

Overseas Travel – July 2025**Chief Executive, Department of Primary Industries and Regions**

Number of Travellers	Destination and Dates	Cost of Travel ¹
X2	28 June – 4 July Rome Italy	\$6443.2
Reasons for Travel To attend the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO) 44 th Session of Conference.		
Outcomes of Travel <i>See report attached</i>		

Approved for publication – 29/08/2025

Example disclaimer - Note: These details are correct as at the date approved for publication. Figures may be rounded and have not been audited. Please contact the Office of the Chief Executive on 8429 0248 if you would like to see copies of receipts and itineraries for this travel.



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¹ Excludes salary costs.



Minute to
Minister for Primary Industries and Regional Development
Minister for Forest Industries

Ref: A7087099

For	Noting
Critical Date	Routine
Subject	Post Overseas Travel Report and Cost Summary for Professor Mehdi Doroudi – 44th session of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations Conference – 26 June to 3 July 2025

Synopsis

As required by Determination 3.2 of the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment, this minute requests you to note the attached travel report and cost summary for my participation in the overseas delegation, led by the Australian Government, for the 44th session of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Conference in Rome, Italy held between 28 June and 3 July 2025.

Recommendations

That you:

- Note the post overseas travel report for Professor Mehdi Doroudi contained in this minute.

NOTED



 Hon Clare Scriven MLC
**Minister for Primary Industries
 and Regional Development**
Minister for Forest Industries
 16 / 9 / 2025

Ministerial Comments

Background

- On 28 April 2025, you approved travel for my attendance at the 44th session of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Conference. A copy of the approved proposal is provided at Attachment A.
- As required by Commissioner’s Determination 3.2, a report on completion of the trip assessing its value against previously identified outcomes is attached below.

Travel Objectives

- The 44th session of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Conference was held in Rome from 28 June – 4 July 2025. This biennial ministerial-level meeting is the peak governing body for setting FAO priorities and its program of work and budget. The Conference provides a key opportunity for the leaders of FAO’s 195 members to come together to meet and discuss key priorities relating to FAO’s mandate – leading international efforts to defeat hunger and achieving global food security.
- Since the FAO was established as a specialised agency of the United Nations in 1945, it has been customary to include a representative of a state and territory agriculture department in the Australian delegation to the conference. In person attendance by an Agriculture Senior Officials Committee (AGSOC) representative is expected. This role is performed on a rotational basis by all participating Australian jurisdictions, and it was South Australia’s rotation in 2025. Travel costs of the state and territory representative are shared by AGSOC member states and territories on a population-based percentage.
- The Australian Government Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry was unable to travel to the Conference due to pressing domestic matters. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry requested my attendance as PIRSA’s Chief Executive, and advised it was important the delegation had a representative with sufficient standing – in terms of qualifications, professional expertise and seniority – to participate on behalf of Australia in a high-level roundtable, bilateral meetings and other events with Ministers, Ambassadors and FAO officials.
- I attended the Conference on 28 June through to 1 July, arriving in Rome on Friday 27 June and departing on Wednesday 2 July.
- Alice Fistr, General Manager Strategy and Policy accompanied me to attend the FAO Conference as part of the Australian delegation and to provide support.

Australian Delegation

Delegates	Agency
H.E. Julianne Cowley Ambassador to Italy Permanent Representative to the FAO Rome	Australian Embassy, Rome
Ms Emma Hatcher Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization DAFF Agriculture Counsellor	Australian Embassy, Rome
Ms Caroline Wardrop Director, Multilateral and Economic Section	Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

International Organisations and Negotiations Branch	
Ms Amanda Browning Assistant Director, Multilateral Economic Section International Organisations and Negotiations Branch	Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Mr Andreas Anargyros Agriculture Adviser	Australian Embassy, Rome
Prof Mehdi Doroudi Chief Executive	South Australian Department of Primary Industries and Regions
Ms Alice Fistr General Manager, Strategy and Policy	South Australian Department of Primary Industries and Regions

Opportunities and Value Assessment

- The FAO conference is critical in strengthening relationships with other FAO members and is particularly valuable in current times of economic and trade uncertainty.
- Attendance of the FAO conference highlighted the importance of Australia's participation to position our world class food and agriculture sector, showcase our expertise, support trade and market access, shape global standards, and strengthen international ties – while keeping us at the forefront of innovation and policy.
- With approximately 70% of our agricultural, fisheries, and forestry production exported to more than 160 markets, Australia has a key role in addressing global food security.
- The Conference provided a valuable opportunity to strengthen international relationships and engage with global speakers and FAO experts on topical agricultural and food security issues, contribute advice and perspectives, and build contacts for ongoing engagement to strengthen Australia's and South Australia's food and agriculture sector.
- The [Report of the 44th Session of the Conference of FAO](#) has been published on the FAO website. The FAO media summary is included at Attachment B.
- Key conference outcomes included:
 - Consensus on the FAO's program of work and budget, including securing critical funding increases for Codex Alimentarius and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) - two global standard-setting bodies that underpin safe, rules-based agricultural trade, helping to ensure Australian producers can access international markets with confidence, backed by science-based food safety and plant health standards;
 - A member-led process to review the various aspects of FAO's functioning, including its institutional structure and governance, its decision-making processes, and its alignment and synergies with the United Nations system – to identify potential issues that prevent FAO from effectively fulfilling its mandate and improving FAO's effectiveness, efficiency, transparency and accountability; and
 - Election of a new Independent Chairperson of the Council – choosing Mina Rizk from Egypt.

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- The Opening Ceremony of the FAO Conference was held on Saturday 28 June, during which Australia delivered the response to the customary [McDougall Memorial Lecture](#) (Attachment C), named after Australian farmer and economist Frank McDougall, whose vision helped establish the FAO.
- Through the response HE Ambassador Julianne Cowley, Australia's Permanent Representative to the FAO and World Food Program, emphasised Australia's strong tradition of agricultural innovation and adaptation. She called for a renewed global commitment to research and development, emphasising the power of boosting innovation to support a sustainable agricultural sector and help tackle persistent food security challenges.
- Ms Emma Hatcher, Deputy Permanent Representative of Australia to FAO delivered Australia's Country Statement (Attachment D), commending FAO's efforts to address transboundary pests and diseases and highlighting the importance of free and open trade. The statement emphasised that science and evidence-based, enabling policy environments – developed in partnership with farmers – are essential to support innovation, build long-term resilience, enhance food security and respond to climate change.
- The Australian delegation participated in a special event on Small Island Developing States, Least Developed Countries and Landlocked Developing Countries to collaborate on solutions aimed at strengthening food security, reducing food import dependency and improving nutrition in these countries. Ministers and Heads of Delegation of these Member Nations reaffirmed their commitment to transforming agrifood systems through science, innovation, and inclusive partnerships, urging FAO to align its support with their development agendas and to develop a tailored strategy and two-year action plan for durable, climate-resilient food system.
- Significant efforts were made to support our Pacific neighbours' active and informed participation at the Conference, in recognition of the unique challenges they face, particularly the accelerating impacts of climate change and geostrategic food security issues in the region.
- During the Conference I represented Australia at a high-level Ministerial Round Table on the Four Betters for Innovation and Agrifood Systems Transformation, which aimed to promote shared understanding of the Four Betters as a holistic economic, social and environmental strategy for agrifood systems transformation, while facilitating the exchange of innovations and experiences that highlight the critical role of science, policy, and partnerships in driving sustainable change.
- The Round Table was opened by FAO Director-General, Qu Dongyu and chaired by FAO Deputy Director-General, Beth Bechdol.
- My contribution to the panel discussion highlighted practical examples of successful Australian and South Australian approaches, including:
 - Our Research and Development Corporation (RDC) framework, which allows the Australian Government and primary producers to co-invest in strategic, collaborative and targeted research and development, helping to drive agricultural innovation;
 - Our focus on the principles of ecologically sustainable development, which are embedded in our natural resource management frameworks; and
 - Efforts to recognise and incorporate First Nations culture and knowledge into modern management frameworks.
- I attended a Field to Future: Ministerial dinner on Agricultural Innovation hosted by the Netherlands Ambassador to Rome (Marcel Beukeboom) on behalf of the

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Netherlands Minister for Fishery, Food Security, Horticulture and Nature Conservation (Jean Rummenie) at Six Senses, Piazza di San Marcello.

- This event provided an opportunity to exchange national perspectives and aspirations on harnessing innovation to transform agrifood systems with participants from the Netherlands, Cabo Verde, Japan, Switzerland, Colombia and FAO. The conversations sparked valuable ideas and highlighted the potential for deeper collaboration across borders.
- I also participated in valuable bilateral meetings with FAO Officials:
 - Kaveh Zahedi, Director, Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment, discussing sustainable agriculture; adapting to a changing climate and advancing the transition to net zero (including South Australia's renewable energy transition); and potential opportunities to showcase the critical role of agriculture in addressing climate change at COP31.
 - Manuel Barange, AGD/Director, Fisheries and Aquaculture Division, discussing FAO's blue transformation priorities, including the role of aquaculture in increasing global seafood production; Australia's ecologically sustainable development framework for fisheries management; and joint work by FAO and UNESCO to understand, predict and mitigate the effects of harmful algal blooms. Following the Conference, I have had further engagement with the FAO's Fisheries and Aquaculture Division regarding their work on marine biotoxins and harmful algal blooms to inform our response to the *Karenia* bloom in South Australia.
 - Maximo Torero, FAO Chief Economist, discussing FAO and Australian efforts to better inform decisions that support sustainable and productive agrifood systems, including our annual industry scorecards and FAO's online [Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System](#).
- I was able to access these opportunities for high-level meetings due to my seniority as a State Government representative, given the hierarchical nature of the FAO system. Participation of an Australian Government Minister in future FAO Conferences would open further opportunities for Australia's bilateral and multilateral engagement.
- I appreciated the opportunity to meet HE Ambassador Cowley, Ms Hatcher and the other members of the Australian delegation to discuss Australia and South Australia's role driving in collaboration, innovation, research and policy to support global efforts to achieve food security.
- I was impressed with the Australian delegation's knowledge, passion and desire to get the best outcomes for both Australia and collectively for FAO members. They provided good support for my involvement and have clearly built productive networks and a very good reputation for the Australian representatives among other Member Nation delegations and the FAO.

Chief Executive's Actual Overseas Travel Costs Summary

Expense Item	Agency Funds (including purchase card)	Commonwealth Government Funds	Industry Funds	Personal Funds (which you have sought reimbursement from the agency)	Other Funds (AGSOC state and territory members)	TOTAL
Airfares	\$906.48	Nil	Nil	Nil	\$12,043.23	\$12,949.71
Accommodation, Meals &	\$251.72	Nil	Nil	Nil	\$3,344.34	\$3,596.06

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Incidentals						
Conference Fees	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Total Actual Travel Costs (GST inclusive)	\$1,158.20	Nil	Nil	Nil	\$15,387.57	\$16,545.77
Less Original Estimated Costs	\$1,400	Nil	Nil	Nil	\$18,600	\$20,000
+ or - Variation	-\$241.80				-\$3,212.43	-\$3,454.23

- The cost of the Chief Executive’s travel to attend the FAO Conference is shared by AGSOC member states and territories on a population-based percentage. South Australia’s cost is 7.0 per cent under the agreed formula, equating to \$1,158.20.
- The cost of the General Manager, Strategy and Policy’s travel was funded by existing PIRSA resources. The total cost to PIRSA associated with attendance at the FAO Conference is estimated at less than \$8,000.

Attachments

- Attachment A: Approved travel proposal
- Attachment B: FAO Director-General champions innovation and collaboration at 44th Session of the FAO Conference
- Attachment C: Australian response to the McDougall Memorial Lecture
- Attachment D: Australia’s Country Statement
- Attachment E: Photograph compilation of Australian delegation to the 44th Session of the FAO Conference



CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Department of Primary Industries and Regions

21/8/2025

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