

Travel & Accommodation Expenses Policy

Travel Expenses

Scope

This policy provides details of how organisation-related travel expenses will be covered for staff and organisation representatives required to travel to, and stay overnight, in locations other than their usual place of work.

We have developed these arrangements to ensure that staff and others representing the organisation do not incur expenses due to away work beyond that expected under normal circumstances.

The policy sets out the conditions and maximum entitlements payable. The policy also encourages a variety of strategies aimed at minimising costs to the organisation. In some circumstances, the entitlements may be beyond the actual cost incurred and the staff member or organisation's representative is then encouraged to reduce the entitlement claim to actual cost.

The primary method in which organisation-related travel expenses are paid is by direct charge to the organisation through credit facilities established with the providing organisation before commencement of the trip. Where this method is not available, the travellers are encouraged to pay for the expense from their own pocket and seek reimbursement upon completion of the trip.

The GST

Under the Goods and Services Tax (GST), it is not possible to claim input tax credits for travel allowances paid in the form of reimbursements to the traveller. It is more GST effective, from the organisation's perspective, to be invoiced directly by the accommodation supplier. Under this policy most business travel related expenses will be charged directly to the organisation (taxis, accommodation, car hire) thereby ensuring that input tax credits can be claimed.

Only meals which are not charged to the accommodation service fall outside this category. In this situation a meal allowance will be paid and QAHC is unable to claim input tax credits.

Income Tax and Pay as You Go (PAYG) Withholding

The Australian Taxation Office publishes an annual Ruling that sets out reasonable allowances amounts for meal allowance expenses and travel allowance expenses. If domestic and overseas travel allowances involving overnight absence from the payee's ordinary place of residence is up to the reasonable allowances amount then:

- no Pay As You Go (PAYG) withholding is required, and
- there is no requirement to show the amount and nature of the allowance separately in the payer's accounting records (Australian Taxation Office, PAYG Bulletin Number 1 "Taxing of allowances for the 2000/01 and future income years").

However, to assist employees to claim an income tax deduction for travel allowance, all travel allowances paid to employees will be processed through the payroll system and recorded separately.

Traveller's who are not staff members will receive payment by cheque for meal allowances.

Travel Costs

Prospective travellers should discuss all travel needs associated with the away-work with their supervisor as early as possible before the event and obtain approval for the most appropriate travel arrangements. Any taxi vouchers or allowances not used during the away work must be returned to the supervisor.

Getting There

Travellers will normally travel to other locations by air, QAHC vehicle or hire car. All air and hire car bookings must be prearranged and approved in line with the Air Travel Procedure.

The invoice for these costs is sent directly to QAHC and no staff outlay is required.

While you're away

The organisation will provide taxi vouchers for airport transfers at both ends of the journey.

Travellers are encouraged to minimise taxi costs by sharing taxis with other staff, volunteers or associates. Where reasonable, use of Airport Transit buses is also encouraged.

Short-distance travel within the away location should be via public transport.

Generally, the traveller should pay the cost of public transport and a claim submitted for reimbursement of expenses. Where away location travel is extensive or public transport is not viable, additional taxi vouchers may be provided or car hire utilised.

Accommodation

Accommodation is booked in advance with invoices for accommodation and meals forwarded directly to QAHC. Any other costs associated with the stay (such as mini bar, in-house movies, etc.) are the responsibility of the traveller.

Where practical, twin share arrangements will be utilised to minimise costs, and staff are also encouraged to seek billeting arrangements to avoid accommodation costs altogether. Only commercial accommodation where we have established credit facilities including the provision of meals may be used.

Meals

All commercial accommodation bookings will be invoiced directly to QAHC and include necessary breakfast and dinner costs. Many conferences and similar events provide breakfast, lunch and dinner as part of the registration.

In circumstances where meals are provided by the event organisers, there is no expense to the traveller and no meal allowance is payable.

In circumstances where accommodation bookings do not include meal costs, a meal allowance is payable. Travellers are not required to provide receipts. For the purposes of meal costs, the following rates will apply from 1 July 2007:

- Breakfast up to \$19.65 per meal
- Lunch up to \$22 per meal
- Dinner up to \$37.85 per meal

In circumstances where the meals are charged to the accommodation booking, the reimbursement amount should not exceed the above.

The traveller's supervisor must carefully calculate any travel allowance payable mindful of arrival times, credit facilities, and conference/event provided meals. For example, if the conference provides breakfast and lunch, the traveller is not entitled to a meal allowance for these meals.

Prospective travellers are required to complete the form styled *Meal Allowance Claim Form* before commencing the trip. Paid staff will have the meal allowance included in their next pay period processing. Non-paid staff will be paid by cheque. No cash payments will be provided.

Staff Time

In addition to time spent working while in an away location, staff should include travel time to and from the away location on their time sheet as time worked.

Staff are encouraged, but not required, to allocate this time as volunteer (unpaid) hours. Sometimes staff are requested to stay in the away location longer than the actual work requires. This may be due to spare days between meetings or the conditions associated with discounted airfares. In these circumstances, QAHC will provide accommodation and meal costs for the additional days.

In circumstances where the staff member chooses to extend the away time, all costs associated with the additional days are the responsibility of the staff member.