
	Capital Cities & High Cost	Tier 2	Other
Breakfast	\$29.90	\$26.80	\$26.80

N.B. An incidental allowance is not payable in 1(a), (b) and (c)

2. Absences extending overnight

An employee shall be paid allowances for costs incurred in purchasing accommodation and/or meals and/or incidentals as set out below. Entitlements are per overnight stay

(a) Capital Cities

City	Accommodation	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Incidental Expenses
Adelaide	\$157.00	\$29.90	\$33.65	\$57.30	\$21.30
Brisbane	\$175.00				
Canberra	\$168.00				
Darwin	\$220.00				
Hobart	\$147.00				
Melbourne	\$173.00				
Perth	\$180.00				
Sydney	\$198.00				

(b) High Cost Country Centres (See note 2 for changes to listed centres)

Centre	Accommodation	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Incidental Expenses
Bundaberg	\$147.00	\$29.90	\$33.65	\$57.30	\$21.30
Cairns	\$163.00				
Chinchilla	\$143.00				
Dalby	\$177.00				
Emerald	\$156.00				
Gladstone	\$155.00				
Gold Coast	\$209.00				
Hervey Bay	\$157.00				
Horn Island	\$295.00				
Mackay	\$161.00				
Mt Isa	\$168.00				
Rockhampton	\$139.00				
Roma	\$146.00				
Toowoomba	\$144.00				
Thursday Island	\$258.00				
Townsville	\$143.00				
Weipa	\$190.00				

(c) Tier 2 Country Centres (See note 2 for changes to listed centres)

Centre	Accommodation	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Incidental Expenses
Ayr	\$134.00	\$26.80	\$30.60	\$52.75	\$21.30
Charters Towers					
Innisfail					
Kingaroy					
Maryborough					
Nambour					
Rockhampton					

(d) Other Country Centres

Centre	Accommodation	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Incidental Expenses
Other	\$121.00	\$26.80	\$30.60	\$52.75	\$21.30

(e) Private accommodation (e.g. with relatives or friends; camping etc.).

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Special Allowance
\$26.80	\$30.60	\$52.75	\$37.15

(f) When travelling overnight by plane or train

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Incidental Expenses
\$26.80	\$30.60	\$52.75	\$21.30

(g) Accommodation and meals are supplied at no expense to the employee.

Incidental Expenses
\$21.30

3. Option to claim actual expenses

An employee may claim actual expenses where the accommodation charges at a particular centre exceed the amount prescribed for accommodation at that centre or where the cost of meals exceeds the total amount prescribed for meals for the whole of the employee’s absence.

Such actual expenses are to be reimbursed to the employee subject to the chief executive being satisfied that the claim is reasonable and the employee has complied with the general conditions relating to minimum standard of accommodation and documentary evidence.

Five examples are shown to clarify the employee’s entitlement where actual expenses are claimed by the employee.

(i) All accommodation and meals claimed as actuals

Actual and reasonable expenses for accommodation and meals PLUS Relevant incidental expenses allowance

(ii) All meals and some accommodation claimed as actuals

Actual and reasonable expenses for accommodation and meals PLUS Relevant allowances as prescribed in 2 above for accommodation not claimed as actual expenses PLUS Relevant incidental expenses allowance

(iii) All accommodation claimed as actuals

Actual and reasonable expenses for accommodation PLUS Relevant allowances as prescribed in 2 above for meals PLUS Relevant incidental expenses allowance

(iv) Some accommodation claimed as actuals

Actual and reasonable expenses for accommodation PLUS Relevant allowances as prescribed in 2 above for meals and accommodation not claimed as actual expenses PLUS Relevant incidental expenses allowance

(v) All meals claimed as actuals

Actual and reasonable expenses for meals PLUS Relevant allowances as prescribed in 2 above for accommodation PLUS Relevant incidental expenses allowance

4. Extended periods of relieving or special duty

Where an employee relieves another employee or performs special duty at another centre for an extended period, the employee shall be allowed relieving allowances or expenses as determined hereunder –

(a) Up to 4 weeks

Relevant allowances as prescribed in 2 above for accommodation, meals and incidentals.

(b) More than 4 weeks

For the whole period of the relieving or special duty, such reasonable expenses as negotiated between the employee and the department provided that the employee is not out of pocket (ie. not financially disadvantaged in comparison to remaining at the employee's usual place of work) during the extended period of relieving or special duty.

Without limiting the capacity of the parties to negotiate the payment of expenses, the following costs may be taken into consideration –

- accommodation costs appropriate to the duration of the relieving period and the personal family circumstances of the employee;
- costs of purchasing or preparing meals for the employee;
- payment of transfer expenses as prescribed in the Ministerial Directive Transfer and Appointment Expenses in lieu of relieving allowances;
- use of a government vehicle or compensation for taking own vehicle to the relieving centre as prescribed in the Ministerial Directive Motor Vehicle Allowances; and
- reunion visits to the employee's normal centre.

The agreed arrangements are to be documented to satisfy any human resource management or financial audit requirements.