

Factsheet: travel cost reimbursement for short-term PALM scheme workers

This factsheet provides information for Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme employers on eligibility and how to claim reimbursement of travel costs for short-term workers (reimbursement of travel costs) under the PALM scheme.

The Australian Government is committed to strengthening the PALM scheme to deliver for employers, workers and their families and communities in the Pacific and Timor-Leste. As part of reforms to the PALM scheme, employers may seek reimbursement of flights, domestic transfer, accommodation, and visa application costs that arise as part of the worker's travel to their worksite for short-term PALM scheme workers.

Information on reimbursement of travel costs is included at clause 20 of the PALM scheme - Approved Employer Deed and sections 7.2 and 7.5 of the PALM scheme Approved Employer Guidelines.

The Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) will consider all claims in accordance with the criteria outlined in the deed, guidelines, and this factsheet. Applications will be processed as soon as possible if all the necessary information has been provided.

Am I eligible for a reimbursement?

You may be eligible if you are an approved PALM scheme employer that has employed a short-term PALM scheme worker and:

- have an executed PALM scheme deed
- the event that required the claim occurred **after** the PALM scheme deed was executed (the date the worker arrived can be before the PALM scheme deed execution date)
- you have paid for the worker's travel costs to come to Australia that could not be recovered due to circumstances beyond your control, such as the worker:
 - disengaged from the PALM scheme
 - did not attend their flight and domestic transfer
 - has resigned from their position
 - returned home early for compelling and compassionate reasons or
 - the visa application was refused due to the workers circumstances
- you have complied with all the requirements of the PALM scheme deed and guidelines, and
- through no fault of your own you have not been able to recover the travel costs incurred.

You are **not eligible** to claim a reimbursement of travel costs if:

- you have not executed the deed
- you are not compliant with all the requirements of the deed and guidelines

- the worker disengaged from the PALM scheme or resigned due to mistreatment, exploitation or your non-compliance with Australian workplace laws
- the worker you are seeking to recoup funds for is a long-term worker
- travel arrangements were made (e.g. flights were purchased) prior to the visa application being finalised and approved by Home Affairs.

What can I claim?

If you are eligible, you can seek reimbursement for visa and travel costs that you have not been able to recoup from a short-term worker due to an event that occurred **after** the deed execution date (the date the worker arrived can be before the PALM scheme deed execution date).

You can only claim out of pocket expenses for travel and accommodation costs from the worker's port of departure to the first work site location in Australia, which may include:

- visa applications charges
- the cost of international flights and domestic transportation (including transit accommodation and meals, where required) up to the maximum cap outlined in the 'International airfares and domestic transportation matrix' or the remaining actual flight costs (whichever is lower).

This does not include:

- any amounts recovered through deductions from worker's pay
- any amounts you have received through travel insurance or flight credits
- the \$300 that you must contribute to the **total** flight costs for each worker's flights (return international flights and domestic transfers) (as per section 7.2.2 of the PALM scheme guidelines).

The \$300 should be deducted from the total cost of the flights **before** the matrix is applied, not deducted from the matrix cap itself, for example:

Total actual flight costs	= \$1,000
\$300 employer contribution (deduct)	- \$300
Cost remaining	= \$700
Matrix cap (example only)	= \$600
Maximum amount that can be deducted from worker/eligible for reimbursement	= \$600

Note: the matrix is available on the PALM scheme website at:

www.palmscheme.gov.au/resources/international-airfares-and-domestic-transportation-matrix. You can also claim for costs associated with a visa application where you have been unable to recoup the cost from the worker if the visa application has been refused by the Department of Home Affairs due to the worker's circumstances.

When can I claim?

You can submit a claim 28 days after travel costs became unrecoverable. That is 28 days after the missed flights or transfer or 28 days after the disengagement or resignation, whichever is later.

You should submit the claim within 12 months from the date of the event that triggers your need for reimbursement.

For example: if a worker disengages on 1 August, you cannot make a claim until 29 August (28 days after disengagement) and should make a claim by 31 July the following year.

How do I submit a claim for reimbursement?

To make a claim for reimbursement you must submit an enquiry via the Approved Employer portal and title the message 'Reimbursement of travel costs request for [worker name + recruitment approval number]'.

You must attach all required documents outlined below.

What is needed to make a claim?

To make a claim you must provide:

1. A tax invoice addressed to DEWR for the amount you are seeking as a reimbursement. The tax invoice must meet the requirements outlined in [Attachment A](#).
2. A [Vendor Information Request form](#) (please note this only needs to be provided once and doesn't need to be resubmitted for any subsequent claims).
3. A completed [reimbursement of travel costs for short-term workers claim form](#).
4. A statutory declaration that states the information you have provided in the reimbursement of travel costs for short-term workers claim form and the evidence you have provided is accurate.

Note: a template for statutory deductions is available at: www.ag.gov.au/legal-system/publications/commonwealth-statutory-declaration-form.

5. Documents to demonstrate the value of your out-of-pocket cost, including:
 - a. proof of purchase (e.g., tax invoice, tickets, bank statements)
 - b. proof of any worker deductions or travel insurance claims/flight credits (e.g., Statement of Deductions or pay slips showing total cost, deductions to date, balance owing, notice of insurance claim decision).

Note: the documents demonstrating the amount claimed must align to the amount in the tax invoice at point 1.

6. If you need to claim for more than one worker a separate claim must be submitted for each worker.

Once you have provided this information, DEWR will contact you if we require more information to assess your claim.

What happens after I make a claim for reimbursement?

Once DEWR receives the claim for reimbursement we will:

- confirm all required information has been received and email you to acknowledge receipt of the claim
 - if additional information is needed, DEWR will request it. Assessment and processing of a claim will not begin until all required information is received
- assess the claim in accordance with the PALM scheme deed and guidelines
- advise, in writing, that a claim has been approved or rejected. If approved, we will outline how and when you will receive reimbursement
- process a payment if the claim is approved.

Resources and other help

- Refer to clauses 20 and 28 of the deed and sections 7.2 and 7.5 of the guidelines.
- The international airfares and domestic transportation matrix is available at: <https://www.palmscheme.gov.au/resources/international-airfares-and-domestic-transportation-matrix>.
- Statutory declarations template is at: www.ag.gov.au/legal-system/publications/commonwealth-statutory-declaration-form.

If you would like to discuss your eligibility or would like more information about reimbursement of travel costs, please refer to the deed and guidelines or contact your relationship manager in the first instance.

Attachment A: information required on tax invoices provided to DEWR for travel cost claims

Tax Invoices

Tax invoices must include certain information. If you use an incorrect or incomplete tax invoice to claim a GST credit, the GST credit may not be allowed.

Table 1: Tax Invoice requirements

A valid tax invoice for taxable sales that total less than \$1,000 (GST inclusive) must contain:	A valid tax invoice for taxable sales that total \$1,000 or more (GST inclusive) must contain:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The words 'tax invoice' stated prominently • The name of the seller • The Australian Business Number (ABN) of the seller • The date of issue of the tax invoice • A brief description of the things sold • The GST inclusive price of the taxable sale and • The GST amount. This can be shown separately or where the GST to be paid is exactly 1/11 of the total price, as a statement along the lines of 'total priced includes GST' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The words 'tax invoice' stated prominently • The name of the seller • The Australian Business Number (ABN) of the seller • The name of the buyer • The address or ABN of the buyer • The date of issue of the tax invoice • The quantity of the goods or the extent of the services sold • A brief description of the things sold • The GST inclusive price of the taxable sale and • The GST amount. This can be shown separately or where the GST to be paid is exactly 1/11 of the total price, as a statement along the lines of 'total priced includes GST'
	<p><i>If the tax invoice is for a taxable sale and either a GST free or input taxed sale, the tax invoice must also show:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each taxable sale • The amount of GST to be paid (for the taxable sales), and • The amount to be paid for total sale.