

Appendix 4: Tribunal application fees

An application to the Tribunal is not taken to be made unless the prescribed fee is paid: section 29A of the *Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1975*. The rules relating to payment of fees are set out in regulations 19 and 19AA of the *Administrative Appeals Tribunal Regulations 1976*.

Subject to a number of exceptions, an application fee is payable for lodging:

- an application for review of a decision;
- an application for a decision on whether a person was entitled to be given a statement of reasons for a decision under subsection 28(1) of the *Administrative Appeals Tribunal Act 1975*; and
- an application for a declaration under subsection 62(2) of the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* that a statement of reasons for a decision is not adequate.

The standard application fee during 2005–06 was \$606. The lower application fee payable when lodging an application for review of a decision that will be dealt with in the Small Taxation Claims Tribunal was \$61.

CIRCUMSTANCES IN WHICH AN APPLICATION FEE IS NOT PAYABLE

Applications for review of certain types of decisions do not attract a fee: regulation 19(1).

The relevant decisions are:

- any decision specified in Schedule 3 to the *Administrative Appeals Tribunal Regulations 1976*; or
- any decision under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* concerning a document that relates to a decision specified in Schedule 3.

Decisions specified in Schedule 3 include decisions in the areas of social security, veterans' affairs and workers' compensation.

If two or more applications relate to the same applicant and may be conveniently heard before the Tribunal at the same time, the Tribunal may order that only one fee is payable for those applications: subregulations 19(5) and 19AA(5).

Certain types of applicants are exempt from the requirement to pay a fee. An application fee is not payable where:

- the person liable to pay the fee is granted legal aid for the matter to which the application relates: paragraphs 19(6)(a) and 19AA(6)(a); or
- the person liable to pay the fee is:
 - the holder of a health care card, a health benefit card, a pensioner concession card, a Commonwealth seniors health card or any other card that certifies entitlement to Commonwealth health concessions;
 - an inmate of a prison, in immigration detention or otherwise lawfully detained in a public institution;
 - a child under the age of 18 years;
 - in receipt of youth allowance, an Austudy payment or benefits under the ABSTUDY Scheme: paragraphs 19(6)(b) and 19AA(6)(b).

The Tribunal also has a discretion to waive an application fee when it is satisfied that payment of the fee would cause financial hardship to the person: paragraphs 19(6)(c) and 19AA(6)(c).

INFORMATION RELATING TO APPLICATION FEES IN 2005–06

In 2005–06, the Tribunal received \$1,052,873.60 in application fees.

Table 4.1 sets out the number of applications lodged during the reporting year in relation to which no fee was paid where an application fee would otherwise have been payable for the type of decision under review.

TABLE 4.1 APPLICATIONS WHERE NO FEE PAID

Category	Number of applications
One fee paid in relation to two or more applications relating to the same applicant	1584
Applicant exempt from paying fee	186
Application fee waived by Tribunal	82
Total	1852

In relation to fees that were not paid pursuant to subregulations 19(5), 19(6), 19AA(5) and 19AA(6), the total revenue foregone was \$1,081,437.00.

The Tribunal refused six applications to waive the application fee on financial hardship grounds under paragraph 19(6)(c) during the reporting year. No applications were refused under paragraph 19AA(6)(c).

Regulation 20 provides that an applicant can apply to the Tribunal for review of a decision not to waive payment of an application fee. There were no such applications for review lodged during 2005–06.

REFUND OF APPLICATION FEES

A person who has paid a standard application fee is entitled to a refund of the fee if it was not payable or if the proceedings have terminated in a manner favourable to the applicant. The lower application fee payable to lodge an application for review of a decision that will be dealt with in the Small Taxation Claims Tribunal is refundable only if it was not payable.

In 2005–06, the Tribunal refunded applications fees in the amount of \$699,979.00.