



31 July 2024

**INFORMATION TO SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION DELEGATES FOR THE 2025 GENERAL CONFERENCE SESSION
3-12 JULY 2025**

TRAVEL, ACCOMMODATION & ALLOWANCES

Dear Delegate and Appointed Guest,

This letter is to provide you with information about allowances, accommodation and travel in relation to your appointment as a delegate to the next General Conference Session. For our Division I will be responsible for coordinating Session accommodation, meals, expenses and some travel arrangements. The Division Secretary & President and their assistants will be caring for visas and information pertaining to your appointment as a delegate as well as general session program information. Please contact Torika Laweloa (torikalaweloa@adventist.org.au) who will be able to provide you with any information relating to visa support letters and status as a delegate.

Over the next year I will supply you with information on the areas that I am responsible for. If you require information before I have given it, please contact my assistant Alexandra Manners who is our nominated Division Expense & Housing coordinator for the Session (alexandramanners@adventist.org.au).

As a delegate you will be given a daily allowance to cover some expenses, breakfast and most evening meals as well as incidentals. During Session you will be provided with accommodation for the night of Wednesday 2nd July 2025 until the night of Saturday 12th July 2025 (check out is Sunday 13th July 2025). The decision whether your spouse accompanies you to the Session is your decision and responsibility, the denomination will not accept responsibility for any cost, loss, personal injury or liability beyond that of allowing them to share a room with you and providing them with a meal ticket to eat with you at lunch times and Sabbath evening meals.

For this Session the allowances and airfares will be paid direct to you from the organisation who you represent as a delegate. Below are the classes of delegates:

1. Ex officio – GC Executive Committee members. Costs are on a shared basis – see table at the end of this letter.
2. Delegates selected by the Union to represent the Union – these are paid for by the Union.
3. Delegates selected by the SPD Executive Committee to represent SPD staff, SPD Executive Committee, Institutions and laypeople. These are paid for by the SPD.
4. SPD Institutions – these are usually the heads of the institution, and their costs are paid for by their institution.

If you are not sure who your sponsoring entity is Torika can let you know. There is a table at the end of this letter provided by the General Conference that summarises the cost responsibility for delegates. For delegates selected by a Union, please contact your Union CFO who is:

1. PNGUM – Kenton Ghona kentonghona@adventist.org.pg
2. TPUM – Fraser Alekevu fraseralekevu@adventist.org.fj
3. AUC – Peter Cameron petercameron@adventist.org.au
4. NZPUC – Kheir Boutros kheirboutros@adventist.org.nz

All others please work with Alexandra at the SPD on claiming fares and allowances.



Flight reimbursement and allowances will be paid just prior to you leaving for the USA. This will be paid directly to your nominated bank account. There will be no provision to give delegates cash or make reimbursements in US currency at the Session. We advise you to withdraw US currency at your bank before you leave or at the airport and make sure your bank card can be used for overseas transactions and withdrawals.

AIRFARES AND TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Flights can be booked with airlines almost a year in advance of your return date. The destination airport is St Louis Lambert, Missouri. There are no direct flights to St Louis from anywhere in the SPD therefore an accommodation allowance will be provided making provision for 1 day transit to and 1 day transit from St Louis.

As each country has different airline pricing, schedules and conditions, different fare arrangements will be made based on the country you are travelling from. AUC, NZPUC, PNGUM and TPUM delegates will be advised by their sponsoring organisation on booking arrangements and airfare allowances. They can also assist delegates residing in Union Mission territories that are sponsored by the SPD or GC.

GC Session is being held during the peak travel period to the USA as it is summer and vacation time. For those travelling from Australia the airfare allowance has been set to cater for purchasing an economy fare based on rates available in peak travel season plus a little more for pricing variations over the next year. Specials will occur for limited periods during the year and I encourage you to watch for these specials and book at a cheaper price, if we come across any specials we will let you know. If you have any questions with regards to the airfare cost or the fare allowance, please check with your sponsoring organisation prior to making the booking to avoid any misunderstandings later.

You are free to make your own booking through any airline or agent of choice, however, keep in mind that we need to be good stewards of Gods' resources. We will reimburse you in full on receipt of your ticket limited to the allowance set for airfares provided. Should you not wish to make your own booking, the sponsoring organisation will be more than happy to assist you with your booking. Note however you are responsible for the booking of your spouse and no reimbursement is possible for that airfare. We recommend you do a Webjet.com comparison of all flight options for the day before you make your booking, as significant savings could be possible on a different airline or different time.

VISAS AND PASSPORTS

All delegates must ensure that they have a valid passport with at least 6 months validity from time of travel. As passports in some countries can take a longer time to obtain, it is recommended you start your application process immediately for a new or renewed passport. It is not required to present airline tickets when applying for a US visa, and we recommend that applicants do not purchase any tickets until they have received their passport with the visa. **If you cannot provide us with a copy of a valid passport and visa included a month before travel, we will not approve your travel, and you will not be travelling to the GC session, it is therefore of utmost importance you start work on this immediately.**

Your appointing body, Union or travel agent should be able to advise you what the requirements are based on what passport you will be travelling with. Those travelling on Australian and New Zealand passports do not require a visa. However, to enter the USA they must apply online prior to travel for clearance or else they will not be allowed to enter the USA. The following is the link to apply for entry: <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/>. The cost of the ESTA application is not separately claimable but comprises part of the expense allowance.



TRAVEL INSURANCE

For most tickets as soon as the booking is made cancellation penalties can apply. To safeguard what has been paid in advance for your ticket it is essential that at the time you make the airline booking you lodge a completed Risk Management Service (RMS) Travel Insurance form with the organisation paying your fare.

The cost of travel insurance (arranged through RMS) for you and your spouse will be covered by your sponsoring organisation, they will need to authorise payment of this with RMS. The travel covered is for GC Session and some additional private travel taken in conjunction with the Session. Please note that private travel covered by this policy must be less than the “business” travel component for the GC Session. If your private travel exceeds that limit you will need to arrange your own travel insurance for the private travel and RMS will not be able to assist with that. It is important to be familiar with the terms of the policy to ensure it is adequate for your requirements. You will need to apply for this cover using the online application form (a separate form is needed for each person travelling) on the RMS website <http://www.rms.org.au/covers/travel>.

For PNG based delegates there are limitations on insurance that can be purchased outside of PNG. The Union will advise you on what travel insurance they deem appropriate and require to be taken out.

For denominational employees who already have the Annual Corporate Travel policy arranged through RMS there is no need to complete a form. At renewal time next year you must include the days you will be in America as the premium is higher for the time spent in the USA.

ACCOMMODATION

Our Division has a block booking at the Courtyard by Marriott which is directly opposite the Session venue. Some delegates may wish to have additional immediate family members travel with them and if that is the case the following points should be noted:

1. The cost of the double room covers 2 people. For rooms with 3 or 4 people there may be an additional cost. If additional family members are staying in your room and that incurs an additional charge this is your personal cost and will be deducted from the allowances paid to you.
2. If you require an additional room for family members, you will not be able to book this through the hotel we will be staying at, as the hotel will be fully booked. We suggested you make your own booking at another hotel.

The General Conference Session website will have a booking service for delegate rooms that can be made up until the time of the Session and those bookings don't have to be made for the whole session time. This option will become available in November-December.

I trust that this letter provides sufficient information for you to commence planning your travel in 2025. If you have any specific questions do not hesitate to contact your sponsor, Torika, Alexandra or myself.

Yours sincerely,

Francois Keet
Chief Financial Officer



General Conference Session 2025 - Delegate Expense Allowances

Session dates: Thursday 3rd July to Sabbath 12th July 2025

Provided Accommodation: Nights included as part of Session will be the night of Wednesday 2nd July, through to the night of Saturday 12th July 2025. Check out Sunday 13th July.

Provided Meals: Lunches and Sabbath meals.

ENTITIES RESPONSIBLE FOR DELEGATE COSTS

Cost Responsibility for	Travel	Accommodation	Per Diems and Meals
GC Committee Members			
Division Officers	SPD	GC	GC
Lay People and Others Appointed by GC	GC	GC	GC
Church Pastors	GC	GC	GC
Union Presidents	Union	Union	Union
Delegates			
SPD Sponsored Delegates	SPD	SPD	SPD
SPD Institution Delegates	Employer	Employer	Employer
Union Sponsored Delegates	Union/Conf/Miss	Union/Conf/Miss	Union/Conf/Miss

Allowance	To St Louis
Airfare	<p>Economy class travel to St Louis, Missouri. <i>For Australian delegates based on a Brisbane/Sydney/Melbourne departure.</i> The maximum reimbursement amount for an economy return airfare from East Coast Australia (BRS/SYD/MEL) to St Louis will be \$3,500 AUD. Other fares such as <i>Round the World</i> can be purchased to the limit of the reimbursement amount.</p> <p><i>Other Locations</i> Similar fare basis as from East Coast Australia by the most direct and economical route or as arranged by the Union/employer for the fare classes applicable to your country or area.</p> <p>If you would like bookings to be made by your sponsoring organisation, please contact them directly. For SPD sponsored delegates, please contact Alexandra Manners. For those delegates being paid for by Unions your Union may give you direction on how to make a booking since they will be paying the cost.</p>
Travel Days	<p>Because of the distance travelled, airline schedules and jet lag additional travel days are allowed. A maximum of two night's accommodation and a daily allowance will be given in addition to what is included as Session accommodation.</p> <p>We have made available US\$150 per night plus US\$58 per diem towards meals, etc. This allowance will be paid as part of your daily allowance.</p>
Daily Allowance. Per Diems	<p>All GC session delegates will be given a per diem allowance of US\$58 per day for the days of the Session (plus the 2 extra travel days as mentioned above) to cover incidental expenses, breakfast and some evening meals.</p>
Meal Tickets	<p>There will be vegetarian meals available at the session. Meal tickets will be provided for the delegate and spouse for lunch and Sabbath evening meals.</p>



Travel Insurance	This is to be arranged with Risk Management Service. It is essential that insurance be taken out at the time of booking your flight. RMS prefers you complete an online application form on the RMS website http://www.rms.org.au/covers/travel or the forms can be requested from your Union and Risk Management Service. For PNG Delegates please check with your Union.
VISA Costs	The cost of a VISA for the USA (and essential transit countries) is claimable through your sponsoring union/institution. For most delegates in the Pacific this may be arranged by your Union. Delegates from countries that have a VISA waiver program cannot enter the USA unless they have made application online for a pre-clearance. This must be done no later than 72 hours before travelling. If that is not done the consequences are that boarding the flight will be denied or entry to the USA will be rejected. The link to apply is https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/ The cost of an ESTA application has been factored into the expense allowance and is not separately claimable. The cost of VISAs for visiting additional non-essential countries is a personal expense and not claimable.
Incidental Expense Allowance	An extra expense allowance will be given of US\$200 to all delegates. This is to cover expenses that will be incurred attending the Session. There will be costs like the airport shuttle to the hotel, ESTA application fee, expenses of getting to your departure airport, laundry, phone calls, incidental expenses of travel etc.

Summary of maximum claimable allowances

Flights	Daily Per Diems	Travel Days	Incidental expenses allowance
\$3,500 AUD	\$58 USD per day 13 days – total \$754USD	\$150 USD per night 2 nights – total \$300USD	\$200 USD

SPD Delegates ONLY - Once you have purchased your VISA and flights, please send your reimbursement and allowance form to alexandramanners@adventist.org.au

All other delegates please check with your sponsoring organisation on how to claim.