



Australian Government

Australian Fisheries Management Authority

REMOTE LOCALITIES POLICY

1 July 2008

1. Purpose

The Remote Localities Policy sets out the Localities Market Package for employees working and living in remote localities.

Locations attracting a Localities Market Package are determined by management in consultation with staff taking into account the cost of living, availability of facilities and isolation. AFMA is committed to providing employees required to work in remote localities with a package of entitlements to assist in meeting reasonable additional costs, and in recognition of the isolation and difficulties experienced in these localities.

The type of allowance varies for each locality and takes into account the differing living conditions in each location. Higher rates of allowance are available for employees with dependants who reside with them.

Employees must normally spend four continuous weeks working in a remote locality to be eligible for an allowance. However, where no other assistance is available (such as a travel allowance) employees may be entitled to pro rata assistance. Where employees are regularly rotated between localities an alternative package may be negotiated.

For the purpose of eligibility for an entitlement to a district allowance the term dependant means a spouse/partner or child who resides with the employee and whose income, if any, is less than \$17,472 per annum. It is the employee's responsibility to notify AFMA where this situation changes.

Where an employee's spouse/partner is receiving remote localities entitlements or a similar allowance with AFMA or another government agency, and the employee has no other dependants, the employee will be regarded as an employee without dependants.

Eligibility for District Allowance

District allowance is not payable during periods of unpaid leave and will cease to be paid when:

- a) the employee leaves the locality permanently,
- b) an employee without dependants is posted away from the locality for more than four continuous weeks,
- c) an employee accompanied by their dependants are posted away from the locality for more than four weeks.

The allowance will not cease if an employee moves directly from one remote locality to another. In such cases the applicable allowance will be paid.

District allowance for employees with dependants who do not accompany them to a new locality will be negotiated on an individual basis. District allowance does not count as salary for superannuation purposes.

Employees who have shared custody of dependants are entitled to pro rata payment of the district allowance based on the percentage of the time the dependants reside with them. It is the employee's responsibility to notify AFMA when their situation changes and payment will only commence at the time of notification.

Part-time ongoing employees stationed at a remote locality are entitled to pro rata payment of the allowance based on their approved weekly hours.

Emergency fares

Employees in receipt of the Localities Market Package and their dependents are entitled to fares assistance for travel:

- where a member of the immediate family is critically ill or dies, or
- where it is necessary to leave the locality for emergency medical or dental treatment that is not available at the locality.

For the purpose of this clause “immediate family” means the employee’s partner, child, parent, sister or brother (including of the employee’s partner). The Agency Head has the discretion to approve travel for any other exceptional circumstance.

Employees will normally be provided with assistance on a reimbursement basis for the return travel to the appropriate locality. Consideration may be given in cases of hardship where the employee is unable to pay for the fare. Where a member of the immediate family is critically ill or dies overseas, the appropriate locality will be the nearest Australian international airport. Employees are required to provide documentary evidence to support claims for reimbursement.

Employees stationed in Darwin

In addition to emergency fares entitlements, the Localities Market Package for employees stationed in Darwin comprises:

- five days extra recreation leave for every 12 months service (or pro-rata),
- an annual district allowance paid on a fortnightly basis as indicated in the table below.

Employee without dependants	Employee with one dependant	Employee with more than one dependant
\$3,520	\$6,720	\$8,000

Employees stationed on Thursday Island

In addition to emergency fares entitlements the Localities Market Package for employees stationed on Thursday Island, comprises:

- seven days extra recreation leave for every 12 months service (or pro-rata),
- the value of one full economy return air fare to Brisbane for the employee and their dependants who reside with them, accruing on the anniversary of the day of commencement on Thursday Island and subsequent anniversary dates,
- the value of an extra 50% of a return air fare to Brisbane for the employee and their dependants who reside with them, available after six months employment on Thursday Island and every 12 months thereafter,
- an annual district allowance paid on a fortnightly basis as indicated in the table below. This allowance is not payable where housing is provided.

Employee without dependants	Employee with one or more dependants
\$3,566	\$5,762

The value of air fares will be set at the fully refundable air fare as at 30 June each year. Employees may only use their air fare assistance for domestic travel undertaken during their term of employment on Thursday Island. The maximum accrual of air fare assistance is two year's credit which can be used for the cost of travel and transitory accommodation and may be used for recreation, long service, personal or concessional leave purposes.

Any entitlement to air fare assistance and any remaining credit will cease when the employee leaves Thursday Island based employment. Where the employee's dependants leave the Island and are no longer residing with the employee any entitlement to air fare assistance for them will cease.

Due to the lack of secondary educational choice, a dependant who resides with the employee during school vacation periods, and who leaves the island to attend a boarding school for secondary education purposes, is deemed to be still residing with the employee for airfare assistance purpose.

Where an employee has shared custody of a dependant, or gains a dependant part way through the year a pro rata amount of the air fare entitlement will be credited.

Additional fares assistance is available to employees located on Thursday Island where the employee or a dependant must leave the remote locality to obtain medical assistance in an emergency. Such assistance will only be available where treatment is not available on the Island and the consulting medical practitioner has provided written certification that the condition is such that urgent treatment is necessary.

Such assistance will be provided to cover the cost of travel to Cairns for the employee or the dependant requiring treatment. Assistance will also be provided to one family member where it is a medical requirement that the person be accompanied or where the medical assistance is for a child dependant of the employee or the employee's spouse.

Reimbursement of accommodation up to the value of \$74.50 per night will be available to cover a period of up to seven nights while the employee or the dependant is receiving treatment. Reimbursement will only be made on the provision of receipts and the provision of a medical certificate that covers the period of the treatment.