TD 2026/4 - Income tax: reasonable travel and overtime meal allowance expense amounts for the 2026-27 income year

This cover sheet is provided for information only. It does not form part of *TD 2026/4 - Income tax: reasonable travel and overtime meal allowance expense amounts for the 2026-27 income year*

Generated on: 7 July 2026, 02:10:09 PM

Status: **legally binding**

Taxation Determination

Income tax: reasonable travel and overtime meal allowance expense amounts for the 2026–27 income year

Relying on this Determination

This publication is a public ruling for the purposes of the *Taxation Administration Act 1953*.

If this Determination applies to you, and you correctly rely on it, we will apply the law to you in the way set out in this Determination. That is, you will not pay any more tax or penalties or interest in respect of the matters covered by this Determination.

Table of Contents **Paragraph**

What this Determination is about 1
Ruling **7**
Amounts provided by certain providers are accepted as reasonable 7
Reasonable amount for overtime meal expenses 9
Example 1 – calculation of reasonable amount for overtime meal expenses 10
Reasonable amounts for domestic travel expenses 16
Example 2 – calculation of reasonable amount for meals and incidental expenses – domestic 25
Reasonable amounts for domestic travel expenses for employee truck drivers 31
Example 3 – calculation of reasonable amount for meals – employee truck drivers 35
Reasonable amounts for overseas travel expenses 39
Example 4 – calculation of reasonable amount for meals and incidental expenses – overseas 48
Date of effect **52**

What this Determination is about

1. This Determination sets out the amounts that the Commissioner considers are reasonable (reasonable amounts) for the 2026–27 income year in respect of the substantiation exception for:

- reasonable **overtime meal** allowance expenses in section 900-60 of the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997* (ITAA 1997) – for food and drink when working overtime
- **domestic travel** allowance expenses in section 900-50 of the ITAA 1997 – for accommodation, food and drink, and incidentals when travelling away from home overnight for work (particular reasonable amounts are given for employee truck drivers, office holders covered by the Remuneration Tribunal and federal members of parliament), and
- **overseas travel** allowance expenses in section 900-55 of the ITAA 1997 – for food and drink, and incidentals when travelling overseas for work.

Status: **legally binding**

2. This Determination must be read together with Taxation Ruling TR 2004/6 *Income tax: substantiation exception for reasonable travel and overtime meal allowance expenses*, which explains how and when the substantiation exceptions listed at paragraph 1 of this Determination apply.

3. The substantiation exceptions in sections 900-60, 900-50 and 900-55 of the ITAA 1997 can only be used if:

- your meal allowance expenses or travel allowance expenses are deductible under a provision outside Division 900 of the ITAA 1997 (refer to paragraph 8 of TR 2004/6)
- you receive and declare in your tax return an allowance for the specific expenditure you are claiming. For example, you can rely on section 900-60 and are not required to substantiate the cost you incur to purchase a meal when working overtime if you receive an overtime meal allowance for that occurrence of overtime.

4. Meal allowance expenses or travel allowance expenses incurred for work-related purposes commonly qualify as a deduction under section 8-1 of the ITAA 1997.[1] In those circumstances, before you can rely on the reasonable amounts in this Determination, you need to satisfy the rules for deductibility under section 8-1 of the ITAA 1997.[2] This includes establishing that:

- you incurred the expenditure, and were not reimbursed
- it is directly related to earning your assessable income, and
- it is not private or domestic in nature.

5. If you have satisfied the rules for deductibility under section 8-1 of the ITAA 1997 or under a provision outside Division 900 of the ITAA 1997 in respect of the meal allowance expenses or travel allowance expenses and you claim:

- the reasonable amount or less, then an exception from substantiation will apply to you – you would not be expected to keep detailed records of the kind that would otherwise be required to meet the substantiation requirements
- more than the reasonable amount, then an exception from substantiation will not apply to you – you must fully substantiate your expenditure, not just the amount over the reasonable amount.

6. All further legislative references in this Determination are to the ITAA 1997, unless otherwise indicated.

Ruling

Amounts provided by certain providers are accepted as reasonable

7. The Commissioner will accept that the daily rates from certain providers such as Employment Conditions Abroad Limited (ECA) as a commercial provider, or the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) as a provider by subscription to government agencies,

[1] For more information on travel allowances, living-away-from-home allowances and accommodation and food and drink expenses refer to Taxation Ruling TR 2021/4 *Income tax and fringe benefits tax: employees: accommodation and food and drink expenses, travel allowances, and living-away-from-home allowances*.
[2] For more information on section 8-1 of the ITAA 1997 refer to Taxation Ruling TR 2020/1 *Income tax: employees: deductions for work expenses under section 8-1 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*.

Status: **legally binding**

are reasonable amounts for the purposes of claims referred to in paragraph 1 of this Determination made by employees.

8. In such cases, you remain obliged to demonstrate, if asked, that you:

- received and declared an allowance for the specific expenditure you are claiming (refer to paragraph 3 of this Determination), and
- satisfy the rules for deductibility under section 8-1 (refer to paragraphs 3 and 4 of this Determination).

Reasonable amount for overtime meal expenses

9. **For the 2026–27 income year, the reasonable amount for overtime meal expenses is $40.**

Example 1 – calculation of reasonable amount for overtime meal expenses

10. *Samantha works for the local government. She is asked to work overtime one night to complete an urgent task. Samantha works her 8-hour day followed by 4 hours of overtime. Samantha receives an overtime meal allowance of $25 pursuant to her agreement, which appears on her income statement. During the overtime, Samantha takes a rest break to get a meal and returns to continue her overtime. Samantha spends $30 on her meal.*

11. *As Samantha spends less than the reasonable amount for overtime meal expenses, she can claim a deduction for the $30 she spends and she is not required to substantiate the expenditure (for example, get and keep the receipt for the meal).*

12. *If we check Samantha's tax return, she may be asked to establish that she satisfies the rules for deductibility and has included the overtime meal allowance in her tax return. To do this, Samantha would need to show that she:*

- *worked overtime*
- *was paid an overtime meal allowance under an industrial instrument*
- *correctly declared this allowance as income in her tax return*
- *purchased and consumed food and drink during the period of overtime, and*
- *wasn't reimbursed by her employer for the cost of the meal she purchased.*

13. *To do this, Samantha could show her pay slip which includes her overtime allowance and a diary note that she made stating that she purchased a Pad Thai noodle bowl and a bottle of soft drink for $30 during the period of overtime. If applicable, she could also show a letter from her employer that states she was not reimbursed.*

14. *If Samantha spends more than the reasonable amount and wants to claim the higher amount she spends, she needs to get and keep the receipt for the meal. That is, she must substantiate the expenditure, as well as demonstrate deductibility.*

15. *If Samantha's overtime meal allowance is not shown on her income statement and she fully spends the allowance, she can choose to leave it out of her tax return and not claim a deduction for the meal she purchases when working overtime.*

Status: **legally binding**

Reasonable amounts for domestic travel expenses

16. The following reasonable amounts for domestic travel expenses do not apply to employee truck drivers[3], office holders covered by the Remuneration Tribunal[4] or federal members of parliament.[5]

17. Reasonable amounts are provided in this Determination for 3 salary levels. Salary excludes any allowances received.

- Use Table 1 if your salary is $153,210 or less.
- Use Table 2 if your salary is between $153,211 and $272,680.
- Use Table 3 if your salary is $272,681 or more.

18. Part-time employees annualise their salary to a full-time equivalent salary level when determining which table to use for determining reasonable amounts under the substantiation exception. This ensures an equitable outcome for employees within the organisation.

19. Reasonable amounts are given for:

- accommodation at daily rates (for domestic travel only)
- meals (showing breakfast, lunch and dinner), and
- expenses incidental to travel.

20. These amounts are shown for the following travel destinations:

- each Australian state and territory capital city (see Tables 1 to 3 of this Determination)
- certain specified high-cost regional and country centres (see Table 4 of this Determination for individual amounts), and
- all other regional and country centres (a common amount is given for all locations not listed in Table 4 of this Determination).

21. The reasonable amount for accommodation applies only for short stays in commercial establishments like hotels, motels and serviced apartments. If a different type of accommodation is used (for example, a hostel or caravan park), the reasonable amount cannot be used even if you receive an allowance.

22. The reasonable amount for meals depends on the period and time of travel. That is, the reasonable amounts only apply to meals (that is, breakfast, lunch and dinner) that fall within the time of day from the commencement of your travel to the end of your travel that is covered by the allowance. For example, if you leave at 10:00 am on Monday and return home at 3:00 pm on Tuesday, you can apply the reasonable amounts for lunch and dinner on Monday and breakfast and lunch on Tuesday.

[3] See paragraphs 31 to 38 of this Determination for the rates for truck drivers.
[4] Paragraphs 26 and 66 to 69 of TR 2004/6 set out that claims made by office holders covered by the Remuneration Tribunal are considered to be reasonable amounts if they do not exceed the rate of allowances set by the Remuneration Tribunal for that office holder.
[5] Paragraphs 27, 70 and 71 of TR 2004/6 set out that travel allowances paid to federal members of parliament and federal parliamentary secretaries, under the arrangements that commenced on 14 April 1998, are considered reasonable amounts for the recipients of those allowances. This includes the capital city and Canberra travel allowance rates for domestic travel, having regard to the circumstances under which those allowances are paid.

Status: **legally binding**

23. The reasonable amount for incidentals applies in full to each day of travel covered by the allowance, without the need to apportion for any part-day travel on the first and last day.

24. The reasonable amounts for domestic travel expenses, according to salary levels and destinations, for the 2026–27 income year, are shown in Tables 1 to 4 of this Determination.

Table 1: Reasonable amounts for domestic travel expenses – employee's annual salary $153,210 or less

Place	Accomm. ($)	Food and drink ($)	Incidentals ($)	Daily total ($)
Adelaide	158	breakfast 36.00 lunch 40.45 dinner 69.00	25.40	328.85
Brisbane	188	breakfast 36.00 lunch 40.45 dinner 69.00	25.40	358.85
Canberra	178	breakfast 36.00 lunch 40.45 dinner 69.00	25.40	348.85
Darwin	220	breakfast 36.00 lunch 40.45 dinner 69.00	25.40	390.85
Hobart	176	breakfast 36.00 lunch 40.45 dinner 69.00	25.40	346.85
Melbourne	175	breakfast 36.00 lunch 40.45 dinner 69.00	25.40	345.85
Perth	180	breakfast 36.00 lunch 40.45 dinner 69.00	25.40	350.85
Sydney	230	breakfast 36.00 lunch 40.45 dinner 69.00	25.40	400.85
High-cost country centres	see Table 4 of this Determination	breakfast 36.00 lunch 40.45 dinner 69.00	25.40	Variable
Other country centres	141	breakfast 32.25 lunch 36.80 dinner 63.45	25.40	298.90

Status: **legally binding**

Table 2: Reasonable amounts for domestic travel expenses – employee's annual salary $153,211 to $272,680

Place	Accomm. ($)	Food and drink ($)	Incidentals ($)	Daily total ($)
Adelaide	211	breakfast 39.20 lunch 55.35 dinner 77.65	36.30	419.50
Brisbane	257	breakfast 39.20 lunch 55.35 dinner 77.65	36.30	465.50
Canberra	246	breakfast 39.20 lunch 55.35 dinner 77.65	36.30	454.50
Darwin	293	breakfast 39.20 lunch 55.35 dinner 77.65	36.30	501.50
Hobart	235	breakfast 39.20 lunch 55.35 dinner 77.65	36.30	443.50
Melbourne	233	breakfast 39.20 lunch 55.35 dinner 77.65	36.30	441.50
Perth	245	breakfast 39.20 lunch 55.35 dinner 77.65	36.30	453.50
Sydney	307	breakfast 39.20 lunch 55.35 dinner 77.65	36.30	515.50
High-cost country centres	see Table 4 of this Determination	breakfast 39.20 lunch 55.35 dinner 77.65	36.30	Variable
Other country centres	188	breakfast 36.00 lunch 36.80 dinner 71.45	36.30	368.55

Status: **legally binding**

Table 3: Reasonable amounts for domestic travel expenses – employee's annual salary $272,681 or more

Place	Accomm. ($)	Food and drink ($)	Incidentals ($)	Daily total ($)
Adelaide	211	breakfast 43.65 lunch 61.70 dinner 86.35	36.30	439.00
Brisbane	257	breakfast 43.65 lunch 61.70 dinner 86.35	36.30	485.00
Canberra	246	breakfast 43.65 lunch 61.70 dinner 86.35	36.30	474.00
Darwin	293	breakfast 43.65 lunch 61.70 dinner 86.35	36.30	521.00
Hobart	235	breakfast 43.65 lunch 61.70 dinner 86.35	36.30	463.00
Melbourne	265	breakfast 43.65 lunch 61.70 dinner 86.35	36.30	493.00
Perth	265	breakfast 43.65 lunch 61.70 dinner 86.35	36.30	493.00
Sydney	307	breakfast 43.65 lunch 61.70 dinner 86.35	36.30	535.00
All country centres	207 or the relevant amount in Table 4 if higher	breakfast 43.65 lunch 61.70 dinner 86.35	36.30	Variable

Table 4: Reasonable amounts for domestic travel expenses – high-cost country centres accommodation expenses

Country centre	$	Country centre	$
Albany (WA)	193	Kadina (SA)	207
Albury (NSW)	207	Kalgoorlie (WA)	193
Alice Springs (NT)	206	Karratha (WA)	304
Ararat (Vic)	159	Katherine (NT)	230
Armidale (NSW)	166	Kingaroy (Qld)	180
Ayr (Qld)	207	Kununurra (WA)	234
Bairnsdale (Vic)	182	Launceston (Tas)	174

Status: **legally binding**

Country centre	$	Country centre	$
Ballarat (Vic)	187	Lismore (NSW)	190
Bathurst (NSW)	207	Mackay (Qld)	166
Bega (NSW)	207	Maitland (NSW)	187
Benalla (Vic)	168	Maryborough (Qld)	207
Bendigo (Vic)	177	Mildura (Vic)	177
Bordertown (SA)	165	Mount Gambier (SA)	164
Bourke (NSW)	189	Mount Isa (Qld)	188
Bright (Vic)	180	Mudgee (NSW)	213
Broken Hill (NSW)	168	Muswellbrook (NSW)	166
Broome (WA)	269	Nambour (Qld)	168
Bunbury (WA)	184	Naracoorte (SA)	207
Bundaberg (Qld)	184	Narrabri (NSW)	207
Burnie (Tas)	181	Newcastle (NSW)	195
Cairns (Qld)	175	Newman (WA)	277
Carnarvon (WA)	183	Nhulunbuy (NT)	278
Castlemaine (Vic)	162	Norfolk Island (Qld)	256
Ceduna (SA)	156	Northam (WA)	232
Charters Towers (Qld)	168	Nowra (NSW)	168
Chinchilla (Qld)	207	Orange (NSW)	222
Christmas Island (WA)	221	Port Augusta (SA)	207
Cobar (NSW)	207	Port Hedland (WA)	281
Cocos (Keeling) Islands (WA)	331	Port Lincoln (SA)	170
Coffs Harbour (NSW)	207	Port Macquarie (NSW)	190
Colac (Vic)	207	Port Pirie (SA)	207
Cooma (NSW)	207	Portland (Vic)	170
Cowra (NSW)	207	Queanbeyan (NSW)	207
Dalby (Qld)	201	Queenstown (Tas)	207
Dampier (WA)	210	Renmark (SA)	207
Derby (WA)	192	Rockhampton (Qld)	174
Devonport (Tas)	170	Roma (Qld)	188
Dubbo (NSW)	173	Sale (Vic)	207
Echuca (Vic)	207	Seymour (Vic)	171
Emerald (Qld)	182	Shepparton (Vic)	172
Esperance (WA)	183	Swan Hill (Vic)	181
Exmouth (WA)	247	Tamworth (NSW)	207
Geelong (Vic)	175	Taree (NSW)	207
Geraldton (WA)	201	Tennant Creek (NT)	207
Gladstone (Qld)	171	Thursday Island (Qld)	323
Gold Coast (Qld)	234	Toowoomba (Qld)	161
Goulburn (NSW)	165	Townsville (Qld)	174
Gosford (NSW)	161	Tumut (NSW)	207

Status: **legally binding**

Country centre	$	Country centre	$
Grafton (NSW)	179	Wagga Wagga (NSW)	178
Griffith (NSW)	165	Wangaratta (Vic)	186
Gunnedah (NSW)	186	Warrnambool (Vic)	182
Halls Creek (WA)	215	Weipa (Qld)	238
Hamilton (Vic)	170	Whyalla (SA)	170
Hervey Bay (Qld)	175	Wilpena-Pound (SA)	281
Horn Island (Qld)	345	Wodonga (Vic)	207
Horsham (Vic)	173	Wollongong (NSW)	188
Innisfail (Qld)	207	Wonthaggi (Vic)	188
Inverell (NSW)	207	Yulara (NT)	570
Jabiru (NT)	216		

Example 2 – calculation of reasonable amount for meals and incidental expenses – domestic travel

25. *Svetlana is an accountant earning $170,000 a year. As part of her duties, Svetlana travels to and from work in Sale for 4 days and 3 nights each month. Svetlana's employer pays for her accommodation directly and gives her a meal and incidental allowance of $140 per day for the 4 days of travel. This allowance is shown on her income statement. Svetlana's usual pattern is to eat 3 times a day, spending $30 on breakfast, $40 on lunch and $65 on dinner (that is, a total of $135 per day). Svetlana calculates the daily reasonable amount for meals and incidentals as follows:*

- *Table 2 of this Determination applies because Svetlana's salary is between $153,211 and $272,680.*
- *Sale is listed as a high-cost country centre in Table 4 of this Determination.*
- *Table 2 of this Determination provides reasonable amounts for high-cost country centres as $172.20 per day for meals and $36.30 per day for incidentals (that is, a total of $208.50 per day).*

26. *As Svetlana spends less than the reasonable amount on meals and nothing on incidentals, she can claim a deduction for the $135 per day that she spends on meals and she is not required to substantiate the expenditure (for example, get and keep all of the receipts for the meals). Svetlana cannot claim anything for accommodation because her employer pays for it. She also cannot claim anything for incidentals because she doesn't spend anything on incidentals while travelling away from home for work.*

27. *If we check Svetlana's tax return, she may be asked to establish that she satisfies the rules for deductibility and has included the travel allowance in her tax return. To do this, Svetlana would need to show that she:*

- *travelled to and worked in Sale for 4 days each month*
- *received an allowance for the meals and incidentals for each day she travelled*
- *correctly declared this allowance as income in her tax return*
- *typically spent $135 a day on meals, and*
- *wasn't reimbursed by her employer for the costs she incurred.*

Status: **legally binding**

28. *To do this, Svetlana could show her pay slip which includes her travel allowance, diary notes, bank statements, menus, and some receipts she kept on some of the trips to show how she arrived at her claim of $135 per day. If applicable, she could also show a letter from her employer that states she was not reimbursed.*

29. *If Svetlana spends more than the reasonable amount on meals and incidentals and wants to claim the higher amount that she spends, she would need to get and keep all of the receipts to substantiate the expenditure, as well as demonstrate deductibility.*

30. *If Svetlana's meal and incidental allowance was not shown on her income statement and she fully spent the allowance, she can choose to leave it out of her tax return and not claim any deductions for the meals and incidentals that she purchases while travelling and working in Sale.*

Reasonable amounts for domestic travel expenses for employee truck drivers

31. Reasonable amounts for domestic travel expenses for employee truck drivers[6] are given for meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner). The amounts are for all domestic travel destinations (that is, capital cities, regional and country centres). For the 2026–27 income year, the relevant amounts are as set out in Table 5 of this Determination.

Table 5: Reasonable amounts for domestic travel expenses – employee truck driver's meals (food and drink)

Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
$32.25	$36.80	$63.45

32. The amounts for each of these meals are separate and cannot be aggregated into a single daily amount.[7] This is of particular importance for the days on which travel commences and ends, when some meals may not be deductible because they are not consumed in the course of work travel. A driver's work diary (as maintained for fatigue-management purposes) can be used to demonstrate when meal breaks were taken, since employee truck drivers may take meal breaks at different times of the day compared to other taxpayers. It should also be noted that amounts cannot be moved from one meal to another (for example, if the full amount for breakfast is not expended, it cannot be carried over to lunch or dinner).

33. The deduction allowed for each meal is the amount actually spent and not simply the reasonable amount specified in Table 5 of this Determination. Although the formal substantiation requirements do not apply for claims up to the reasonable amount, taxpayers need to be able to demonstrate that they satisfy the rules for deductibility under section 8-1. Example 3 of this Determination shows how this can be done.

34. All accommodation expenses and incidental expenses (for example, the cost of a shower) incurred by employee truck drivers as part of work-related travel must be substantiated with written evidence (for example, a receipt).

---

[6] For further information on truck drivers, refer to paragraphs 72 to 75 of TR 2004/6.
[7] A single aggregated figure was introduced for truck drivers in TD 2017/19 now withdrawn, for the 2017–18 income year. This ceased the same year when an addendum issued on 27 October 2017.

Example 3 – calculation of reasonable amount for meals – employee truck drivers

35. *Glenn is an employee truck driver. He is required to drive from Melbourne to Adelaide. Glenn leaves Melbourne at 9:00 pm, sleeps away from home overnight in his truck cab, then drives back to Melbourne the following day. Glenn is paid a travel allowance of $80 for each day. These amounts are shown on his income statement.*

36. *While still in Melbourne, Glenn spends $10 on fresh fruit and nuts to snack on while he travels as these items are hard to get where he stops. Glenn stops around midnight at a 24-hour truck stop in Horsham and spends $40 on food and drink (some of which is consumed later during the trip). He then continues to Adelaide where he snacks on a sandwich that he brought from Horsham, and the fruit that he brought in Melbourne, before having a sleep in the truck cab. In the morning, Glenn spends $25 on food and drink at the truck stop where he parked overnight. After the truck is unloaded and reloaded, Glenn heads to Bordertown where he stops for lunch. Here, he spends $30 on food and drink. He then continues to Melbourne arriving at 5:00 pm, snacking on almonds and fruit that he brought from Melbourne as he drives.*

37. *As Glenn spent less than the reasonable amount for each of dinner, breakfast and lunch, he can claim a deduction for the full amount that he spent on those meals ($105) and is not required to obtain and keep all of the receipts for these meals.*

38. *If we check Glenn's tax return, he may be asked to establish that he satisfies the rules for deductibility and has included the travel allowance in his tax return. To do this Glenn would need to:*

- *show that he travelled to and from Adelaide (for example, his work diary)*
- *show that he received an allowance for the meals for each day that he travelled*
- *show that he correctly declared this allowance as income in his tax return*
- *demonstrate his typical spending pattern on meals (this could be by reference to diary entries, bank records and receipts kept for some (a representative sample) of his trips), and*
- *show he wasn't reimbursed by his employer for the costs he incurred.*

Reasonable amounts for overseas travel expenses

39. If you are travelling overseas and are away from your usual residence for 6 or more nights in a row, you must still keep travel records even if you rely on the reasonable amounts and do not have to substantiate your expenses. Travel records may include ticketing information, diary entries or other information setting out the nature of your travel, the day and time it began, how long it lasted and where you travelled.

40. Reasonable amounts are provided in this Determination for 3 salary levels. Salary excludes any allowances received.

- Use Table 6 if your salary is $153,210 or less.
- Use Table 7 if your salary is between $153,211 and $272,680.
- Use Table 8 if your salary is $272,681 or more.

Status: **legally binding**

41. Reasonable amounts are given for:

- meals (showing breakfast, lunch and dinner), and
- expenses incidental to travel.

42. Any expenditure on accommodation overseas must be fully substantiated.

43. Reasonable amounts are shown for cost groups to which a country has been allocated. Table 9 of this Determination sets out the cost group to which a country has been allocated.

44. If you travel to a country that is not shown in Table 9 of this Determination, and you are not using an alternate provider's data, use the reasonable amount for cost group 3 in the table relevant to your salary range. We use the cost group values of countries listed to reflect the reasonable costs of unlisted countries.

45. If you travel to 2 or more countries in the same day, use the cost group of the country that is in the higher cost group in determining the reasonable amount for that day.

46. The reasonable amount for incidentals applies in full to each day of travel covered by the allowance, without the need to apportion for any part-day travel on the first and last day.

47. The reasonable amounts for overseas travel expenses per day according to salary levels and cost groups for the 2026–27 income year are shown in Tables 6 to 9 of this Determination.

Table 6: Reasonable amounts for overseas travel expenses – employee's annual salary $153,210 or less

Cost group	Meals ($)	Incidentals ($)	Total ($)
1	75	25	100
2	110	30	140
3	150	35	185
4	195	35	230
5	235	40	275
6	280	45	325

Table 7: Reasonable amounts for overseas travel expenses – employee's annual salary $153,211 to $272,680

Cost group	Meals ($)	Incidentals ($)	Total ($)
1	95	25	120
2	130	35	165
3	175	40	215
4	215	45	260
5	290	50	340
6	360	50	410

Status: **legally binding**

Table 8: Reasonable amounts for overseas travel expenses – employee's annual salary $272,681 or more

Cost group	Meals ($)	Incidentals ($)	Total ($)
1	120	30	150
2	180	40	220
3	230	45	275
4	290	50	340
5	365	60	425
6	415	60	475

Table 9: Table of countries

Country	Cost group	Country	Cost group	Country	Cost group
Albania	3	Georgia	3	Norway	6
Algeria	3	Germany	5	Oman	6
Antigua and Barbuda	6	Gibraltar	4	Pakistan	2
Argentina	3	Greece	4	Panama	4
Armenia	3	Guatemala	4	Papua New Guinea	4
Austria	5	Guyana	5	Paraguay	2
Azerbaijan	3	Hong Kong	6	Peru	3
Bahamas	6	Hungary	4	Philippines	4
Bahrain	6	Iceland	6	Poland	4
Bangladesh	5	India	3	Portugal	4
Barbados	6	Indonesia	3	Puerto Rico	6
Belarus	2	Iraq	4	Qatar	6
Belgium	5	Ireland	6	Romania	3
Bermuda	6	Israel	6	Russia	4
Bolivia	3	Italy	5	Rwanda	2
Bosnia	2	Jamaica	4	Saint Lucia	5
Brazil	3	Japan	5	Saint Vincent	3
Brunei	3	Jordan	6	Samoa	4
Bulgaria	3	Kazakhstan	3	Saudi Arabia	5
Burkina Faso	3	Kenya	4	Senegal	5
Cambodia	4	Korea Republic	5	Serbia	3
Cameroon	4	Kosovo	2	Sierra Leone	3
Canada	5	Kuwait	5	Singapore	6
Chile	3	Kyrgyzstan	2	Slovakia	4
China	5	Laos	2	Slovenia	4

Status: **legally binding**

Country	Cost group	Country	Cost group	Country	Cost group
Colombia	3	Latvia	4	Solomon Islands	4
Cook Islands	4	Lebanon	4	South Africa	2
Costa Rica	4	Lithuania	4	Spain	4
Cote d'Ivoire	5	Luxembourg	6	Sri Lanka	4
Croatia	3	Macau	5	Sweden	6
Cyprus	4	Malaysia	3	Switzerland	6
Czech Republic	4	Mali	3	Taiwan	5
Denmark	6	Malta	4	Tanzania	2
Dominican Republic	4	Mauritius	4	Thailand	4
East Timor	3	Mexico	4	Tonga	3
Ecuador	4	Monaco	6	Trinidad and Tobago	6
Egypt	2	Morocco	3	Tunisia	2
El Salvador	4	Mozambique	3	Türkiye (Turkey)	3
Eritrea	3	Myanmar	2	Uganda	3
Estonia	4	Namibia	2	Ukraine	2
Ethiopia	2	Nepal	2	United Arab Emirates	6
Fiji	3	Netherlands	5	United Kingdom	5
Finland	6	New Caledonia	5	United States of America	6
France	5	New Zealand	4	Uruguay	3
French Polynesia	6	Nicaragua	3	Vanuatu	4
Gabon	5	Nigeria	4	Vietnam	3
Gambia	2	North Macedonia	2		

Example 4 – calculation of reasonable amount for meals and incidental expenses – overseas

48. *Prashant travels to China on business for 2 weeks and is paid a travel allowance of $550 per day (made up of $300 for meals and incidentals and $250 for accommodation). Prashant's annual salary is $191,000. Prashant spends $300 per day on meals and incidentals and $300 per night on accommodation when travelling in China. Prashant calculates the daily reasonable amount for his overseas travel as follows:*

- *Table 7 of this Determination applies because Prashant's salary is between $153,211 and $272,680.*
- *Table 9 of this Determination lists China as Cost group 5.*

- *Table 7 of this Determination provides reasonable amounts for meals and incidental expenses for Cost group 5 as $290 per day for meals and $50 per day for incidentals (that is, a total of $340 per day).*

49. *As Prashant spends less than the reasonable amount on meals and incidentals, he can claim a deduction for the $300 per day that he spends and he is not required to substantiate the expenditure (for example, get and keep all of the receipts for the meals and incidentals). However, because he spends more than 6 nights away in a row, Prashant must keep travel records (such as a travel diary) for the 2 weeks he is in China. Prashant can claim a deduction for the $300 per day he spends on accommodation, but he must fully substantiate this expenditure (by getting and keeping a receipt or other documentary evidence of the expenditure).*

50. *If we check Prashant's tax return, he may be asked to establish that he satisfies the rules for deductibility and has included the travel allowance in his tax return. To do this, Prashant would show he:*

- *travelled to China for work*
- *received an allowance for the meals and incidentals for each day he travelled*
- *correctly declared this allowance as income in his tax return*
- *typically spent $300 a day on meals and incidental expenses (for example, by reference to diary entries, bank records and some receipts that he kept), and*
- *wasn't reimbursed by his employer.*

51. *If Prashant's travel allowance for meals and incidentals were not shown on his income statement and he fully spent the allowance, he can choose to leave this allowance out of his tax return and not claim any deductions for the meals and incidentals he purchases when travelling and working in China. His accommodation allowance will have been included on his income statement as Prashant's employer must withhold from the accommodation allowance.*[8]

Date of effect

52. This Determination applies to the 2026–27 income year only.

Commissioner of Taxation
24 June 2026

[8] Refer to Taxation Administration (Withholding Variation for Payment of Certain Allowances) Legislative Instrument 2025.

Status: **not legally binding**

References

Related rulings and determinations:

TR 2004/6; TR 2020/1; TR 2021/4

Previous rulings and determinations:

TD 2021/6; TD 2022/10, TD 2023/3; TD 2024/3; TD 2025/4

Legislative references:

- ITAA 1997 8-1
- ITAA 1997 Div 900
- ITAA 1997 900-50
- ITAA 1997 900-55
- ITAA 1997 900-60

Other references:

Taxation Administration (Withholding Variation for Payment of Certain Allowances) Legislative Instrument 2025

ATO references
NO: 1-1BJ68BF7
ISSN: 2205-6211
BSL: IAI
ATOlaw topic: Income tax ~~ Deductions ~~ Work related expenses ~~ Accommodation and meal expenses
Income tax ~~ Deductions ~~ Work related expenses ~~ Travel expenses

© AUSTRALIAN TAXATION OFFICE FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

You are free to copy, adapt, modify, transmit and distribute this material as you wish (but not in any way that suggests the ATO or the Commonwealth endorses you or any of your services or products.