



## Overseas travel

### Background

1. Under the *Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017* (PBR Regulations), certain Members may be accompanied by employees on official travel overseas.
2. Information on overseas travel is on the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) website.

### Official itinerary

- ▶ Enterprise Agreement clause 36
3. All travel by accompanying employees, including travel in advance of the employing Office Holder, must be in accordance with the official itinerary.
  4. The employee must ensure that IPEA receives a copy of the official itinerary before the commencement of travel in order for all necessary funding arrangements to occur before departure.
  5. Employees who depart from the official itinerary for personal travel or other reasons not approved will be personally responsible for meeting all travel costs, including the cost of airfares. These costs represent a debt to the Commonwealth subject to the debt recovery arrangements at clause 28 of the Enterprise Agreement. In relation to airfares, IPEA will only provide funding approval to the travel services provider for flights on the approved itinerary.
  6. Employees are on duty when on official travel overseas including where the official itinerary includes rest periods or stopovers. An employee may not depart from the official itinerary, except as a result of personal illness. Where an employee is unable to work due to personal illness when on official travel overseas, the employee must apply for personal leave by submitting a leave application to Ministerial and Parliamentary Services as soon as possible following their return to Australia.

## Rest periods and stopovers

7. Rest periods and stopovers may be included in the official itinerary by the international travel approver. During a rest period or stopover while overseas, employees will be paid allowances and have their accommodation and meal expenses met by IPEA as provided in this guideline.
8. Rest periods of between 12 and 24 hours immediately after the completion of official travel overseas recognise that employees may need to recover from jet lag and may be approved by the employing Office Holder. Rest periods are not a debit against an employee's annual or personal leave. Travelling allowance may be paid where a rest period occurs away from the employee's work base due to the requirements of official business travel within Australia.

For example: an employee based in Canberra returns from overseas travel, arriving in Sydney. The employing Office Holder approves a rest period prior to the employee undertaking official business in Sydney on the following day. The employee may be paid travelling allowance for that night.

## Quarantine arrangements

9. Employees required to undertake a period of mandatory quarantine upon their return to Australia will have the cost of their quarantine met.

## Class travel

10. An employee of a Minister or Parliamentary Secretary is expected to travel at a class no higher than business class.
11. The class of travel overseas for other employees is subject to the obligations set out in the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*, including value for money.
12. Employees are responsible for ensuring at the time of booking and at check-in that they travel in accordance with legislation, this Guideline, the travel determination, and any guidelines on travel by Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries (if applicable). Where an employee does not travel in accordance with these requirements, the relevant travel expenses are a debt recoverable by the Commonwealth in accordance with clause 28 of the Enterprise Agreement.

## Travel expenses

13. IPEA meets the following travel expenses based on the official itinerary:

- a. fares – includes airfares (actual costs are paid directly to the travel service provider) and ground transport costs such as taxi fares and other car with driver services when accompanying their employing Office Holder which are in support of the official itinerary;
- b. accommodation (actual costs may be paid by the relevant Australian post(s) on behalf of IPEA). However, overnight accommodation in Australia at either the commencement or end of official travel overseas is subject to the domestic travelling allowance provisions as outlined in clause 55 of the Enterprise Agreement, the Domestic Travel Guideline, and the Travelling Allowance Guideline except where mandatory quarantine arrangements are required;
- c. meals (i.e. breakfast, lunch and/or dinner only) where taken in the hotel(s) of stay - (actual costs are paid by the relevant Australian post(s) on behalf of IPEA);
- d. reimbursement of reasonable meal expenses for other meals or meal allowance, as described below;
- e. international travel incidentals allowance as described below;
- f. equipment allowance as described below;
- g. baggage and personal effects insurance as described below;
- h. reimbursement of passport charges, including the cost of passport photos;
- i. excess baggage charges;
- j. departure tax from overseas airports;
- k. essential vaccinations or medical supplies required for travel;
- l. emergency or essential medical, dental or hospital treatment while overseas; and
- m. reimbursement of reasonable laundry and dry-cleaning expenses where travel is for seven or more consecutive days. Where employees personally incur such expenses, itemised receipts should be forwarded to IPEA on completion of travel. Where receipts are not available, employees must individually itemise all laundry and dry-cleaning expenses in a statutory declaration. Otherwise, IPEA will not reimburse such expenses.

## International travel incidentals and allowance

14. Employees are paid an international travel incidentals allowance. The allowance is \$40 per day or part day that the employee is outside Australia.

15. The incidentals allowance covers personal expenses *not* otherwise met by IPEA.

For example, IPEA will not cover the costs of: refreshments outside of meal times such as tea, coffee and mini-bar items; alcoholic beverages; in-house entertainment and other personal services; currency exchange fees; tips and gratuities; newspapers and magazines; and sightseeing costs, such as entry fees and tour operator costs.

16. Employees are also required to meet laundry and dry-cleaning expenses from their incidentals allowance where travel on official business is for less than seven days. For travel on official business for seven or more consecutive days, refer to paragraph 13(m) for further guidance.
17. IPEA will not pay any personal expenses in excess of the incidentals allowance. Any personal expenses charged to an employee's hotel account will be recovered by IPEA during the reconciliation process.
18. Where an employee pays for incidental expenses on behalf of their Office Holder, the employee should seek reimbursement from their Office Holder as IPEA will not reimburse such expenses.
19. Employees are not required to reconcile the incidentals allowance on completion of travel.

## **Meal expenses and meal allowance**

20. In circumstances where meals are unable to be taken in the hotel of stay, or meal costs are not met by the relevant Australian post(s) on behalf of IPEA, employees may be reimbursed their reasonable meal expenses. Employees should obtain receipts for these meal expenses and forward them to IPEA on completion of travel. Where a receipt is not available, employees must provide written certification by way of a statutory declaration detailing the nature and amount of the expense, and why a receipt was unable to be provided. Otherwise IPEA will not reimburse such expenses.
21. Under the PBR Regulations, an international travel meal allowance is only payable to an employee travelling under Subdivision B that is, accompanying a Presiding Officer. In exceptional circumstances, where meals are unable to be taken in the hotel of stay or meal costs are not met by the relevant Australian post(s) on behalf of IPEA or provided by the host in accordance with the official itinerary, these employees may be paid a meal allowance (i.e. breakfast, lunch and/or dinner). This allowance is set in accordance with rates determined by an independent organisation from time to time, based on current market data.
22. The meal allowance is calculated using the exchange rates for the overseas locality available on the day the calculation is made. The amount that an employee is paid as meal allowance is calculated as:

Breakfast = 25% of a full day's allowance

Lunch = 25% of a full day's allowance

Dinner = 50% of a full day's allowance

23. Where the amount of the allowance is insufficient to cover the reasonable cost of meals across the whole trip, the employee may seek a discretionary payment on return to Australia in accordance with clause 26 of the Enterprise Agreement. In such cases, employees should obtain receipts for all meal expenses and forward them to IPEA on completion of travel. Where a receipt is not available, employees must provide written certification by way of a statutory declaration detailing the nature and amount of the expense, and why a receipt was unable to be provided.
24. Where an employee is paid a meal allowance and IPEA also funds meals taken in the hotel(s) of stay on the official travel itinerary or a meal is provided as part of an official function, e.g. a working lunch or official dinner, a component of the allowance will be recovered by IPEA.

### International travel equipment allowance

25. An international travel equipment allowance of \$430 (as at 1 January 2018) is provided to offset expenses that an employee may incur as a result of preparing to travel overseas, e.g. sturdy luggage and travel accessories including seasonal weather clothing.
26. The equipment allowance is not payable to a person more than once in any 36 month period.

For example, if an employee is paid this allowance for travel overseas commencing on 1 June 2018, they will not be paid this allowance again until commencing overseas travel on or after 1 June 2021.

27. Employees are not required to reconcile the equipment allowance on completion of travel.

### Insurance

28. IPEA provides employees authorised to travel on official business overseas with travel insurance as follows:
  - a. compensation for lost or damaged baggage and personal effects belonging to the employee or for which the employee is responsible up to a maximum of \$5,000;
  - b. full replacement value where lost items are replaced with a like item and 'fair value' (i.e. a depreciated amount) where the item is not replaced and monetary compensation is sought;
  - c. compensation for lost money belonging to the employee or for which the employee is responsible up to a maximum of \$500;
  - d. the reasonable cost of necessities if baggage is delayed for more than 24 hours; and

- e. the cost of emergency overseas medical expenses, including access to SOS International. SOS International provides a 24-hour world-wide medical information and assistance service.
29. Travel insurance does not cover loss, destruction, damage or liability arising from the deliberate disregard by the employee of the need to take all reasonable steps to prevent losses.
30. IPEA is the policy holder. In accordance with the policy, employees must notify IPEA within 30 days of the loss or damage occurring and complete and return all relevant forms to IPEA for processing.
31. A claim for travel insurance will not be paid:
- a. if the employee has received or is entitled to receive a payment from an insurance company in respect of the lost or damaged item; or
  - b. if the employee has received or is entitled to receive, restitution from a person or organisation, e.g. an airline, liable for the loss or damage.

## Reconciliation of travel expenses

32. Employees are required to notify IPEA of any variations to their itinerary that are approved by the travel approver as soon as possible after the completion of travel. The changed itinerary may result in adjustments to the allowances paid to the employee.
33. Reimbursement of expenses not met by the incidentals allowance can be sought after the completion of travel. All claims for reimbursement must be supported by receipts. Where a receipt is not available and the expense is over AU\$50, a statutory declaration must be completed.
34. On completion of travel, IPEA will reconcile all charges, including those met by an employee on behalf of their employing Office Holder (except incidental expenses referred to at paragraph 18). Employees must repay to IPEA any overpayment of allowances or expenses, such as personal expenses charged to IPEA through the hotel account. The recovery of such monies will be subject to the debt recovery arrangements at clause 28 of the Enterprise Agreement.