

Fees and Charges

Scope

In assisting participants to achieve their goals and aspirations, Araluen provides a variety of services for which there are a range of applicable fees. This policy describes the processes Araluen uses to recover fee's and ensure the delivery of high-quality services.

Policy Statement

Araluen is committed to working with people to create individualised supports that meet their needs and expectations. This policy sets out the way in which Araluen provides participants and the people who support them with transparent, honest, and efficient invoicing for the delivery of high-quality supports and related expenses.

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1. Invoicing and Payment

Once a fortnight, Araluen's finance team generates invoices for the supports and community-based transport that have been delivered to participants, based on information provided by service managers responsible for enacting participants plans and goals. Managers are responsible for ensuring that information provided about the supports participants have received is correct.

Invoices are sent to the participant or whomever is responsible for supporting them with the management of their NDIS package. Participants and the people who support them are advised to pay invoices and use the invoice generated by Araluen to claim back funds from the NDIS via their funding portal, if self-managing their NDIS plan.

Where the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is responsible for participants funds, requests for payment will be sent via the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) portal, rather than via invoice. All invoices will be given a unique number (referred to as a purchase order number) so that payments can be made towards the right person's supports.

2. Additional Service Fees

Additional service fee's such as the cost of activities that participants engage in will be charged for monthly. All additional service fees are based on quotations and agreements that are made when participants commence service with Araluen and participants and their families will be notified of any changes to the cost of these services before they are enacted. Invoices for additional expenses are generated on the 1st day of each month, and participants are encouraged to pay them via direct deposit. Additional fees may include, but are not limited to:

Activity Costs

Activity costs are the out-of-pocket costs over and above the cost of support. Examples of activity costs include going swimming or bowling, art supplies, cooking ingredients and entrance fees. Araluen does not charge for activities when a participant is absent. More information about activity costs can be found within the Participant Service Agreement, Timetable and Price Guide.

Absentee Charges

Information about Araluen's cancellation process can be found within the organisations Service Agreement, Service Quote and Program of Support Agreement.

Damage to Araluen Property

If a participant causes damage to any Araluen property, they may be responsible for replacement or repair of that property. Responsibility for costs will be determined by the relevant Araluen General Managers based on the following considerations:

- Whether the damage was intentional or unintentional.
- Whether the person was being supported appropriately at the time the damage was done.
- Whether it is likely to occur again.

Intentional damage is damage that is deliberate. To be deliberate a person must understand the outcome of their action.

3. Board and Lodgings Fee in Residential Services

In accordance with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) guidelines, Araluen's accommodation fees are based on a maximum of 75% of the Commonwealth Disability Support Pension plus 100% of Commonwealth Rent Assistance (but not including Mobility Allowance).

Fees cover regular 'board and lodging' costs. A rent fee and separate service fee comprise the total Residential Service Fee. (*See current Residential Service Fees for details – available from Araluen*). Furniture, bedding, linen, clothes, and other personal effects will be the responsibility of the participant and are not provided by Araluen. If

Araluen does not own the residence, then you will be invoiced for board only.

House staff will be directly accountable to participants and their families/guardians for managing participants personal expenditure, which they will track using logs and receipts.

The costs of agreed or requested 'Special' holidays and camps will be at the participant's own expense.

Araluen will invoice participants, families, or guardians in advance at the beginning of each month for Board and Lodgings costs.

Fees and charges will be reviewed and adjusted every 6 months in line with increases in the Disability Support Pension, changes in DHHS Policy and other related factors.

4. Overdue, Recovery and Grievance

In providing services, Araluen incurs expenses that need to be paid, such as staff wages, building and transport costs and insurance. Where participants or financial intermediary's fail to pay invoices, Araluen will take action to notify relevant parties and recover the required funds in the following ways:

- A written notice informing participants or relevant parties that fee's require prompt payment
- You will receive a written notice that your account will be forwarded to a Debt Collection Agency if it remains unpaid for 30 days or more.
- Araluen reserves the right to take legal action to recover monies owed and pass on collection expenses incurred to the participant.
- Araluen reserves the right to suspend services for non-payment of accounts, until all amounts owing have been received.
- Relevant General Manager to discuss with Participant/ Financial Carer suspension of service and follow up with written confirmation.
- General Manager to advise Executive Officer of suspension.

Grievances

Grievances about fees and charges should be raised with the relevant service manager as early as possible, to ensure their adequate, timely resolution.

Cases of Hardship

Sometimes, participants may have difficulty paying their fee's due to cases of genuine financial hardship. In such instances, the following procedure is to be followed:

A request can be made by or on behalf of a participant to meet with the relevant General Manager to explore:

- The nature of the financial hardship.
- The length of time that such hardship may endure.
- The capacity to part-pay fees for the time in question.

In cases where hardship has been established, an agreement will be reached regarding the payment of fees. Where necessary the agreement will be reviewed on a three-monthly basis.

5. Confidentiality, Retention and Destruction of Information and Privacy

Araluen treats all information related to participants with respect, in line with the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014. Financial information related to participants funding and financial matters will be securely stored in password protected systems and when necessary, securely locked storage systems to protect their confidentiality.

The destruction of any records or documents that are no longer needed by Araluen will be done in a way that assures confidentiality including shredding of and disposal via secure bins and electronic deletion within password protected systems.

Related Documents

- Araluen's Privacy Policy
- The Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014
- Araluen's Service Management: Community Participation policy
- Araluen's Service Agreement
- Araluen's Program of Support Agreement and Summary
- Araluen's Service Quote
- NDIS Pricing Arrangements Price Limit

Policy Review and Authorisation

This policy will be reviewed every three years. The Finance Manager in collaboration with the Quality Team will be responsible for reviewing and where necessary updating this policy.