

## **Fees, Charges, Refunds, Deferred Payment and Waiver Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

Meerilinga is a not for profit organisation and as such the fees and charges for our services are reviewed bi-annually to allow Meerilinga to maintain viability with provision of quality and equitable services. The fee, charges, refunds and waivers terms may be determined by:

- Department for Training and Workplace Development Vocation and Education and Training Fees and Charges Policy
- Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015
- Family Assistance Law
- Equity and Inclusion Policy
- Budget (Published Fees and Charges Addendum)
- Determination of an authorised officer by a reasonable process (to determine waiver, payment plan, deferred payment or sponsorship).
- Policy

Charitable services offered by Meerilinga to children and families are provided at cost recovery or free of charge.

Fees and charges apply to the following services:

- Meerilinga Training College
- Consulting Services
- Children's Early Learning Programs, playgroup, events and activities
- Community events and activities
- Published resources and merchandise
- Hire of facilities and/or equipment
- Online programs
- Records retrieval and replacement

### Refunds

Meerilinga publishes refund information for Meerilinga Training College, Early Learning Programs and Facility Hire Terms and Conditions. Generally, a refund will be given:

#### Meerilinga Training College

- In accordance with the Department for Training and Workforce Development Vocation Education and Training Fees and Charges Policy each calendar year.
- If a college service is cancelled by Meerilinga and a mutually acceptable alternative service cannot be found.
- If a college service is not available due to maximum number of places being reached.
- If a student has paid in advance for any unit(s) and withdraws from the unit(s) on or before the applicable census date.
- If a student, participant, client, or customer makes a complaint about a service where Meerilinga has failed to deliver the agreed service and the failure is substantiated and Meerilinga is unable to rectify the situation.

#### Early Learning Program

- In accordance to the applicable Early Learning Program published conditions.

#### Facility Hire

- In accordance to the published Facilities Hire Terms and Conditions and in other circumstances.
- In accordance to the Terms and Conditions stated in a Memorandum of Understanding / Contract of Services / Payment Plan or Written Agreement bearing authority of the Chief Executive Officer.

#### Fee and Charges Waiver

Equity between clients demands that the correct fee should be charged in accordance with Meerilinga and any relevant third party published fees and charges. Fees must always be charged unless levying such fees would cause severe financial hardship or would be inequitable. Staff must not unilaterally determine or promote that a fee should not be applied.

Only the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) can waive, remit or reduce fees.

In considering whether to waive, remit or reduce a fee or approve deferred payment, the Executive will take into consideration all circumstances and evidence.

Factors contributing to severe financial hardship generally include family tragedy, financial misfortune, serious illness, threat, impacts of natural disaster, excessive debt-to-income ratio and other serious or difficult circumstances:

#### Individual

A person is considered to be in severe financial hardship when the charging of a fee or recovery of debt they would be left unable to meet basic living needs for themselves, or their dependents including the following:

- Food
- Accommodation
- Clothing
- Health/Medical treatment
- Education
- Job Security / Entitlements
- Access to or full participation in social / beneficial services
- Other basic necessities.

#### Business

Serious financial hardship can also apply to businesses associated with:

- Business closure
- Disconnection of an essential service
- Repossession
- Imminent legal action pending for non-payment of debts
- Period of review limitations
- Court orders
- Settlements
- Other necessities for the business or people you are responsible for.

Final approval will be at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

## **Policy Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to outline Meerilinga's fee, charges, refunds and waivers to ensure fees are charged unless levying such fees would cause severe financial hardship or would be inequitable.

## **Application of Policy**

Fees will be published and charged for the specified services in accordance with the guidelines set by the Executive and approved by the Board of Governors.

The collection, storage, banking and reconciliation of fees, charges, refunds and waivers will be carried out in accordance with the written fees, charges, refunds and waivers handling processes.

Written information relating to the fees, charges, refunds and waivers for services will be provided to clients, customers, and students prior to any agreement to participate in the service is reached.

The applicable fees will be collected prior to a client participating in a service. Payment plans or waiver must be in place prior the date of fees being due.

Should a client be having difficulty paying fees as due, they should contact the Executive Manager Finance and Assets prior the due date to discuss an alternate payment structure.

Requests for refunds must be made in writing to the appropriate Executive. Consideration to waive these guidelines will be given in exceptional unforeseen circumstances at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer.

Meerilinga will ensure and approve its financial capacity to refund client fees in accordance with contractual and/or legislative requirements.

Requests for waiver, concession, and deferred payment plans must be made on the prescribed application form.

From time to time Meerilinga may offer group concessions or discounted fees for its services. Each case will be considered on its merits.

***Refer to Addendum Approved Schedule of Fees and Charges section.***

## **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually as a part of Meerilinga's performance review.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to the Board of Governors, Executive, all workers, customer, clients, students and those employed on a fee for service or contract basis while conducting Meerilinga business.

## **Addendum Approved Schedule of Fees and Charges**

### **1. Foreword**

The Approved Schedule of Fees and Charges outlines all fees that may be charged by Meerilinga for products and services or other engagement with Meerilinga in the current year. This document is published annually with the authority of the Chief Executive Officer.

**Reference should be made to accompanying policies and procedures in ALL instances.**

#### **1.1 Authorised Officer**

Only fees that have been approved by the Chief Executive Officer (or delegate) can be charged to students or persons. Fees not approved are illegal and cannot be either charged or collected. The Chief Executive Officer is the Authorised (approving) Officer for Fee Waiver Applications.

Fees listed in this document are invoiced and collected through the Finance Department.

#### **1.2 Authority to Approve Deferred Payment Plan**

The Executive Manager Finance and Assets may approve a deferred payment plan as mutually acceptable to both parties. The plan **must** be documented and final payment must not exceed the duration of the term of hire, study or employment.

An application on the prescribed form addressed to the Authorised Officer (CEO) is required by the applicant. The written statement should outline what the individual / organisation can afford to pay towards the fees

#### **1.3 Authority to Waiver due to Severe Financial Hardship**

The Chief Executive Officer may approve Fee Waiver Applications due to Severe Financial Hardship.

Financial hardship involves an inability of the individual / organisation to pay bills, rather than an unwillingness to do so. Customer hardship can arise from a variety of situations. Hardship can be either of limited duration or long term.

Severe financial hardship will be decided on an individual / organisational basis for the purpose of:

- waiving any Meerilinga Fees
- writing-off a debt to Meerilinga
- making a decision about reducing or suspending the collection of fees

**MTC Only**

Note: DTWD VET Fees and Charges Policy now provides criteria for VET Fee Waivers - see table below.

<b>Criteria for Severe Financial Hardship-VET FEES &amp; CHARGES POLICY(effective 1/2019)</b>		
1. The student's income must not exceed the Department of Human Services income thresholds for the low income health care card, as outlined below.		
<b>STATUS</b>	<b>Weekly Income</b>	<b>Total income in the 8 week period prior to applying</b>
Single no children	\$556.00	\$4,448.00
Couple combined, no children	\$960.00	\$7,680.00
Single, one dependent child	\$960.00	\$7,680.00
For each additional child add	\$34.00	\$272.00
2. The student does not have the disposable income to pay the fees via instalments without compromising their ability to meet their basic living needs or those of their dependents		
3. There is no basis for concluding that the student's financial circumstances are likely to change within a reasonable period (e.g. 12 months).		

Where these criteria are not met, instalment plans are appropriate and extended payment periods may also be considered

Subject to exceptional circumstances, a fee waiver cannot be given unless **all** of the above criteria are met.

**1.4 Severe Financial Hardship**

Severe financial hardship will be decided on an individual / organisational basis by the Authorised Officer taking into account all the circumstances. Refer to Policy Section 9, Fees, Charges and Refund Policy. These could include:

- the make-up of the family group (e.g. single parent, number of children etc)
- current family income and expenses
- available funds of an organisation (consideration of the individuals organisation expense and debts and income)
- long term unemployed
- exceptional expenses (e.g. funeral, pharmaceutical costs or illness)
- receipt of pension / government support
- recent loss of job, and enrolment is for purposes of retraining
- Recent migration to Australia and enrolment to establish work purpose plus the current family income and expense

**Application for Severe Hardship**

The applicant needs to establish that severe financial hardship would result (after reasonable expenses are deducted from income) if Meerilinga pursued the recovery of a fee. Reasonable expenditure includes, but is not limited to: minimum loan repayments, fix operating costs of an organisation, rent, groceries, electricity, insurance, school fees, medical costs, etc.

An application on the prescribed form addressed to the Authorised Officer (CEO) is required by the applicant. The written statement should outline what the individual / organisation can afford to pay towards the fees.

At the sole discretion of the Authorised Officer (CEO) additional, tangible evidence (to that stated in the prescribed application form) of hardship may be requested and could include:

- Documentation such as a statutory declaration from a person/agency familiar with
- The individuals/organisations circumstances (not for profit agencies, a government agency, family doctor, clergy, bank officer, agencies etc)
- Evidence of the customer having consulted with, and/or being accompanied by a recognised financial counsellor or a booking to see a financial counsellor
- Current Bank Statements
- Letter from charitable organisation
- Legal documents

Details of the individuals / organisations and grounds for waiving of fees and charges will be retained for audit purposes.

### **1.5 Bad Debt Recovery and Refunds**

All bad debts are reportable to the Chief Executive Officer. A bad debt write off can only be recommended when all opportunities to recover in full have been applied. Fair and adequate recovery procedures should be in place to manage the collection and recovery of monies.

Requests for refunds must be made in writing to the Chief Executive Officer accompanied by a completed request for refund form/student amendment request form. Refunds are guided by the current fees and charges policies.

## **2. Meerilinga Training College Fee Management**

MTC fees are collected in accordance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015 and DTWD VET Fees and Charges Policy of the current calendar year.

### **2.1 Course Fees**

*(New Trainee / New Funded Student)*

An hourly rate, based on nominal hours, will apply to each unit commenced. Nominal Hours do not represent the hours of training or instruction. The course fee is the sum of fees for all units that a student enrolls in.

Students will be invoiced on the commencement of units. The total course cost is approximate and indicative only. Fees and charges are subject to change pending proof of evidence in relation to units eligible for Recognition of Prior Learning, Credit Transfer and the Department of Training and Workforce Development current calendar year VET Fees and Charges Policy. Incidental charges may be incurred through the course of study.

For secondary school aged persons, not enrolled at School the maximum course fee chargeable in 2019 is \$420.00. This maximum applies to the total course fees for one or more courses for both concessional and non-concessional students. For these students, course fees are calculated at the concessional rate until the student reaches the fee cap.

Students will be informed, prior to enrolment, the payment in full of course fees are required before arrangement/commencement of final practicum.

### Enterprise Students – Trainees

Please refer to Policy 5. Workers Development and Review Policy. If Meerilinga elects to pay the fees on behalf of the employee then the approved and documented process will be adhered to.

### CHC30113 Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care

New Enrolments	Total Course Cost*
Traineeships and Classroom delivery Fees based on Nominal Hours 775 hours 12 months to complete	
Non-concession	<b>\$2,518.75</b>
<i>Concession</i>	<b>\$751.75</b>

### CHC50113 Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care

Traineeships and Funded Fees Based on Nominal Hours 1780 hours 24 Months to Complete		
	Non-Concession	Concession
Full Course Fee	\$10,306.20	\$3,097.20
VET Fees Annual Maximum Fee per Course* (Only if all units commenced in 2019)	\$7,860.00	N/A
Resource & Other Fee	N/A	N/A

\* CHC50113 Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care is ineligible for Course Fee Waiver.

### 2.2 Concession Rate (Refer to DTWD VET Fees and Charges Policy)

#### CONCESSIONS ON COURSES

The following students are entitled to the concession rate on course fees:

- a) Persons and dependants of persons holding
  - i. A Pensioner Concession Card.
  - ii. A Repatriation Health Benefits Card issued by the Department of Veterans' Affairs.
  - iii. A Health Care Card
- b) Persons and dependants of persons in receipt of AUSTUDY or ABSTUDY.
- c) Persons and dependants of persons in receipt of the Youth Allowance.
- d) Persons and dependants of persons who are inmates of a custodial institution.
- e) Secondary school-aged persons not enrolled at school.

Proof of eligibility for concession must be shown at the time of enrolment. For online or self-enrolments where a concession is claimed, proof of concession checks by RTOs will be carried out at a later date.

### 2.3 Other Fees

Fees may be charged for goods or services that are not essential to the course or for alternate forms of access to goods and services that are otherwise made available by Meerilinga at no additional cost. Fees will be published prior to commencement of enrolment.

	<b>Non-Concession</b>	<b>Concession</b>
Replacement of Log Book	\$50.00	\$50.00
Re-Issuance of record (VET 5.9.1.h)	\$50.00 each	\$50.00 each
RPL (Recognition of Prior Learning)	\$100 per unit assessed	N/A

### Skills Recognition

Recognition of prior learning (RPL) involves the assessment of previously unrecognised skills and knowledge an individual has achieved outside the formal education and training system in respect of a specific unit. RPL is an assessment process that assesses the individual's non-formal and informal learning to determine the extent to which that individual has achieved these required learning outcomes or competency outcomes and all trainee students and funded students will be reviewed for an opportunity to apply recognition of prior learning to their study.

### Text Books

Meerilinga Training College stocks textbooks available for purchase, students will be advised on textbooks that are recommended reading for MTC courses prior to enrolment.

MTC endeavour to provide a cost recovery only to students as an outright purchase option of textbooks. Students are unable to add the cost of textbooks to payment by instalment arrangements or other fee waiver approved options.

Students who cannot obtain a current copy of the recommended reading materials via independent purchase will be able to access the Class Set in the Student Library.

Text books and other text material may be purchased externally or through Meerilinga at cost recovery:

- Diploma \$205.00
- Cert III \$205.00

### 2.4 Payment Options

All students, on enrolment will take up one of the following payment options:

- 1) pay the full amount of fees and charges
- 2) present a signed authority from an employer to invoice that employer for the student's fees and charges
- 3) pay fee by instalment
- 4) make application on the grounds of severe financial hardship for fees and charges to be waived for courses below diploma level or concession-eligible and Advanced Diploma courses (excluding the Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care).Diploma; or
- 5) Students who fail to take up one of the above options must not be enrolled.

### **2.5 Payment by Instalment**

Students must be given a minimum of eight weeks from the commencement of semester to finalise payment, which may include payment by instalments. Accountable officers should use their discretion in application of this instruction by formulating the payment by instalments to more appropriately match the particular training program. Details of the student's enrolment and details of why deferred payment was granted must be retained for audit purposes.

Students who have fallen behind in their payments **must not** be enrolled in additional units unless appropriate arrangements, agreed by both student and RTO, have been put in place to pay the outstanding amount.

### **2.6 Deferment and Extensions**

Meerilinga will consider extensions to students seeking extra time to complete courses of study. Applications for extension must be made in writing to and approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

Meerilinga reserves the right to refuse an extension in its absolute discretion.

Students seeking to defer their studies must state an intention to do so prior to the commencement of training or within 2 weeks following the commencement of training. Deferments will only be granted for a period of up to 6 months additional time.

In the event that a student does not complete their course in time, and does not seek either an extension or deferment for the course as directed above, then their training will be considered incomplete. No refund will be given and a new enrolment must be pursued.

### **2.7 Collection and Refund of Fees**

MTC fees are collected according to the Training and Accreditation Council directive 'Fees Paid in Advance 2010' and 'AQTF 2010 Condition of Registration'.

Payments for any course of study attracting total fees of \$1,500.00 or more will be as follows:

- First payment will be invoiced on confirmation of enrolment
- The balance of fees will be invoiced in advance progressively over the study period. No one payment will exceed \$1,000.00.
- Whereby a unit or cluster of units exceed an upfront cost of \$1500 alternative payment arrangements will be made through the Executive Manager Finance and Assets
- All fee waivers, concession and deferred payment plans will be authorised by the Executive.

MTC has a refund policy and ensures that the financial and contractual relationship between the student/client and the organisation is fair and equitable.

**Students must advise in writing their request to withdraw.****2.7.1 Full Refund**

A full refund will be given:

- If a service is cancelled by Meerilinga and a mutually acceptable alternative time cannot be found.
- If the RTO ceases to operate and a student has not received the service paid for or yet completed or attained a unit of study in which they enrolled
- A course/qualification or unit is cancelled or re-scheduled to a time unsuitable to the student
- A student is not given a place due to maximum number of places being reached
- Where a student has formally withdrawn in writing within 4 weeks of application (excluding costs of resources)
- The Accountable officer can approve a full refund of fees at any time during the delivery if a class is cancelled because of declining numbers, no available lecturer or due to other circumstances caused by the RTO.

Students who withdraw for reasons other than those outlined above, and who lodge a withdrawal form before the Census Date will be eligible for a full refund of their course fee.

**2.7.2 Part Refund**

MTC set a census/withdrawal date for each unit at no less than 20% of the period the unit is undertaken.

Students who withdraw before the census date for a unit, for reasons other than listed in Section 2.7.1, will be eligible for a full refund of the unit fee.

**2.7.2 Pro-Rata Refunds**

Accountable officers can approve a pro rata refund of fees and charges at any time during the course of delivery if students withdraw for reasons of personal circumstances beyond their control.

For example:

- serious illness resulting in extended absence from classes
- injury or disability that prevents the student from completing their program of study
- other exceptional reasons at the discretion of the accountable officer

In all cases, relevant documentary evidence (for example, medical certificate) is required. Details of all refunds will be retained for audit purposes, and the enrolment form annotated to show that a refund has been given.

**2.7.3 Refunds are not given:**

- a) Where a student fails to complete assessment tasks / placements and responsibilities
- b) For change of mind after 4 weeks of acceptance, or after the applicable Census date
- c) Where a student defers
- d) Where a student does not achieve competency at the completion of study
- e) For resources where they are damaged/incomplete

Students wishing to withdraw or defer courses must advise in writing their intent to Student Services. Deferral will be time limited and will incur additional fees.

### 3. Professional Service Fees

- \$150.00 per hour plus GST
- Cancellation of consulting services will result in a charge of 20% of the contracted fee.

### 4. Records Service Fees

External Charges	
Description	Charge
Record Retrieval	\$30.00 per hour or part thereof

### 5. Facilities and Equipment Hire Fees

***These apply to Community Orgs, Non Profit Orgs, and Private Business that promote/provide services to children and/or families. All fees quoted below are inclusive of GST.***

	Hourly
West Leederville Single Training Room (capacity of 30)	\$25.00*
West Leederville Double Training Room (capacity 80)	\$50.00*
Long Term Exclusive Use	REFER TO EXECUTIVE MANAGER FINANCE

\* Refer Executive Manager Finance for pricing for a hiring of six (6) or more hours

\*\* A discount of 20% is available for a hiring of six (6) or more hours.

Item	Central	FC's
Room Cancellation (<5days)	50%	50%
Late/Lost Keys	\$35.00	\$35.00
Security Call-Out	\$85.00	\$85.00
Setup	\$40	\$40
Staff callout/attendance (per hour)	\$50	\$50
Tea/Coffee (p/person, prior booking required)	\$1.75	\$1.75
Photocopying (Black)(p/page)	\$0.25	\$0.25
Data Projector per day or part thereof (where available).	\$50.00	\$50.00
Electronic White Board per day or part thereof (where available).	\$50.00	\$50.00
		N/A
Chairs & Tables	No Cost	No Cost
TV/DVD (where available)	No Cost	No Cost
Crockery & cutlery	No Cost	No Cost
Kitchen Facilities	No Cost	No Cost

Toys & Play Equipment (limited playgroup use)	N/A	N/A
Shared Storage	N/A	No Cost

*Additional subsidy will only be granted by the CEO on a case by case basis where a group is both not for profit and community managed. See 1.3 – Financial Hardship*

### 5.1 Playgroups/Room Hire

Meerilinga Facilitated (including Parenting Groups)	Room Hire	Not for Profit and Community Groups	Not for Profit and Community Groups	Others All times
\$30.00* + \$5.00 for two or more children per term		<b>Weekdays Hourly</b>	<b>Weekends Hourly</b>	<b>Hourly</b>
	Children and Family Centre Activity Room	\$18.00	\$22.00	\$22.00
	Double Activity Room	\$36.00	\$44	\$44.00
	Children and Family Centre meeting room	\$14	\$14	\$14
Toys & Play Equipment (limited playgroup use) No Cost for Meerilinga Facilitated groups		\$2	\$2	\$2

\* \$15.00 if joining midway through term  
\$15.00 per term for fortnightly groups

\*\* Requests are to be submitted to Executive Manager Finance.  
Criteria for concession is as follows.

- Not for Profit entity, and
- Not in receipt of external funding, and
- Community/Parent Committee managed

#### Refund of Fees

- Refunds of 50% of hire fee will be given for hiring cancelled with less 5 day notice
- A full refund will be given if a hirer of facilities/equipment provides more than 5 day notice of cancellation.

### 5.2 Centre Organised Activities (excludes events that are funded via grants/sponsorship)

	Meerilinga Facilitated	
One-off or casual activity	\$5 per event per family	Refer to EMF for any variation

### 5.3 Staff Resource Costs

Description	Cost
Free dress shirt – charcoal Free Sport Shirt (new staff only)	Free
Sports shirt	P.O.A
Ladies dress shirt – ¾ sleeves	P.O.A
Ladies dress shirt – short sleeves	P.O.A
Men’s dress shirt – long sleeves	P.O.A
Text Books	Cost recovery
Amenities – Per working day per fortnight	\$0.50
Car Parking	N/A
Malicious damage or loss of work equipment	Replacement cost of Item

### 6. Children’s Program Fees

Meerilinga Early Learning Programs (ELP) are approved under the Family Assistance Law to receive and pass on Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payments to eligible families as a fee reduction.

The setting and payment of fees considers all requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, Australian Tax Office, Family Assistance Law, Privacy Act and the guidelines contained within the Australian Government Child Care Service Handbook. All records held at the service will be maintained in accordance with the Privacy and Security of Documentation and Records Management Policy.

Daily Session Fee Current 01 July 2019 to 20 December 2019	\$95.00
Daily Session Fee effective 01 January 2020 to 30 June 2020	\$95.00
Administration Fee (Per family, upon enrolment or re-enrolment, once per calendar year and non-refundable).	\$50.00

#### Payment of Children’s Program Fees

Fees will be paid by Direct Debit from a nominated account, enrolling parents/guardians will complete a Child Care Easy Pay - Direct Debit Request and Service Agreement form.

Fees will be deducted each week on Friday of the current week of care.

The amount drawn down will be the remaining gap fee amount, after the CCS portion of the fee for eligible families has been received from Centrelink.

At the time of enrolment or re-enrolment, a one off \$50 non-refundable administration fee per family will be deducted. The child/ren must be living in the same house as the enrolling parent/guardian. Where the CEO approves a fee waiver for hardship, the administration fee is inclusive of this waiver.

A dishonour fee will apply from Child Care Easy Pay for failed direct debit transactions.

Meerilinga will provide a dated statement each week, in accordance with legislative requirements. *Regulation 168(n)*

Enrolment means attendance, applicable fees and acceptance of all terms and conditions for agreed routine daily sessions during licensed operating hours over forty eight (48) weeks per year. Fees are payable for the agreed routine daily sessions of enrolment, this includes where absences are taken, such as public holidays, illness, vacations, school holidays or emergency closure until cancellation by Meerilinga or the enrolling parent/guardian in accordance to the terms and conditions of enrolment or cessation of the service.

If places are available, parent/guardian can request (in writing) to book a casual daily session if that daily session falls outside their permanent and agreed routine daily session. Once the casual booking is confirmed in writing by the service, fees will be payable for that day and this includes if the child is absent as the place has been held for that child.

Fees will not be charged for Meerilinga Early Learning Programs published closure days. Annual scheduled closure for four (4) weeks over Christmas and New Year period and one (1) day nominated for planning.

Parent/guardians will be given at least two (2) weeks notice in writing of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which fees are collected. *Regulation 172(2)*

The enrolling parent/guardian is required to give two (2) weeks notice in writing of cessation of the care agreement with the service. Fees will be continue to be charged for the notice period. If the child does not attend during this notice period, no CCS will be paid for any days after the child's last physical day of attendance at the service, therefore full fees will be charged.

### **Refund of Fees**

Requests for refunds in respect of Children's programs are to be referred to the Executive Manager Finance and Assets

### **Child Care Subsidy**

Meerilinga will comply with the Australian Government requirements as an approved service for the purposes of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) reporting requirements, keeping accurate records and any other requirements for claiming and administering CCS.

Upon enrolment, Meerilinga ELP will enter into a Complying Written Arrangement (CWA) with the enrolling parent/guardian and the planned arrangements for providing care in return for fees. The agreement will be recorded electronically through the Commonwealth Government Child Care Management System (CCMS), printed and signed. Any changes to the CWA will require an updated agreement eg: fees, session times, routine bookings etc.

Should the enrolling parent/guardian wish to claim CCS, they are responsible for registering with Centrelink/Department of Human Services through myGov online services and completes an assessment to confirm eligibility to receive CCS. The enrolled child must also meet the Australian Government immunisation requirements.

The amount of CCS to which a family is entitled to is determined by the family income and activity test eg: work, study, volunteering. Families are responsible for keeping their details on myGov current and contact Centrelink direct if they wish to dispute assessments or discuss changes in their circumstances that may affect CCS entitlement.

Any changes in a child's routine enrolment arrangement must be given in writing via email, letter or new CWA.

Families are entitled to 42 absence days for each registered child in each financial year. CCS is paid for these days provided that the child would normally have attended on that day, and fees have been charged.

Additional absences can be claimed when the first 42 days have been used. Supporting documentation may be required for approval of additional absences.

All documentation pertaining to CCS will be kept for the specified period of time and made available to Australian Government Officers on request.

## **Sponsorship**

Meerilinga provides limited sponsorship in the Children's Services Programs across the organisation. All families are eligible, however, the Service Director together with an Advisor are to assess each potential case on its merits at the time of considering enrollment and are to submit a recommendation to the Chief Executive Officer. No commitment is to be conveyed to families.

It is important to understand that sponsorships are for inclusion into a group care and education program. Inclusion is to mean enabling a family and/or child/ren deemed to be experiencing hardship or vulnerability to have equitable access to Meerilinga fee charged services. As an organisation we assess individual cases, we also look at how our organisation may assist the family, and also consider all of the children that will be attending the program. Assessment for assistance in participating in our early learning program is a holistic process and funds are capped. Therefore, we must look upon each case and the organisations resources to provide the best outcomes for children and families.

Our services will seek to provide information to clients on other services available to children and families so we can refer a family when required to do so.

The provision of assistance through the Australian Government, Non-Government Centre Support (NGCS) element may be accessible to support services for children living with disabilities provided by non-school organisations. Applications can be made <http://det.wa.edu.au/ssen/detcms/school-support-programs/schools-of-special-educational-needs/non-government-centre-support-for-non-school-organisations/non-government-centre-support-for-non-school-organisations.en?cat-id=14278862>

The CEO may provide a sponsorship for the full or partial fee, which if approved will be for a duration advised in writing.

**Any approval will be based on and subject to the following:**

- A recommendation – in addition to that from the Service Director (e.g. from **Child Health, DCP, Meerilinga Parenting**).
- A completed Application for Fee Waiver.
- Continued attendance of the child (regular or extended nonattendance may result in withdrawal of the sponsorship).
- An inclusion plan.
- Approved additional gap funding where applicable to cover additional or specialized staffing / resources.

**Additional Child Care Subsidy (Child Wellbeing)**

Additional Child Care Subsidy provides additional fee assistance to support vulnerable or disadvantaged families and children. This support recognises the preventative and protective influence of quality child care on a child's health, wellbeing and development; and the importance of continuity of care.

Approved providers can only make application for Additional Child Care Subsidy (child wellbeing) where an enrolled child is at risk of serious abuse or neglect.

Any child identified as being at risk under the state child protection law will meet the definition of at risk and will therefore be eligible to receive the payment.

Meerilinga is not involved in making applications for the other types of Additional Child Care Subsidy available to families however will encourage families to contact Centrelink to apply for additional assistance.

- Additional Child Care Subsidy (grandparent) - to help grandparents on income support who are the principal caregiver of their grandchildren.
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (temporary financial hardship) - to help families experiencing financial hardship.
- Additional Child Care Subsidy (transition to work) - to help low-income families transitioning from income support to work.

**Inclusion Support Program**

The Inclusion Support Program assists our Early Learning Programs to include children with additional needs. This includes advice and support from contracted Inclusion Agencies as well as funding towards employing for additional support staff.

### **Inclusion Development Fund**

Funding that supports our ability to include children with additional needs into our programs enabling them to learn and develop alongside their typically developing peers.

There are two (2) streams of Inclusion Development Funding support accessible for our Meerilinga programs, which have different eligibility criteria, application processes and approved funding purposes.

These streams of support are:

- Subsidy for an Additional Educator - per-hour funding to the service to subsidise the employment of an additional educator to increase the educator-to-child ratio to support the inclusion of a child (or children) with diagnosed disability or
- Subsidy for Immediate / Time-Limited Support – enabling the service to immediately engage an additional educator for a time-limited period while an alternative and more stable solution is being determined.

Access to the Inclusion Support Program is done by the Advisor Enrolment and Inclusion through the web-based application; the Inclusion Support (IS) Portal. IS Portal is the gateway for our ELP services to complete an online Strategic Inclusion Plan and access funding available through the Inclusion Development Fund.

<https://www.education.gov.au/inclusion-support-portal-information>

## **7. Products**

### **Children's Week** (restricted sales refer C/W Coordinator)

<b>Item</b>	<b>Options</b>	<b>Cost \$</b>
Posters		POA

## **8. Freedom of Information & Copies of Document Charges**

A scale of fees and charges is determined by Finance annually. Apart from any non-refundable fee advertised, all charges are discretionary. The fees and charges are as follows.

Personal Information about the applicant	No Fee/charges
Non personal information application fee	\$30.00
Charge for time dealing with the application (per hour, or pro rata)	\$30.00 Min.
Access time supervised by staff (per hour, or pro rata)	\$30.00 Min.
Photocopying staff time (Per hour, or pro rata)	\$30.00
Per photocopy	\$0.30
Transcribing from tape, film or computer (Per hour, or pro rata)	\$50.00
Duplicating a tape, film or computer information	Actual Cost
Delivery, packaging and postage	Actual Cost
Replacement of records current on file	\$50.00
Replacement of Record from archive retrieval	\$50.00

Fee is paid in full upfront. For financially disadvantaged applicants or those issued with prescribed WA Concession cards, the charge payable is reduced by 25% or waived at the discretion of the CEO

## **9. Funding Applications-Item Costs**

To be used when applying for minor grants that may include supply of workers eg crèche and local advertising and etc.\*\*

<b>Description</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Flyer-A4 double sided, DL triple folded full colour	\$1.50ea
A4 single sided full colour Laminated	\$1.50ea
A4 double sided full colour Laminated	\$1.90ea
Support Worker(casual) Children Services per hour**	\$26.61
Room /Equipment Hire	As per schedules above
Advertising and miscellaneous/one -off items	Refer EMF

**\*\* REFER Executive Manager Finance and Assets if Meerilinga Staff are to be used.**