



Fees and Bookings Policy and Procedures

Policy Number	2000/37
Approved by	Heritage Management Committee – 12 June 2012; 12 November 2013; 14 June 2016; September 2017; Director: Feb 2018; Sept 2018; Feb 2019; Jan 2021; Director - Nov 2021
Last reviewed	June 2012; November 2013; May 2016; August 2017; January 2021. Minor review Nov 2021
Next review due	2024
National Law and Regulations	Regulation 168(2)(n)
National Quality Standard	Quality Area 7: Leadership and Service Management

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Policy Statement

Heritage Early Childhood Centre Inc. (Heritage) is a small, community-based, not-for-profit service situated on the campus of the Australian National University (ANU). The service provides high quality early childhood education and care to 57 children between the ages of 6 weeks and 6 years and gives priority of access to employees and students of the ANU. The service is managed by a parent-based Management Committee and a full-time Director (**Refer to:** The Heritage Constitution; Governance and Management Policy; Committee Handbook).

While some funding is received from the ANU towards the maintenance of the building and wages of the Heritage handyman, Heritage receives no government funding and income is required primarily from service fees and the Child Care Subsidy (CCS) to meet all additional costs incurred by the service.

Heritage operates under the Child Care Management System (CCMS), a national childcare support system that brings all approved child care/long day kindergarten services online. Heritage uses CCMS registered software to record child enrolment and attendance information. This data is reported online to the Department of Education and Training (DET) to allow calculation and payment of CCS fee reductions and entitlements on behalf of enrolled children.

Under National Regulation 168(2)(n), Heritage is required to have a written policy that includes a statement of the fees to be charged and the payment process. All families must be informed of fees at the time of enrolment.

As of January 2023, Heritage fees are **\$145.00 per day**. The Heritage Management Committee reviews and approves fees annually as part of the budget process. Every effort is made to provide affordable education and care for families, however, as a community based, not-for-profit organisation, it is necessary to ensure that fees are paid in a timely manner in order to maintain the financial viability of the service. Heritage utilises the services of Debitsuccess to automatically manage family accounts and invoices. Debitsuccess is an Australian-owned company specialising in payment solutions which automate the payment collection process to improve cash flow and reduce financial risk.

The Management Committee reserves the right to increase fees that have been set for the year in extraordinary circumstances, such as if attendance rates fall below the budget 'break even' point.

Policy Aims

The Heritage Fees and Bookings Policy and Procedures aims to ensure:

- There are clear guidelines for the setting, payment and collection of fees and subsidies, for making bookings and cancellations, and fundraising.
- There is effective communication of the procedures for fees and subsidies, bookings and cancellations, and fundraising to the Heritage community.
- Fees are paid in an orderly and timely manner.
- The service continues to be financially viable.

Scope

It is understood that there is a shared responsibility and accountability between the Management Committee, Director, educators and parents/guardians of an enrolled child or who wish to enrol a child at Heritage, to implement the Fees and Bookings Policy and Procedures as a matter of high priority due to the importance of maintaining the financial viability of the service.

Rationale

The Heritage Fees and Bookings Policy and Procedures has been developed to comply with the:

- *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* (ACT)
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* (ACT)
National Regulation 168: Policies and procedures are required in relation to:
 - (n) Payment of fees and provision of a statement of fees charged by the education and care service;
- National Quality Standard for Early Childhood Education & Care & School Age Care, 2012.
Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership
 - Standard 7.1. Governance: Governance supports the operation of a quality service.
Element 7.1.1. Service philosophy and purpose. A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service's operations.
 - Element 7.1.2. Management Systems. Systems are in place to manage risk and enable the effective management and operation of a quality service.
- The Commercial (On-Campus) Licence between Heritage and the ANU, 2020.

Strategies and Practices

Heritage is committed to:

- Providing responsible financial management of the service, including establishing fees that will result in a financially viable service, while keeping fees at the lowest possible level in order to minimise the financial barriers for families wishing to access early childhood education and care.
- Advising families of enrolled children about how the service is funded and the fees required to be paid.
- Maintaining confidentiality in relation to the financial circumstances of families.
- Providing a fair and manageable system for dealing with non-payment and/or inability to pay fees/outstanding debts.

Summary of Responsibilities

The Management Committee is responsible for:

- Reviewing the current budget to determine fee income requirements.
- Developing a fee policy that balances the parent's/guardian's capacity to pay with providing a high-quality program and maintaining financial viability of the service.
- Reviewing the number of families experiencing financial hardship and the effectiveness of the procedures for late payment and support offered.
- Implementing and reviewing the Fees and Bookings Policy in line with the requirements of the ACT Government, National Regulations and Quality Standards.

The Director is responsible for:

- Providing all parents/guardians with a copy of the document containing fee information for families (**refer to:** Heritage Family Handbook).
- Where applicable, communicating the Fees and Bookings Policy and payment options to families in a culturally sensitive way. Language translation can be sourced if necessary.
- Providing parents/guardians with a fortnightly statement of fees and charges.
- Ensuring that the Fees and Bookings Policy is readily accessible at the service.
- Providing all parents/guardians with a fee payment agreement (**refer to:** Enrolment Form), Debitsuccess Set up and Information Forms).
- Collecting all fees and providing receipts upon request.
- Collecting all relevant information and maintaining relevant documentation regarding those with entitlement to concessions, where applicable.
- Complying with the Heritage Privacy and Confidentiality Policy regarding financial and other information received, including in relation to the payment/non-payment of fees.
- Notifying parents/guardians within 14 days of any proposed changes to the fees charged or the way in which the fees are collected.
- Ensuring a notice outlining the fees charged by the service is displayed prominently in the main entrance to the service.



Educators and other staff are responsible for:

- Informing the Director or Responsible Person in Charge of any complaints or concerns that have been raised regarding fees at the Heritage.
- Referring questions from parents/guardians in relation to this policy to the Director or Responsible Person in Charge.

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- Reading the fee information provided to families (**refer to:** Heritage Family Handbook).
- Signing and complying with the fee payment agreement (**refer to:** Enrolment Form).
- Reading and checking their fortnightly Statement of Fees and Charges.
- Notifying the Director or Responsible Person in Charge if experiencing difficulties with the payment of fees.

Fee Setting Procedures

As part of the Heritage budget development process, the Management Committee will set fees each year taking into consideration:

- The financial viability of the service.
- The fees charged by similar services in the area and within the ANU grounds.
- Reasonable expenditure in meeting agreed program quality and standards.
- The financial barriers for families wishing to access early childhood education and care.

Fees set for the year will only be reviewed in extraordinary circumstances, for example, if attendance rates fall below the budget 'break even' point.

Priority of Access

15% Quota of Non-ANU Families

- Heritage is required under the Special Conditions of its' Commercial On-Campus Licence with the ANU to give priority of access to the children of ANU employees and students.
- Heritage may have up to 15% of the total enrolment capacity of the service allocated to non-ANU children at any time provided there are no ANU children waiting for a place. This enables Heritage to fill any gaps and remain financially viable.
- Where Heritage exceeds its' 15% quota, 12-month provisional placements may be offered, provided they are re-allocated at the end of the term if ANU affiliated families require a place.

Waiting List Fees

- Families must go to <https://childcareapplication.com.au> to draft, submit, track and manage a waiting list application form for Heritage.
- A small non-refundable administration fee will apply to each online waiting list application to ensure the list remains manageable. **Refer to:** Waiting List Policy.

Accepting a Place and Paying the Enrolment Deposit

- When a position becomes available, the Director will send an email and a SMS notice to the primary parent of the first family on the waiting list according to the Heritage Priority of Access Guidelines. The Director will also take into account the age of the child and the suitability of the days available. (**Refer to:** Waiting List Policy).
- Once a family on the waiting list receives an offer notification, they must accept it within **2 working days** by calling, emailing or visiting the centre. The application may also be withdrawn.
- Once a family accepts the offer of a place at Heritage for their child, they must pay a **2 week holding fee/deposit** within **48 hours**, via Electronic Funds Transfer (or cash). This deposit will be put towards the first invoice the family receives.
- These procedures apply equally to all families.

Payment of Fees, Subsidies and Fundraising Procedures

- Fees must be paid according to the current fees schedule (**\$145.00** per day as at 2023).
- Fees for all booked sessions are due from the agreed starting date and must be paid **2 weeks in advance**. This will apply whether the child starts on this date or not.
- **Families must not pay their accounts more than 2 weeks in advance** as this creates accounting and governance issues for Heritage management. In exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Director, families may request to pay up-front by more than 2 weeks, for example, if they are going on an extended holiday.
- Families will receive a fees statement fortnightly. Any queries regarding the fees statement must be made promptly to the Director or Responsible Person in Charge.
- All regularly booked sessions, including those when the child is sick/absent, or which fall on a public holiday must be paid for, whether they have been used or not.
- Families will not be charged for the annual educator training day or the 2 week shut down period over Christmas and New Year.
- If families anticipate that they will not have sufficient funds to make a scheduled direct debit payment, they are asked to contact the Director in advance to make special arrangements. (**Refer to:** Late Payment of Fees Procedures).
- The Management Committee reserves the right to terminate enrolment, if fees are not paid for 2 consecutive fortnights.

Heritage Payment Options:

Salary Sacrifice - All ANU employees are able to apply for salary sacrifice or to have their childcare fees deducted from their net pay. Paperwork must be completed on enrolment.

OR

Debitsuccess Scheduled Fortnightly Direct Debit Payments - Invoices are automatically sent to Heritage families. There is a small charge for each transaction. Paperwork must be completed on enrolment.

Note: Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) - may be used for the initial 2-week deposit on enrolment. **BSB** 062 903. **Account No.** 0090 3533. Child's surname as the Reference.

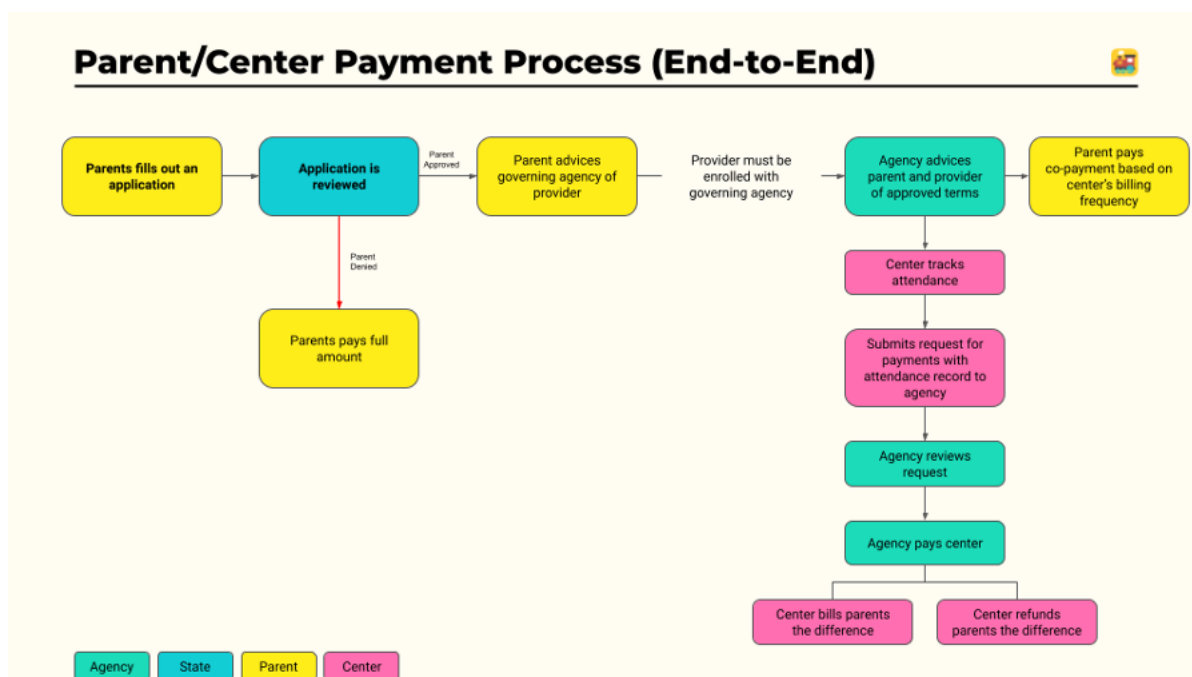
The Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

- The Heritage **CRN is 555001386A**.
- The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) commenced on 2 July 2018 and replaced the Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Rebate (CCR) with a single, means-tested subsidy. CCS is the main way the Government assists families with their childcare fees. It is generally paid directly to childcare providers to be passed on to families as a fee reduction. Families make a co-contribution to their childcare fees and pay to the provider the difference between the fee charged and the subsidy amount.
- Some basic requirements must be satisfied for an individual to be eligible to receive Child Care Subsidy for a child. These include the child meeting immunisation requirements and the individual, or their partner, meeting residency requirements. In addition, the individual must be liable to pay for care provided, the care must be delivered in Australia by an approved childcare provider, and not be part of a compulsory education program.
- The three factors that determine a family's level of Child Care Subsidy are: Combined annual family income; activity test – the activity level of both parents; service type – type of childcare service and whether the child attends school.
- Families can get an estimate of what they may be entitled to by entering their details into the [Department of Human Services Payment and Service Finder](#). There is also additional fee assistance for vulnerable families through the Child Care Safety Net.

If an employer contributes to the cost of childcare through salary sacrificing or packaging, it is important that families discuss with the employer who is 'responsible for the cost'.

- Families will be required to pay fees in full while waiting for CCS payments. Accounts will be credited once CCS notification and payment from Centrelink is made.
- The maximum allowable absent days without affecting CCS is 42, including public holidays.
- **CCS will stop if the family's child falls behind on their immunisations. (Refer to: Immunisation Policy; No job, No Pay policy. Australian Government, Department of Health).**
- The family tax benefit lump sum claiming time period has been reduced to 1 year.

Families have an obligation to advise Heritage if a sibling is using another early education and care facility, after school or holiday education and care etc. as it affects the CCS percentage that Heritage receives.



Late Payment of Fees Procedures

- **Debitsuccess** charges a failed payment fee of **\$14.00** to a family 7 days after failing to have sufficient funds available to pay their scheduled direct debit. The outstanding amount will be added to their next invoice.
- If families anticipate that they will not have sufficient funds in their account to pay their scheduled direct debit on time, they are asked to contact the Director in advance to make special arrangements. Any arrangements will be at the discretion of the Director in consultation with the Treasurer on the Management Committee.
- If the next scheduled direct debit fee payment fails, the Director will inform the Treasurer on the Heritage Management Committee and ask the family to clear the outstanding fees immediately. The Director will inform the family that they will lose their position if the debt is not cleared immediately.
- Any family who owes fees at the end of an enrolment year will not be offered a renewal of their sessions until all outstanding fees are paid.
- Where a family leaves the service and fees are outstanding, Heritage management will inform the family that unless the debt is cleared, steps may be taken to recover the debt through the Small Claims Court.

Late Pick-up Fees

- It is very important that, unless there are exceptional circumstances, families notify Heritage if they are going to be late to pick up their child, so that staff overtime can be arranged. Educators must be paid for any time they are at Heritage after hours and it impacts their ability to meet their own family responsibilities.
- If children remain at Heritage after **5:45pm** a late fee charge of **\$20 per each 5 minutes or \$50 per 15 minutes will be charged.**
- If an educator is delayed and misses their bus, the cost of a taxi will be charged to the families account.
- Late pick-up fees are not eligible for childcare benefit.

Refer to: Late and Non-Collection of Children Policy; Delivery and Collection of Children Policy.

Excursions

- The financial ability of families must be considered by the Director in consultation with the Management Committee, before deciding on an excursion/incursion that would require an addition charge. Events that are planned ahead of time should be included as an expenditure item in the service budget and, as a result, not incur additional charges.
- Where a proposed excursion or incursion incurs an additional cost, the cost must be made clear ahead of time and added to the child's account. Cash may be requested in some cases.
- Where a child is not able to attend on the day, no refund will be given, unless at the discretion of the Director.

Fund Raising

- Heritage relies on raising additional funds at times to cover purchases of books, toys etc.
- Families are strongly encouraged to participate in **2 fundraising/working bee activities a year.** This is also a great way of socialising with other members of the Heritage community. If families have any fundraising ideas, they are welcome to discuss them with the Director.
- **Families are welcome to make a financial donation in lieu of attending fundraising activities. Refer to:** Communication and Family Involvement Policy.

Fundraising Account: BSB - 062 903 Account No. 1037 0080 Reference - Child's surname.

Bookings, Absences and Cancellation Procedures**Regular Booked Days**

- Regular booked days are permanent booked sessions, including those which fall on a public holiday, and must be paid for whether the child uses them or not.

Families enrolling into Heritage are required to:

- **Book more than one day per week**
- **Include either a Monday or Friday in their booking.** This is to ensure the on-going financial viability of the service. (ANU classes are held mainly from Tuesday to Thursday and unused places would otherwise occur on Mondays and Fridays).

- Families are not required to pay for the educator training day or the 2 week shut down over Christmas.
- If families wish to change their regular booked days at any time, they must contact the Director **two weeks in advance** and state the date on which the new booking requirement is from.
- If the change cannot be accommodated, the child will be put on the waiting list for that particular day.

**Short Absences Procedure**

Families must:

- **Inform the Heritage office by phone (6249 8851) or email (info@heritageecc.com.au) or text (0434 435 101), preferably before 9.00am**, if a child is going to be absent for a normal booked session, to allow the place to be offered to other families as a swap day (see below).
- Inform the office of the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the absence has been correctly recorded by an educator on the computerised attendance system.
- Ask for a doctor's certificate for the child, if applicable, and give it to the Heritage office staff for Child Care Subsidy purposes. **Refer to:** Illness and Infectious Diseases Policy.

Cancellation of Sessions/Notice of Withdrawal

- Families are required to give at least **2 weeks written notice** of cancellations of a booked day at Heritage. This applies equally to families who withdraw from a place prior to their child's official commencement date.
- Debitsuccess will issue a final invoice.
- During the 2 weeks' notice all normal booked sessions require payment.

Extra Days

- These are temporary days that may be booked on a one-off basis by contacting the Director.
- Extra days are allocated on a first-come, first-served basis according to spaces available for that particular day.

Urgent Care

- If an extra day is needed urgently, families may call the office and see if the child can be accommodated that day, at the discretion of the Director.
- Heritage must notify the ACT Regulatory Authority within 24 hours when they educate extra children in an emergency and may apply to temporarily waive space, educator-to-child ratio and early childhood teacher requirements in this case. The care of all other children must not be compromised. **Refer to:** Supervision and Water Safety Policy.
- Fees for extra sessions are billed according to the normal fee schedule and will be billed on the following invoice/statement.

Swapping Absent Sessions

Families may request for an alternative session and must comply with the following conditions:

- The booking for an alternate session must be made on or before an absent session and taken in the same billing period as the absence falls.
- Alternate sessions will only be available if attendance numbers and the staff ratios permit.
- Sessions can only be swapped once.
- Absences cannot be accumulated.
- Alternative sessions may not be available for the full period of absence.
- Swapped sessions will be approved at the discretion of the Director or Room Leader.

Extended Absences

If families are planning on being absent for an extended period of time, the following options are available:

- Families may resign immediately and re-apply for a place at a later date. They will have priority on returning, as per the Heritage Priority of Access Guidelines. **Refer to:** Waiting List Policy.
- Families may keep their position open by paying for at least one normal booked session per week while they are away. The days for which they pay will be immediately available on their return, and they will receive Priority of Access on all other required sessions. **Please note:** Heritage cannot guarantee that all required sessions will be immediately available after a long absence.
- All normal booked sessions may be retained by continuing to pay for them during the extended absence.

Communication

The Heritage Fees and Bookings Policy will be communicated to families on enrolment and through the Heritage Handbook, newsletter and noticeboards. Educators will be informed of the policy during their induction, staff meetings and through Policy Manuals.

Privacy

All sensitive and confidential information obtained on enrolment will be kept securely in the main office. **Refer to:** Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Policy Review

In order to assess whether the values and purposes of the Fees and Bookings Policy have been achieved, Heritage management will:

- Monitor the implementation, compliance, complaints and incidents in relation to the policy.
- Monitor the number of families/children excluded from the service because of their inability to pay fees.
- Keep the policy up to date with current legislation, research and best practice.
- Revise the policy and procedures as part of the service’s policy review cycle, or as required.
- Notify parents/guardians at least 14 days before making any changes to this policy.
- Encourage families and educators to contribute to the regular policy review process.

Related Forms

Enrolment Form
Waiting List Application Brochure
Fortnightly Statement of Fees and Charges

Related Policies

Name	Location
Complaints and Grievance Policy – Staff and non-Staff	Heritage Family Handbook
Governance and Management Policy	
Inclusion and Equity Policy	
Enrolment and Graduating Rooms Policy	Policy and Procedures Manuals in resources room, entrance foyer and main office.
Excursions and Incursions Policy	
Illness and Infectious Diseases Policy	
Late and Non-Collection of Children Policy	
Non-Compliance Policy	Policy and Procedures section on Heritage website.
Privacy and Confidentiality Policy	
Supervision and Water Safety Policy	
Waiting List Policy	

References and Further Reading

Australian Government, Department of Human Services Payment Finder and Estimator (2021).

https://www.centrelink.gov.au/custsite_pfe/pymtfinderest/paymentFinderEstimatorPage.jsf?wec-appid=pymtfinderest&wec-locale=en_US#stay

Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs. (2018). *The Education and Care Services National Regulations, 2011.*

<https://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653>

The Australian Children’s Education and Care Authority (2018). *Guide to the National Quality Standard.* https://www.acecqa.gov.au/sites/default/files/2018-11/Guide-to-the-NQF_0.pdf

The Australian National University (2020). *On-Campus Commercial Licence between The Australian National University and Heritage Early Childhood Centre, Special Conditions.*

Version Control and Change History

Version Number	Approval Date	Approved by	Author and Amendments
1	October 2001	Management Committee	
2	12 June 2012	Management Committee	Author: Julia Charters Combined Enrolment, Fees and Graduating Room Procedures and created new policy based on references above.
3	13 November 2013	Management Committee	Author: Julia Charters Enrolment, Graduating Rooms, Fees and Governance Policy split into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolment and Graduating Rooms Policy • Waiting List Policy • Fees and Governance Policy Added clause that families must not pay their accounts more than 2 weeks in advance.
4	14 June 2016	Management Committee	Author: Julia Charters Fees and Governance Policy split into: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fees and Bookings Policy • Governance and Management Policy Booking procedures amended to reflect special conditions of <i>On Campus Licence</i> with ANU. Information on provisional placements added. Added updates from Waiting List Policy 2016 including small fee for online application. Added Summary of Responsibilities.
5	12 Sept 2017	Management Committee	Author: Julia Charters Adjusted procedures to reflect new Ezidebit scheduled direct debit fee payment process. Updated fee rate to \$113.50 as at Jan 2017. Added Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate will be changed in July 2018 to one means-tested payment called the Child Care Subsidy. Added Contents Page.
6	February 2018	Director	Fees updated to \$119.50
7	September 2018	Director	Changed Ezidebit to Debitsuccess to reflect that QikKids has moved from Ezidebit to Debitsuccess
8	February 2019	Director	Added Clause on Excursions: The financial ability of families must be considered by the Director in consultation with the Management Committee, before deciding on an excursion/incursion that would require an addition charge. Events that are planned ahead of time should be included as an expenditure item in the service budget and, as a result, not incur additional charges. The Director
9	January 2021	Director	Minor update: Updated Child Care Rebate to Child Care Subsidy.



			Updated fee rate to \$137.50. Updated Debitsuccess fee to \$14. Added Fundraising Account details.
10	November 2021	Director	Minor update - LatePick up fees simplified. <u>Changed from:</u> If children remain at Heritage after 5:45pm a late fee of \$20 will be charged for the first 15 minutes or part thereof, and \$20 per 15 minutes after that, for the initial occurrence. Any subsequent instances in a calendar year will attract a late fee of \$50 for the first 15 minutes and \$50 per 15 minutes after that. <u>To:</u> Heritage has a late fee charge of \$20 per each 5 minutes or \$50 per 15 minutes.
11	Jan 2022	Director	Updated Fees for 2022 to \$141.50 per day.
12	Jan 2023	Director	Updated Fees for 2023 to \$145.99 per day.