TD 96/D9 - Income tax: is the cost of travel between a primary production property, where a taxpayer resides, and a place of employment or business, deductible?

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Australian Taxation Office

Taxation Determination TD 96/D9

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Draft Taxation Determination

Income tax: is the cost of travel between a primary production property, where a taxpayer resides, and a place of employment or business, deductible?

1. Generally, no. The mere fact that a business of primary production is being carried on at the residential property does not automatically make deductible the expenses incurred in travelling between the property and the taxpayer's other business or employment. The Commissioner's view, as reflected in Taxation Ruling IT 2199, is that the expenses incurred in travelling from home to work are not deductible as they are outgoings of a private or domestic nature. The High Court has stated in relation to 'home to work' travel: '...it may be said to be a necessary consequence of living in one place and working in another...' (per Williams, Kitto and Taylor JJ in *Hayley v. FC of T* (1958) 100 CLR 478 at 501).

2. The purpose of the trip will usually determine whether the expenses related to it will be an allowable deduction. Travel by a taxpayer from their residential property, where a primary production business is also carried on, to work, will generally maintain its character as non-deductible private or domestic expenditure, i.e., it is travel **to** work and not **on** work. This principle is supported by the Board of Review decisions in *Case Q49* 83 ATC 237; *Case 113* 26 CTBR (NS) 776 and *Case F43* 74 ATC 245; *Case 61* 19 CTBR (NS) 420.

3. Exceptions:

(a) If the taxpayer is undertaking some significant primary production related activity such as carrying produce or stock to market, or carrying feed or veterinary supplies home, the costs of travelling on that particular trip may constitute an allowable deduction. This travel may be considered to be **on** work or business (see *FC of T v. Vogt* 75 ATC 4073, (1975) 5 ATR 274).

(b) If the employment circumstances of the taxpayer warrant it. For example, travel costs may be deductible where the taxpayer's employment is itinerant (see *FC of T v. Wiener* 78 ATC 4006, 8 ATR 335) or where the home constitutes a base of their non-primary production business activities or employment (see *Garrett v. FC of T* 82 ATC 4060, (1982) 12 ATR 684). Refer also to Taxation Rulings IT 112; IT 113; IT 2543 and TR 95/34.

Examples

1. Mr and Mrs Brown live on a property on which they run a cattle breeding business. Mr Brown also works at the local mine and Mrs Brown is a partner in a local accounting firm. Before going to their respective places of employment each day, they check the water available to the cattle. The costs of travelling from the property to their places of employment is not deductible as it is considered to be of a private or domestic character. Those travel costs arise as an incident of living away from the place of work and are incurred for the purpose of transporting Mr and Mrs Brown from their home to their place of work. The undertaking of a minor business activity immediately prior to departure is not considered to alter the character of that travel.

2. Assume the same facts as above but, once a week on her way home from work, Mrs Brown picks up veterinary supplies and some bales of hay for the cattle. The expenses of her trip to the suppliers from work and from the suppliers to home will be deductible as they are for business purposes. The expenses incurred in relation to her journey to work, however, are not deductible as that travel remains private or domestic.

3. Ms Smith has a primary production business of growing strawberries, selling most of her produce to local wholesalers. She also works at a bank. Occasionally, she takes 3 or 4 punnets of strawberries to work to sell to her co-workers at fully commercial prices. Carrying this small amount of produce will not, on its own, be sufficient to change the nature of the trip, which remains home to work travel. The carriage of such an insignificant quantity of produce does not confer a different character to the trip. The expense of that travel is not deductible.

Commissioner of Taxation
24 July 1996

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Related Determinations: TD 96/D10

Related Rulings: IT 112; IT 113; IT 2199; IT 2543; TR 95/34

Subject Ref: motor vehicles; primary production; travel expenses

Legislative Ref: ITAA 51(1); ITAA 53

Case Ref: FC of T v. Vogt 75 ATC 4073; (1975) 5 ATR 274; FC of T v. Wiener 78 ATC 4006, (1978) 8 ATR 335; Garrett v. FC of T 82 ATC 4060; (1982) 12 ATR 684; Hayley v. FC of T (1958) 100 CLR 478; Case F43 74 ATC 245; Case 61 19 CTBR (NS) 420; Case Q49 83 ATC 237; Case 113 26 CTBR (NS) 776

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