

Short Term Accommodation / Respite (STA)

The NDIA defines Short Term Accommodation (STA) as a temporary arrangement for participants who require a short-term stay away from home, offering respite for both the participant and their informal carers. This policy outlines the NDIA's guidelines, which providers must adhere to and details the implementation approach by IOE.

Funding for Short Term Accommodation

STA funds can be accessed if it relates to a person's disability support needs, and where it is reasonable and necessary. Funds come from the core budget of a NDIS plan for up to 28 days.

The STA Guidelines state that funding must be used in accordance with an individual's assessed support needs. This includes the required staffing ratio, and one-to-one support should only be provided where there is clear evidence that it is necessary as a result of the person's disability.

Short Term Accommodation at IOE

IOE acknowledges that Short Term Accommodation (STA) generally refers to facility-based respite opportunities. A primary purpose of IOE is to enhance family wellbeing by offering respite for informal carers while delivering dynamic and innovative services.

Given the limited access to facility-based respite, STA opportunities will be provided in a variety of settings through IOE. All STA services will have the primary goal of providing informal carers respite while providing a meaningful experience for the participant.

IOE will claim the following for STA in accordance with the NDIA Pricing Arrangements and Price Limits:

- **Direct support costs:** Claimed in line with the applicable NDIA pricing guidelines and in accordance with the individual's assessed support needs and the ratio requirements specified in their plan.
- **Standard accommodation:** With no extra inclusions. The expectation is accommodation should be clean and comfortable and include basic amenities like a bed, bathroom, and the accessibility features ie: hotel, motel, short stay rental, cabin, cottage, hostel, or respite accommodation. Location suggestions will be welcomed from participants and families although IOE will make final decisions about the accommodation based on affordability, suitability to participants needs and availability.
NDIA will only fund the support component of services occurring in a participant home, or a homestay arrangement where a participant stays in a private home and receives support from the person who lives there. The accommodation component of an STA cannot be claimed in these instances.
- **Non-face-to-face support:** Time required to plan and coordinate the STA, including booking venues, updating participant support information, arranging or hiring any equipment required for the stay and or set up and pack up of activity.

- **Travel:** Travel is not claimable as part of a Short-Term Accommodation (STA) service where a participant is able to travel independently. Travel may be claimed where the participant requires travel-related support due to their disability.

Group Based Recreation: Recreation will identify the mileage to be charged for activities at the time of advertising activities and will be charged as an out-of-pocket cost. Mileage claimed will be kilometres required for travel to and from the recreational campsite locations. Any additional kilometres incurred during the STA will be absorbed by IOE and will not be charged to the participant.

Provision 1:1/Specialist Services STA: Mileage to and from the STA location as well as travel while on the activity will be claimed where appropriate.

Out of Pocket Costs

All participants accessing STA will be charged out-of-pocket costs. The total amount will vary depending on the program attended and the frequency of activities selected by the participant.

Out-of-pocket costs will include:

- **Entry Fees and Activities:** Pricing will be based on the specific activity, entry or tickets required specifically for the activity chosen.
- **Meals:** how participants are charged for meals will be dependent on the type of STA being accessed.

Group Based / Recreation: Meals will be provided as part of the program being accessed. Participants will be charged an out-of-pocket cost to cover the cost of meals.

Provision 1:1 Participants will be required to either bring their own food to prepare meals or pay for any meals purchased while on the STA. Payment for purchased meals must be made at the time of purchase, as meal expenses will not be billed through IOE.

Disclosure of costs

IOE will provide participants with the cost of group-based activities before they commit to the program. This information will include the total program cost, including any applicable out-of-pocket expenses. It will also clearly outline the difference between accessing the program using standard support hours plus out-of-pocket costs as opposed to accessing it under Short Term Accommodation (STA) plus any applicable out-of-pocket costs.

Exclusions

NDIA are clear that short term accommodation funding cannot be used to go on a holiday. You cannot use funding to pay for:

- Costs of a holiday or tourist travel ie: cruises, holiday packages, holiday accommodation and airfares, including interstate and overseas travel, passports, visa, travel and vehicle insurance, internet, activities, and meals.
- Holiday accommodation outside of Australia, for example in an overseas location
- Accommodation or travel expenses for family members who are providing you with informal support on holiday.
- Accommodation or travel expenses for your support workers who are providing you with formal support on holiday.
- Activities, entrance fees.

- Meals

NDIA will not fund STA

If a participant:

- Lives in Supported Independent Living
- Lives alone
- Not living with primary informal supports
- Accessing 18 hours of support each day

Payment

IOE strongly advises that participants or their nominees contact their plan manager or LAC before booking a STA to confirm eligibility and ensure the STA will be approved for payment.

If STA is provided but later rejected for payment by the plan manager or NDIA, the participant will be responsible for covering the cost.

Some plan managers may ask additional questions when using STA prior to approving the payment

- What is the reason for STA? Is it providing respite for unpaid carers?
- Have you been funded for 1-1 support in your plan or group funding? (You may require additional evidence to support your reason for needing 1:1 support for STA if you usually access group supports)