



No. 9 of 2025

REPORT OF THE REMUNERATION TRIBUNAL

2025 Review of Accommodation and Meal Allowances – Judges, Court Officers and Statutory Officers

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Remuneration Tribunal (**Tribunal**) has conducted a review of Determination 9 of 2024 which provides for accommodation and meal allowances for Judges, Court Officers and Statutory Officers covered by the determination.
2. As explained in this report, the Tribunal has decided to increase the rate of the allowances, excluding Sydney travel, by 1.17%. The increased allowances apply from 1 January 2026.
3. The Tribunal has also determined that the existing approach of considering applications for accommodation and meal allowances for overseas travel for members of the Judiciary covered by the determination on an ad hoc basis will continue.

BACKGROUND

4. The *Remuneration Act 1990 (SA)* (**Act**) provides that the Tribunal has jurisdiction to set the remuneration payable to the members of the judiciary and other office holders listed in section 13 of the Act, and the remuneration payable to other office holders as conferred under section 14 of the Act.
5. The Tribunal has used this jurisdiction to provide accommodation and meal allowances for Judges and Court Officers, as well as the following Statutory Officers:
 - a. The Auditor-General;
 - b. The Electoral Commissioner;
 - c. The Deputy Electoral Commissioner; and
 - a. The Health and Community Services Complaints Commissioner.
6. As required by section 8 of the Act, the Tribunal has conducted an annual review of its current Determination on accommodation and meal allowances.

THE REVIEW PROCESS

7. On 23 July 2025, in accordance with sections 10(2) and 10(4) of the Act, the Tribunal wrote to and invited submissions by 20 September 2025 in respect of this review from:
 - a. the Honourable Premier of South Australia – as the Minister responsible for the Act who may make submissions or introduce evidence in the public interest;
 - b. the Judicial Remuneration Coordinating Committee (**JRCC**); and
 - c. members of the judiciary and relevant office holders.

8. The Tribunal also placed a notice on its website from 24 July 2025 inviting submissions from affected persons by 20 September 2025.
9. On 30 July 2025, the Premier's representative confirmed that the Premier did not intend to make a submission with regard to the review of the rate of the accommodation and meal allowances but would reserve his right to make submissions on accommodation and meal allowances for overseas travel for the Judiciary once the Tribunal has made its determination.
10. On 20 August and the 19 September, the JRCC provided submissions on behalf of:
 - a. The Chief Justice, the President of the Court of Appeal, Judges of Appeal, Judges and Associates Justices of the Supreme Court;
 - b. The Chief Judge, Judges and Associate Judges of the District Court;
 - c. The Chief Magistrate and the Magistrates of the Magistrates Court;
 - d. The State Coroner and Deputy State Coroners;
 - e. The Senior Judge and Commissioners of the Environment, Resources and Development Court;
 - f. The President and Deputy Presidents of the South Australian Employment Tribunal; and
 - g. The Judge of the Youth Court.
11. The JRCC submitted that the Tribunal should review the determination of the accommodation and meal allowances arrangements in the usual way and otherwise make a determination that reflects the terms of Determination 9 of 2024.
12. The JRCC further submitted that it supports the Tribunal maintaining the existing approach of issuing specific determinations for overseas accommodation and meal allowances on a case-by-case basis.
13. On 22 August the Electoral Commissioner confirmed that no submission would be made.
14. No other submissions were received.

CONSIDERATION AND CONCLUSION

Accommodation and Meal Allowances

15. The determination under review sets allowances to cover the costs of commercial accommodation and meals associated with official travel.
16. In considering this matter, the Tribunal has had regard to the following economic data relevant to the costs of commercial accommodation and meals:
 - a. The Consumer Price Index (All groups Adelaide) shows the following percentage changes from the corresponding quarters of previous years:
 - i. 2.5% for December 2024
 - ii. 2.2% for March 2025
 - iii. 1.8% for June 2025
 - iv. 2.4% for September 2025
 - b. As at November 2025 the Reserve Bank of Australia forecast of the Consumer Price Index was as follows:
 - i. 2.1% for June 2025
 - ii. 3.3% for December 2025
 - iii. 3.7% for June 2026

- iv. 3.2% for December 2026
- c. The Australian Taxation Office Taxation Determination TD 2025/4, which sets for taxation purposes reasonable accommodation, meal and incidental expenses for the 2025-26 income years. The Tribunal has noted the following percentage changes from the previous financial year, for the highest earners:
 - i. 0% increase to accommodation costs for Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Darwin, Hobart, Melbourne and Perth
 - ii. 12% increase to accommodation costs for Sydney 2025/4
 - iii. 2.55% increase to breakfast costs
 - iv. 2.58% increase to lunch costs
 - v. 2.58% increase to dinner costs
 - vi. 2.33% increase to incidentals
 - vii. overall, 1.07% to 7.80% increase for daily total (which includes accommodation, meals and incidentals)

17. Having regard to these factors, the Tribunal has decided that these allowances should be increased by 1.17% with effect from 1 January 2026. Consistent with the concern that the Tribunal expressed in Report 9 of 2024, the Tribunal has noted that the accommodation allowance for Sydney travel is substantially more than the ATO Determination. Even in relative terms, when contrasted with the other Capital Cities, it remains inconsistent. Consequently, the Tribunal has determined not to increase the Sydney accommodation allowance for this year. The Tribunal will review its position in this respect next year and is open to receiving submissions on this issue.

Travel and Accommodation Allowance for Overseas Travel for members of the Judiciary

18. The Tribunal invited submissions on whether the Tribunal should issue a general determination to govern accommodation and meal allowances for overseas travel for members of the Judiciary. The Tribunal also invited suggestions on a framework and criteria to assess eligible travel, as well as governance and approval arrangements which maintain high levels of transparency.
19. The JRCC has highlighted that the predominant reason for these determinations is because a Judge wishes to attend a legal or judicial conference overseas and the cost of accommodation and meals will vary depending on the country where the conference is being held. Further, applications for these allowances are rare and there is significant complexity in designing a framework to determine fair entitlements which would appropriately consider the unique circumstances and costs associated with each travel application.
20. Notwithstanding the potential for efficiency dividends from a general determination, the Tribunal is satisfied that the existing method encourages transparency and accountability from all office holders who seek the allowance. It also allows for the consideration of the circumstances and costs of the travel.
21. Accordingly, the Tribunal has determined that the current approach of considering these applications on a case-by-case basis will be retained.
22. The Tribunal invites future submissions on expanding the range of accommodation available to the Judges, Court Officers and Statutory Officers covered by Determination 9 of 2025 to include sharing economy accommodation such as Airbnb or similar platforms. A change of this nature would create consistency with the range of accommodation

available for Ministers of the Crown and Leader of the Opposition (Determination 7 of 2023) and Country Members of Parliament (Determination 9 of 2023).

23. Clause 3.6 of Determination 9 of 2025 reflects the terms of previous determinations, however its practical application may cause uncertainty and potential inequity. For example, questions arise about when the half-day allowance should apply and why it excludes South Australian travel. Because of these ambiguities, the Tribunal plans to review the clause in 2026 and will invite submissions on its operation and fairness, including whether the exclusion of South Australian travel remains appropriate.

24. An accompanying Determination has been issued and will operate from 1 January 2026.



Matthew O'Callaghan
PRESIDENT



Donny Walford
MEMBER



Mark Young
MEMBER

Dated: 2 December 2025