

## **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 for each calendar year
- 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 with the applicable Early Learning Program published conditions.

Facility Hire:

- In accordance with the published Facilities Hire Terms and Conditions and in other circumstances.
- In accordance with 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 Executive 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 includes 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 relevant contractual and/or legislative requirements, 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 Manager Finance and Administration prior the due date to discuss an alternate payment structure.

Requests for refunds must be made in writing to the 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.

<b>Addendum Approved Schedule of Fees and Charges</b>	
<b>Process Owner</b>	<b>Chief Executive Officer</b>
<b>Effective Date</b>	<b>14 November 2023</b>
<b>Date of Last Revision</b>	<b>19 September 2023</b>

## **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 (CEO).

**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.

\* Refer clause (6) Children's Program Fees. A limited authority has been approved in respect of Early Learning Fees

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

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

The Manager Finance and Administration 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 Executive may approve Fee Waiver Applications due to Severe Financial Hardship and determined on an Individual basis, taking into account all circumstances.

Financial hardship involves an inability of the individual to pay for their essential living needs or those of their dependents, 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

### 1.3.1 Meerilinga Training College Only

Department of Training Workforce & Development (DTWD), [Vocational Education and Training \(VET\) Fees and Charges Policy](#) outlines criteria for VET Fee Waivers Attachment C - Fee Waiver Guidelines.

Fee waiver due to severe financial hardship does not apply to the CHC50121 Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care course.

The assessment of whether an applicant qualifies for a fee waiver is to be made on the basis of their individual circumstances at enrolment and those of any dependent family members.

Subject to the exceptional circumstances outlined below, a fee waiver cannot be given unless ALL of the following criteria are met.

<b>Criteria for Severe Financial Hardship - VET Fees &amp; Charges Policy (effective 1 January 2023)</b>		
1. The student's income must not exceed the Services Australia income thresholds for the low income health care card, as outlined below:		
<b>STATUS</b>	<b>Weekly Income</b>	<b>Total income in the eight - week period prior to applying</b>
Single no children	\$656	\$5,248
Couple combined, no children	\$1,127	\$9,016
Single, one dependent child	\$1,127	\$9,016
Couple combined, one child	\$1,161	\$9,288
For each additional child add	\$34	\$272
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).		
<p><b>NOTE:</b> The student must provide relevant supporting documentation to evidence their claim, including evidence as to their financial circumstances. The nature of the evidence provided will depend on the individual circumstances of the student. Example evidence for assessing income includes pay slips and bank statements. Example evidence for assessing outgoings includes tenancy agreements and utility bills.</p>		

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

### 1.4 Exceptional Circumstances

Short term hardship or temporary financial difficulty that arises from a sudden change in circumstances does not generally qualify a person for fee waiver consideration. Only in exceptional circumstances should a fee waiver be considered.

The following provides examples of the types of events that may compromise a student's ability to meet their essential living needs or those of their dependents. The list is indicative and not exhaustive.

- The student or family member has a sudden or unexpected health issue or disability.

- Death of a significant wage earner in the family, where the student had a dependent relationship.
- Relationship breakdown or domestic violence.
- Significant events which are likely to last over the duration of the enrolment period and clearly impact on the student's capacity to provide themselves or dependents with basic necessities such as food, accommodation, clothing, medical treatment and other basic necessities.

Other:

- Unable to meet their financial obligations because of illness, unemployment or other reasonable cause
- Reduction or loss of pension / government support
- Single parent or carer status with dependents living with them
- Young person (under 25) living independently (with no parental support)
- Long term unemployment /recent loss of job and enrolment for purposes of retraining
- Reduction or loss in income resulting in debt servicing difficulties and capacity to provide themselves or dependents with basic necessities such as food, accommodation, clothing or medical treatment.
- In receipt of protective measures/court or government intervention (eg: domestic violence)
- Available funds of an organisation (consideration of the individuals organisation expense and debts and income)
- Exceptional expenses (e.g. funeral, pharmaceutical costs or illness)
- 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 CEO. 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 CEO 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**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the [Standards for Registered Training Organisations \(RTOs\) 2015](#), [DTWD VET Fees and Charges Policy](#) for each calendar year and associated [Meerilinga Policies](#).

### **2.1 Course Fees**

Fees for each course, including publicly funded and fee for service are published in [Training and Education](#) on the Meerilinga website and include:

- Concession eligibility
- Secondary school age
- Collection of fees and payment options (also refer to 2.1.1 below)
- Pre-paid Fee Protection (also refer to 2.1.2 below)
- Additional Costs
- Text books, recommended reading resources
- Recognition of prior learning fee
- Credit Transfer – *No Fees*
- Re-issue of Record fee
- Deferment, assessment extension and withdrawing from course or unit.  
*Refer to [Deferment, Assessment Extension and Withdrawal Policy](#)*

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

Current course categories for enrolment and table of fee rate per nominal hour is stated the [DTWD VET Fees and Charges Policy](#) for each calendar year.

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 for each calendar year VET Fees and Charges Policy.

Publicly funded [Lower Fees Local Skills](#) have annual fee caps which may apply.



Student tuition fees are indicative only and are subject to change given individual circumstances at enrolment. Additional fees may apply for student services, resource fees and incidental charges may be incurred through the course of study.

### **2.1.1 Fee Collection and Payment Options**

Students will be informed, prior to enrolment, the payment in full of course fees is required before the completion of the course and the qualification certificate being issued.

Student first cluster/unit fee will be invoiced on commencement and payment will be determined by the students option they elected on their enrolment form.

Meerilinga provides students with a 'pay as you study' fortnightly payment plan, using an automatic payment system linked to a nominated debit or credit card. This allows students to pay course fees over the agreed time frame.

During the enrolment process, if the student elects to pay by instalments a personalised Pay Fee By Instalment and Direct Debit Request and Agreement is established outlining a fortnightly payment schedule, based on the student's training plan. The Pay Fee By Instalment Application form is signed by the student over 18 years of age, or by their parent/guardian if the student is under 18 years of age.

This signature acknowledges the student or payee has read and accepted the Payment Plan terms and conditions, including the following:

- The nominated Credit/Debit account will be direct debited fortnightly, on the date selected and for the amount detailed in the payment schedule.
- This payment will continue for the number of nominated fortnights as listed, unless I choose to pay the course fees in full.
- If an error has been made in the payment of a Direct Debit, the payee is entitled to a full and immediate refund of the amount paid in error back to the nominated account
- Payment plans may need to be adjusted to align with circumstances such as a change in timetabling, progression in course, mode of study or Credit Transfer units occurs.
- All fees due must be paid in full at course completion, before a qualification is issued.

Seven (7) working days' notice prior to a due payment due date applies in the following circumstances:

- Stopping or deferring a payment
- Altering the Direct Debit nominated account details
- Cancelling the Direct Debit arrangement completely

In all circumstances an alternative arrangement approved by Meerilinga will be required to finalise the remainder of the course fees due. A student's payment plan will be maintained as per their signed agreement to avoid any default of course fees until a new agreement is in place.



Other fees and charges:

- There are no additional fees charged for students using the fortnightly payment plan
- Incidental fees and charges are listed on Meerilinga's Fees Schedule, in the student guide on the website (such as replacement of lost certificates: fee collection procedure If a direct debit payment fails to process)

Where a direct debit fails Meerilinga administration will contact the student to arrange immediate payment and/or update correct payment details.

### 2.1.2 Prepaid Fee Protection

In accordance Standard 7, clause 7.3 of the [Standards for Registered Training Organisations \(RTO's\) 2015](#), 'Prepaid fees' refers to 'fees collected in advance' and relates to the fees collected before the relevant services have been provided. These include payments made at any time before, during or after the student enrolls. All student fees paid in advance are protected until the training and/or assessment has commenced.

To comply with this clause, Meerilinga will not:

- Accept more than \$1000 prior to the commencement of a qualification; or
- Collect more than \$1500 in advance from a student, following commencement of enrolment

Where a unit or cluster of units exceed \$1000 or \$1500 above, the 'pay as you study' fortnightly payment plan will apply or alternative payment arrangements can be made through the Manager Finance and Operations.

## 2.2 Refund of Fees

Students that are studying a Unit, Certificate or Diploma, not under a VET Fee-Help loan can withdraw from a Meerilinga training course:

- If approached and signed up on the spot, students automatically have a 10-day cooling-off period by law; or
- Prior to the census date, as stated on the student invoice; and
- Must do so in writing, using the approved [Deferment/Withdrawal Request Form](#) T642.

### 2.2.1 Full Refund

A full refund will be given:

- If a service, course/qualification or unit is cancelled by Meerilinga and a mutually acceptable alternative time cannot be found or is unsuitable to the student.
- If MTC 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 student is not given a place due to maximum number of places being reached.
- Meerilinga Executive can approve a full refund of fees at any time during the delivery of a class is cancelled because of declining numbers, no available lecturer or due to other circumstances caused by MTC.

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.

### 2.2.2 Part Refund

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

### 2.2.3 Pro-Rata Refunds

MTC 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 and retained. Details of all refunds will be retained for audit purposes, and the enrolment form annotated to show that a refund has been given.

### 2.2.4 Refunds are not given:

- a) Where a student fails to complete assessment tasks / placements and responsibilities
- b) Where a student defers
- c) Where a student does not achieve competency at the completion of study
- d) For resources where they are damaged

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 <i>per hour or part thereof, together with off-sit retrieval costs where applicable</i>

## 5. Facilities and Equipment Hire Fees

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

## 5.1 Facility Room Hire

Facility Room Hire	Not for Profit and Community Groups Weekdays Hourly	Not for Profit and Community Groups Weekends Hourly	Others All times Hourly
Children and Family Centre Activity Room	\$20.00	\$25.00	\$25.00
Children and Family Centre meeting room	\$20.00	\$20.00	\$20.00

- All casual hirings will be subject to a minimum bond of \$50 per booking, up to a maximum of \$100 at our discretion.
- A cleaning fee of \$50 per hour may apply if the hired room is not left clean at the end of booking.
- A discount of 20% is available for a hiring of six (6) or more hours.
- Request for fee concession to be submitted to Manager Finance and Operations (MFO) and criteria as follows:
  - *Not for Profit entity, and*
  - *Not in receipt of external funding, and*
  - *Community/Parent Committee managed*
- 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.

## 5.2 Equipment Hire

Item	CCS's
Room Cancellation (<5days)	50%
Late/Lost Keys	\$50.00
Staff callout/attendance (per hour)	\$50
Chairs & Tables	No Cost
TV/DVD (where available)	No Cost
Crockery & cutlery	No Cost
Kitchen Facilities	No Cost
Shared Storage subject to availability	No Cost

### Refund of Fees

A refund of 50% of the hire fee will be given if a hirer of facilities/equipment cancels with less than 5 days' notice.

A full refund minus a booking fee of 2.5% will be given if a hirer of facilities/equipment provides more than 5 days' notice of cancellation.

### 5.3 Meerilinga Organised and Facilitated Activities

One-off or casual activity	\$5 per event per family	Refer to MFO for any variation
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- Excludes events that are funded via grants/sponsorship

### 5.4 Staff Resource Costs

Description	Cost
Free dress shirt and polo shirt as per contract terms	Free
Ladies dress shirt – ¾ sleeves	P.O.A
Men's long sleeve shirt	P.O.A
Meerilinga Polo	P.O.A
Meerilinga RAP Print Polo	P.O.A
Text Books	Cost recovery
Malicious damage or loss of work equipment	Replacement cost of Item

## 6. Children and Community Services Fees

### 6.1 Playgroups

<b>Meerilinga Facilitated</b> (Per Family and includes Parenting Groups)	Per Term	\$50.00
	Per Term for fortnightly groups	\$25.00
	Joining midway through the Term	\$25.00

### 6.2 Early Learning Programs

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.

<b>Ballajura</b>	<b>Pre-Kindy Daily Session</b>	Fee effective 9 January 2023	\$75.00
		Fee effective 8 January 2024	\$120.00
	<b>Pre-Kindy Daily Session</b>	Fee effective 9 January 2023	\$100.00
		Fee effective 8 January 2024	\$120.00

<b>Beechboro</b>	<b>Bindi Kindi Session</b>	Fee effective 9 January 2023	\$55.00
		Fee effective 8 January 2024	\$60.00
<b>Cockburn</b>	<b>Pre-Kindy Daily Session</b>	Fee effective 9 January 2023	\$100.00
		Fee effective 8 January 2024	\$105.00
	<b>Bindi Kindi Session</b>	Fee effective 9 January 2023	\$55.00
		Fee effective 8 January 2024	\$60.00
<b>High Wycombe</b>	<b>Pre-Kindy Daily Session</b>	Fee effective 9 January 2023	\$100.00
		Fee effective 8 January 2024	\$105.00
	<b>Bindi Kindi Session</b>	Fee effective 9 January 2023	\$55.00
		Fee effective 8 January 2024	\$60.00
<b>Kingsley</b>	<b>Pre-Kindy Daily Session</b>	Fee effective 9 January 2023	\$100.00
		Fee effective 8 January 2024	\$105.00
	<b>Bindi Kindi Session</b>	Fee effective 9 January 2023	\$55.00
		Fee effective 8 January 2024	\$95.00
<b>Woodvale</b>	<b>Pre-Kindy Daily Session</b>	Fee effective 9 January 2023	\$100.00
		Fee effective 8 January 2024	\$105.00
	<b>Bindi Kindi Session</b>	Fee effective 9 January 2023	\$55.00
		Fee effective 8 January 2024	\$95.00
<b>Administration Fee</b> (Per family, upon enrolment or re-enrolment, once per calendar year and non-refundable)			\$50.00

A limited special delegated authority (the authority) for the above fees is attached to the following positions.

- Advisory Services Enrolment and Inclusion Officer
- Finance and Payroll Officer

The authority is limited to:

1. Application of a Discretionary Concessional daily fee for those families that are ineligible for CCS or for any other reason at the discretion of the CEO.
2. The approved 'other' reason is for those families that are ineligible, unable or unwilling to deal with Centrelink.

The Discretionary Concessional Daily Fee is the applicable carded daily fee, less 20%, to a maximum (discount) rounded figure of \$25.

The authority, which is to be exercised on a selective basis, is to assist families secure or retain enrolment in the Early Learning Program. Families will have seven (7) days in which to accept the offer and formally enrol into the program. No extensions are applicable. The families will be required to complete all enrolment documentation including the CWA (Complying Written Agreement).

In the event a family in receipt of the concessional fee subsequently is in receipt of CCS they are to inform Meerilinga immediately and, will revert to the standard daily fee upon first payment of the CCS to Meerilinga.

The authority does not remove the requirement to assist families with Hardship or Sponsorship applications as may be necessary, and particularly in light of repeated requests for financial consideration from individual families.

Full details of assistance approved are to be documented on the relevant database, and arrangements confirmed in writing to the family (email, mail) by the approving officer.

The authority will be reviewed annually or as determined by the Chief Executive Officer.

### **Payment of Children's Program Fees**

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

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.

*Refer to Department of Education - [Early Childhood Provider Obligations, Electronic Payment of Gap Fees](#).*

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

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.

### **Administration Fee Waiver**

CEO approved for hardship and the administration fee will not be charged to a permanent staff member or a student who enroll their child into a regulated Meerilinga service in the year of employment or study.

A dishonor 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 unless cancellation by Meerilinga or the enrolling parent/guardian in accordance with 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 closures for one (1) week in July, up to three (3) 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 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 Manager Finance and Operations.

### **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/Services Australia 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 may provide limited sponsorship in the Children's Services Programs across the organisation. All families are eligible, however at the time of considering the enrolment, the Service Co-ordinator together with an Advisor will assess each potential case on its merits and submit a recommendation to the Chief Executive Officer. No commitment is to be conveyed to families.

It is important to understand, where families and/or children are deemed to be experiencing hardship or vulnerability, sponsorship enables equitable access and inclusion into Meerilinga fee charged group care and education programs.

As an organisation we believe all children have the right to attend our programs. We review each case and the organisations resources to provide the best outcomes for children and families. We also consider other ways Meerilinga can support families through our community and parenting services. Assessment for assistance in participating in our early learning program is a holistic process and funds are capped.

Our services will seek to provide information or referral to clients on external services available to children and families.

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 at [Children with special educational needs](#)

The CEO may provide a sponsorship for the full or partial fee. If approved, the conditions will be set in writing to the recipient and include an end date for review.

*Refer to ELP Fee Sponsorship Approval Letter T548*

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

- A recommendation – in addition to that from the Service Co-ordinator or Advisor Enrolment and Inclusion (e.g. from **Child Health, DCP, Meerilinga Parenting, Advisor Cultural Engagement and Liaison or Community Elder**).
- Continued attendance of the child (regular or extended non-attendance may result in withdrawal of the sponsorship).
- An inclusion plan.
- Approved additional gap funding where applicable to cover additional or specialised staffing / resources.
- An Agreed date for review

### **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](#).

## 7. Products

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

Item	Options	Cost \$
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	\$50.00
Charge for time dealing with the application (per hour, or pro rata)	\$50.00 Min.
Access time supervised by staff (per hour, or pro rata)	\$50.00 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 – per record	\$50.00
Replacement of Record from archive retrieval – per record plus retrieval cost where applicable	\$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.\*\*

Description	Cost
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**	\$34.01
Room /Equipment Hire	As per schedules above
Advertising and miscellaneous/one -off items	Refer MFO

**\*\* REFER Manager Finance and Operations if Meerilinga staff are required.**