



# Reimbursement Policy

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## 1. Version Control

<b>Version</b>	1
<b>Last Review Date</b>	March 2026
<b>Author</b>	J. Sigley
<b>Approved by</b>	Story Dogs Board
<b>Review cycle</b>	Every 2 years
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## 2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a clear framework for the reimbursement of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses incurred by Volunteers, Staff and Directors (or Responsible Persons) of the charity.

This policy aims to ensure that any reimbursements:

- are incurred in connection with the charity's business,
- are processed efficiently and in line with ACNC and ATO requirements,
- are reasonable, properly authorised, documented and accounted for, and
- do not amount to remuneration or an improper private benefit to Volunteers, Staff or Directors (unless specifically authorised).

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All Story Dogs volunteers, including Volunteer Dog Teams, Coordinators and Support Central Volunteers
- Paid staff
- Directors / Responsible Persons

## 4. Definitions

- **Director / Responsible Person** means a person who serves on the board (or equivalent governing body) of the charity.



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- **Charity Business** means activities undertaken by the charity in pursuit of its charitable purpose – for example, but not limited to, reading sessions, school meetings, volunteer training, board meetings, strategy sessions, conferences, committee work, representation of the charity at external events (if approved).
- **Out-of-Pocket Expense** means a documented cost incurred personally (not paid or reimbursed upfront by the charity) in performing charity business, which is reasonable and directly connected to that work.
- **Reasonable** means appropriate in the context of the charity's size, resources, the nature of the expense, and what a prudent person would consider appropriate in comparable circumstances.

## 5. General Reimbursement Principles

- **Approval Required:**
  - General weekly/monthly business required expenses do not need prior approval
  - Extraordinary expenses or expenses over \$500 must be approved in advance by a relevant staff member
- **Receipts Required:** All claims must be supported by itemised receipts, tax invoices, or evidence of payment.
- **Reimbursement Form:** Reimbursement claims must be submitted on the Story Dogs standard expense reimbursement form.
- **Timely:** Claims must be submitted within 30 days of the expense.
- **Extraordinary Claims:** Occasionally unusual or one-off expenses (e.g. attending a conference or event, unexpected supplies) may occur. These will be considered on a case-by-case basis with appropriate approval. These claims must still be approved in advance.
- **Review of Claims:** The Treasurer (or other designated finance/administration lead) will annually review claims for compliance with this policy and guide the board in monitoring the total reimbursement costs as part of the charity's financial oversight.



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## 6. Eligible Expense Categories & Limits

### Travel:

- Reimbursement applies for travel reasonably required to attend approved charity business.
- Economy class travel is to be used unless otherwise approved by the Chair or board (e.g., for remote location, disability or other special reason).
- Please take the safest, most cost-effective option for day-to-day travel. Car travel will be reimbursed as per relevant Australian Taxation Office (ATO) mileage allowance guideline. Before using your own personal vehicle, please confirm with your insurer that your insurance covers you for any damage/liability while being used for this purpose.
- Any traffic tickets, parking fines or other fines/ tickets/ summons incurred on hired or private vehicles being used for work purposes, will not be reimbursed by the charity.
- Transfers (taxi / uber) to and from airports and event venues will be reimbursed. Where it is more cost effective, volunteers who own a private vehicle are encouraged to drive to the airport and use the long-term car parking facilities.

### Accommodation:

- If the Volunteer, Staff member or Director is required to stay overnight the charity will reimburse a mid-range hotel accommodation, generally no more than 4 Star rated or a maximum of \$300 per night.

### Meals and incidentals:

Where overnight accommodation is required or a meeting extends through meal times, actual and reasonable meal costs will be reimbursed up to a daily cap of \$75 per day.

### Other approved costs:

- Parking, tolls, public transport or rideshare costs incurred in connection with attending a charity meeting or business.
- Pre-approved conference or event registration fees, if attendance by the Director has been authorised by the board as part of charity business.

### Limits and thresholds:

- No single reimbursement claim should exceed AUD \$1,000 without board approval



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- All reimbursements above AUD \$1000 should be flagged in the board's finance report and accompanied by a brief description of purpose (e.g., travel to interstate strategy meeting).

## 7. Non-Eligible Costs

The following are **not** eligible for reimbursement under this policy:

- Any expense that is not directly connected to board or charity business
- Fines or penalties (e.g., traffic infringements).
- Costs of spouse/partner/guest travel or accommodation, unless expressly approved by the board in advance (and only if that attendance is legitimately part of the charity business).
- Membership fees of professional associations or clubs, unless specifically authorised as part of the Director's role in the charity and approved by the board.
- Any expense that is not substantiated by an itemised receipt, invoice or explanation, or which fails to comply with this policy.
- Upgrades or luxury items not justified by business needs
- No reimbursement is allowed for alcohol.
- Vet bills – although a subsidy is provided for the annual vet check
- Dog grooming, dog food, and other equipment for managing your dog
- Pet insurance

## 8. Timeframes for Submission and Reimbursement

- Reimbursement claims must be submitted within **30 calendar days** of the date the expense was incurred.
- All claims received after **90 calendar days** of the expense date will ordinarily **not** be reimbursed unless approved by the board with a valid reason for the delay.
- Once validated and approved by the Treasurer (or delegate), the reimbursement will be paid within **15 business days** of the claim being approved (or next scheduled payment run).



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## 9. Taxation, Fringe Benefits and Accounting Treatment

- Reimbursements under this policy are not remuneration for the Director's services, but repayment of actual out-of-pocket expenses incurred in the performance of their role. They should not give rise to an additional taxable payment to the Director (provided they are genuine and substantiated).
- Reimbursements should be recorded in the charity's financial accounts under an appropriate expense category and reviewed.

## 10. Transparency and Disclosure

- The board will ensure that this policy is available to all Volunteers, Staff and Directors
- The charity will disclose any reimbursed expenses in its Annual Information Statement (AIS) or annual report as required by the ACNC (especially in relation to related-party transactions). ([ACNC](#))
- The board should review annually the actual expenses reimbursed to Directors and assess whether they remain reasonable in the context of the charity's size, activities and financial position.

## 11. Responsibility

- The Chair is responsible for ensuring this policy is brought to the board's attention and understood by all Directors.
- The Treasurer (or Finance Committee) is responsible for reviewing reimbursement claims for compliance, reporting the aggregated results to the board, and monitoring overall costs relative to budget.
- Volunteers, Staff and Directors are responsible for ensuring that their claims comply with this policy, are supported by appropriate documentation, and are submitted within the timeframes specified.



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## 12. References & Regulatory Links

- Story Dogs – Claim form link  
<https://www.cognitofirms.com/STORYDOGS1/StoryDogsCoordinatorReimbursementAndTravelClaimForm>
- ACNC – Remunerating Responsible People (includes guidance on reimbursement vs remuneration): <https://www.acnc.gov.au/tools/guides/remunerating-responsible-people> (ACNC)
- ACNC – Managing Charity Money: <https://www.acnc.gov.au/tools/guides/managing-charity-money-guide-for-responsible-people> (ACNC)
- ACNC – Related Party Transactions guidance: <https://www.acnc.gov.au/tools/topic-guides/related-party-transactions> (ACNC)
- ASIC – Charities registered with the ACNC: <https://www.asic.gov.au/for-business/running-a-company/charities-registered-with-the-acnc> (ASIC)