

OFFICIAL TRAVEL POLICY

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Summary: This policy describes the requirements and entitlements of members and staff who

undertake any form of travel on official business. It complies with NSW Government

policy and remuneration rates

Applies to: Council members

Members of Council committees and associated regulatory bodies

HPCA staff

Author: Bronwyn Coop, Manager, Corporate Governance

Related legislation, Awards, Policy and Agreements: NSW Health Official Travel Policy Directive (PD2009 016)

NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, Policy on Official Travel within Australia

and Overseas, August 2013 (M2013-08)

HPCA Member Remuneration and Payment Policy

• Code of Conduct

Review date: January 2018

Approved by: Director, HPCA

Approval date: 28 February 2013

INTRODUCTION

This policy applies to HPCA staff and to members appointed under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW)* (the Law) who may be required to undertake travel on official business.

The provisions in this policy are in accordance with the requirements of legislation and NSW Government policies, circulars and guidelines. Members are referred to the related HPCA *Member Remuneration and Payment Policy* for information on member entitlements and making claims.

All air travel and accommodation bookings must be made by the HPCA. Expenses for these particular items will be reimbursed only on those rare occasions where the person travelling has to make their own arrangements and has incurred the cost. Actual expenses are paid for other domestic travel costs incurred. A daily subsistence allowance is paid for official overseas travel expenses.

Eligible expenses and rates of reimbursement are set by the NSW Government based on Australian Taxation Office (ATO) determinations, which are reviewed annually. The current rates are available from HPCA Finance staff or the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, and NSW Department of Finance and Services websites. ^{1, 2} The HPCA uses these rates as the upper limit when making air and accommodation bookings.

¹ NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, *Australian and Overseas Travelling Allowances for Official Travel by Senior Officials*, Circular, <u>www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/announcements</u>

² NSW Department of Finance and Services, *Review of Meal, Travelling and Other Allowances*, Public Sector Industrial Relations Circular, https://www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au/Public Sector IR/Public Sector IR Information for Agencies.page

The actual costs of all other expenses are paid up to the maximum amount on presentation of original receipts or other evidence of expenditure. Original receipts are required to satisfy audit requirements and accountability.

This policy does not cover individuals or employees of organisations who provide services under contract to the HPCA or a Council. Where necessary, travel provisions in respect of such contract personnel should be set out in the relevant conditions of the contract.

KEY DEFINITIONS

Official travel means any travel by HPCA staff, a member or any other person where public money or Council funds are used to pay for the travel.

Subsistence is a daily travel allowance paid to cover the cost of meals and incidentals, such as personal laundry and dry cleaning, taxi and other transport fares, newspapers and magazines and private telephone calls. A subsistence allowance is only paid for official overseas travel.

Council means any Council established under s 41B of the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law (NSW) No 86a and includes all committees established by the Council from time to time.

Associated regulatory bodies means Assessment Committee, Professional Standards Committee, Tribunal, Impaired Registrants Panel or Performance Review Panel established under the Law.

Members includes any member of a health professional Council, a Council governance committee or an associated regulatory body, and is inclusive of all membership categories and positions held. It also includes Section 150 Inquiry delegates, interviewers, panellists, assessors, experts and other ad hoc participants in Council activities.

Staff includes permanent, temporary and casual employees working in a full-time or part-time capacity, at all levels of the HPCA.

The Law means the Health Practitioner Regulation National Law NSW) No 86a and associated regulations.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All official travel must be approved in advance. Requests for air travel, accommodation and car hire should be made on the Domestic Travel Application Form (Attachment 1). Approval to use other modes of transport should be approved in advance where possible, and may be by an email exchange with the Council Executive Officer, Tribunal Support Team or line manager/supervisor.

The lines of responsibility to be followed for submitting travel requests and claims are:

Members (except Tribunal members) Council Executive Officer Tribunal members **Tribunal Support Team** Staff Line Manager/Supervisor

As required by the Code of Conduct, members and staff are accountable for official expenditure, and should ensure the efficient and responsible use of public funds. Council funds are derived from fees paid by registered practitioners. The Council, members and staff should be mindful of the responsibilities to ensure expenditure of funds is in the best interests of the public and the professions. Publicly funded resources must be used diligently and efficiently and in accordance with legislation and NSW Government policies.

2

Staff and members undertaking official travel are responsible for submitting expense claims within one month (where possible) of incurring expenditure to enable payments to be made promptly. Payments will only be made on presentation of original receipts or other certified evidence of expenses if original receipts are not available. Members should refer to the HPCA *Member Remuneration and Payment Policy* for further information on entitlements and making claims.

The HPCA will provide an itinerary for bookings made confirming the travel and accommodation arrangements, any necessary additional information and emergency contact advice.

MINIMISING TRAVEL

The most economical means available must be used to attend meetings and other official business. Travel should be minimised where possible, including the use of taxis where public transport is readily accessible and practical. Use of the free city bus for travel around the CBD is encouraged. ³ Staff should also confirm the availability of designated HPCA pool cars.

Alternative methods of communicating over long distances should also be explored prior to considering travel. Alternative communication methods include teleconferencing and video conferencing. HPCA Shared Services staff can assist with access to these services.

APPROVAL TO TRAVEL

All travel requests must be approved in writing from an authorised delegate prior to any official travel being arranged or undertaken. The Council Executive Officer or Tribunal Support Coordinator must endorse a member's travel prior to it being arranged or approved. No travel bookings should be made without prior approval.

All interstate travel requires prior approval by the Director, HPCA. An Assistant Director may approve intrastate travel. Overseas travel by staff requires approval by the Ministry of Health.

A Domestic Travel Application Form (Attachment 1) is to be completed and approved for all travel where domestic air fares, accommodation and/or car hire are involved. The form must be signed by an officer delegated with authority to incur expenditure and certify the availability of funds.

The travel form is not required for approval of regular use of other modes of transport, such as metropolitan transport, or use of a private motor vehicle. This may be done through an email exchange with the relevant delegated officer and may be approved to cover an agreed period, e.g. up to 12 months.

A request for approval for official travel must disclose any funding from a private source for that travel at the time of making the application. This requirement also encompasses all private funding which may affect any claim for accommodation, subsistence or travel costs, whether provided before or after a claim is made.

Private/Annual leave

The practice of staff taking private leave before, during or after official overseas travel is not encouraged. Each staff application for leave will be assessed on its merits and the amount of leave approved, if any, should be based on the distance to be travelled and the length of the official visit. Approval to take private leave while undertaking official overseas travel is usually limited to 1-3 days. In no instance should leave result in any additional expense to a Council or the HPCA.

Official Travel Policy 3

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³ NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet, *Work-Related Transport for NSW Public Sector Employees*, Circular (C2009-02), work-related transport for nsw public sector employees

The HPCA books official travel for the most direct return journey. If there is a break in the journey for private reasons, any additional bookings must be approved in advance and additional costs met by the individual. This includes extending a visit over a weekend.

CLASS OF TRAVEL (ALL MODES OF TRANSPORT)

Economy class is to be used for all modes of transport for official travel. However some staff and members are entitled to fly premium economy or business class for travel to Western Australia, Northern Territory and overseas when undertaking official travel as follows:

- Council Presidents and Tribunal Chairs/Deputy Chairs
- Staff whose annual salary exceeds Senior Officer Grade 1, 1st year (or equivalent) and members of the Senior Executive Service or Health Executive Service
- Members or staff accompanying the Minister for Health overseas. If required by the Minister, travel may be in the same class as the Minister for the sectors travelled together; and
- Members or staff travelling overseas on duty as a member of a Government sponsored delegation or similar representative group. The submission may propose that the travel be in the same class as the other members of the delegation for the sectors where they travel overseas together.

The Minister may waive the requirement to fly economy class for medical reasons.

Members or staff who wish to travel in a class higher than their salary or position allows for, must cover all additional costs that may be incurred.

TRAVELLING BY AIR

Air travel bookings

All domestic and international air travel and accommodation bookings must be arranged by the HPCA. The cost of air travel includes payment of in-flight meals and luggage where required. These needs should be specified when seeking approval to travel.

Members and staff are not to arrange their own bookings and cannot specify a desired airline on which they wish to fly. They can only nominate their destination and desired date and time of departure. Any variation to this should be discussed with the Council Executive Officer, Tribunal Support Coordinator, line manager/supervisor or HPCA Administration Manager.

Changes to bookings should be kept to a minimum to avoid excessive additional costs.

Travel insurance

The NSW Treasury Managed Fund automatically covers members and staff travelling by air on official business under the provisions of WorkCover and no other official insurance coverage will be provided.

Loyalty schemes and airline lounges

Frequent flyer or other loyalty points must not be sought or accepted from any airline, accommodation or other provider in respect of official travel. Benefits from airline, car or hotel loyalty schemes or lounge memberships are not to influence travel decisions.

Membership of such schemes and facilities is at the individual's expense irrespective of the nature and extent of the official travel.

OVERSEAS TRAVEL

Automatic approval for official overseas travel applications should not be assumed in any circumstances. Therefore an irrevocable commitment to an overseas visit should not be given prior to approval. Any costs incurred where approval is not given, or that is above the approved amount, will be the responsibility of the applicant and any other person(s) involved.

Members are reimbursed the actual cost of these expenses up to a set amount when required to travel overseas. HPCA staff will be paid a daily subsistence allowance to cover the cost of meals and incidental expenses from the time of arrival at the overseas destination up to the time of commencement of the return trip. Incidentals include items such as laundry and dry cleaning, taxi fares (other than for official business), newspapers and magazines and private telephone calls. The HPCA will confirm the appropriate subsistence rate at the time of booking.

All member applications must be approved by the Council. Applications should demonstrate that the purpose of the travel is consistent with the Council's aims, role and priorities and must comply with this Policy and NSW Government policies and guidelines. The Director, HPCA must approve the travel expenses and travel bookings are made by the HPCA.

All official overseas travel by staff requires the prior approval of the Ministry of Health. Applications should be discussed with the line manager/supervisor and the Director, HPCA before being submitted for approval.

DOMESTIC TRAVEL

Means of travel - rail, air or road and overnight accommodation

The most appropriate means of travel will be determined by considering the relative costs of fares and expenses, travel time and convenience. Air travel may be approved in instances where it can be clearly demonstrated that an overall saving would eventuate taking these matters into account.

The HPCA also arranges rail travel on official business outside the Sydney metropolitan area. Rail travel is based on overnight rail travel with sleeper accommodation.

The need to obtain overnight accommodation shall be determined having regard to the safety of the person travelling and local conditions applicable in the area. Overnight accommodation will be granted where attendance involves evening sessions or an early start is required to enable arrival at the scheduled start time of the official business or event.

Individual rates and allowances are set for capital cities and regional centres. The overnight accommodation arranged by the HPCA for official travel will be up to the maximum approved rates for accommodation for the specific location. There are different rates payable up to a maximum amount that are divided into three categories: A, B and C dependent on position held. ⁴

The categories that apply under this policy are:

Council President/Deputy President Tribunal Chair/Deputy Chair

Category B

HES staff paid a total remuneration package below \$257,270 pa

Members

Staff, including Senior Officers (Grades 1 to 3) and all other officers on a cash salary below \$140,067 pa

Category C

Official Travel Policy

⁴ www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/announcements

Note that as accommodation and air travel is organised by the HPCA, reimbursement will generally only apply to meals and other related expenses up to the maximum rates on presentation of original receipts or other certified proof of expenditure.

Use of private motor vehicles

Prior approval should be obtained to use a private motor vehicle on official business. To avoid repeated applications, approval may be sought to cover a period of travel, where regular travel is required. This can be done through an email exchange with the Council Executive Officer or Tribunal Support Team for an agreed period up to 12 months.

Use of a private motor vehicle will be approved subject to the use of the vehicle being the most practical and economical means of transport, i.e. where no other transport is available or where the member is unable to use other transport due to access, disability or practicality.

A private motor vehicle used for Council related business must be registered and have valid comprehensive motor vehicle insurance and third party insurance policies. Evidence must be provided if requested to do so by the HPCA.

The rate of reimbursement payable for the use of a private motor vehicle is the 'casual rate' as determined by NSW Treasury and published on its website. ⁵ All claims for reimbursement of expenses must be made on the Reimbursement of Expenses Claim Form and include a declaration that registration and insurance policies are valid and that use of the vehicle has been approved.

Parking

The HPCA has limited parking available on-site and at nearby facilities that may be used by members when attending official business at the HPCA offices at 477 Pitt Street Sydney. Members who wish to access the on-site car park must make prior arrangements with the Council Executive Officer, Tribunal Support Team or HPCA Shared Services.

Parking at the Medical Council at Gladesville is free.

When parking is required for official business at other locations, the cost of the parking fee may be reimbursed. Reasonableness of length of stay and location of the parking station should be observed when making such claims. For example, it is not appropriate to seek reimbursement for a full day in a city parking station when the relevant meeting may occupy only two hours. Members are also encouraged to utilise any discount rates such as 'early bird' rates if intending to park all day, rather than the causal/hourly parking rates.

Tolls, charges and miscellaneous costs

Expenses such as bridge tolls, road tolls and the like that are incurred during official travel will be reimbursed. Details should be included on the Reimbursement of Expenses Claim Form and receipts or toll usage statements provided on request.

Taxi vouchers/Cabcharge

Use of public transport is encouraged where possible, particularly within Sydney, unless it is impractical (e.g. with luggage) or access is difficult due to location, time or disability. Staff who cease

Official Travel Policy 6

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⁵ www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au/Public_Sector_IR/Public_Sector_IR_Information_for_Agencies.page

work at a time that does not permit safe travel by public transport may use a Cabcharge docket, with their manager's prior approval.⁶

Taxi vouchers for official travel may be obtained from the Council Executive Officer, Tribunal Support Team or HPCA Administration Manager. The stub of the taxi voucher must be returned with the receipt to the person who provided the voucher as soon as practicable.

Alternatively a taxi fare incurred on official business will be reimbursed upon production of a tax invoice or receipt issued by the taxi company and attached to the Reimbursement of Expenses Claim Form. This should be done as soon as practicable after the travel has been undertaken. No tips are to be paid.

At times taxi vouchers may be required for official business in regional NSW. On these occasions, vouchers can be obtained in advance. All unused vouchers must be returned promptly to the issuing officer.

One day trips

Members or staff who undertake approved official travel outside certain hours, where an overnight stay is not involved and where travel is to and from their private residence are entitled to meal allowances:

- for breakfast when required to commence travel at or before 6.00 a.m.
- for dinner when required to work or travel beyond 6.30 pm.

As a matter of course the cost of meals will not be reimbursed unless such expense has been approved beforehand by the relevant delegate. Any meal expenses are to be restricted to no more than the prescribed upper limits.

The ATO regards meal allowances for one day journeys as assessable income and requires these amounts to be taxed and shown on annual payment summaries.

REMUNERATION AND PAYMENT OF TRAVEL, ACCOMMODATION, MEALS, AND RELATED EXPENSES 7

As all expenses associated with travel bookings for airfares and accommodation are paid directly by the HPCA and charged to the relevant Council, there should rarely be an occasion where such expenses would be claimed. Only in exceptional circumstances should such expenses be claimed and prior approval should be obtained.

Members are reimbursed the actual cost of expenses up to a set amount when required to travel within Australia and overseas. Staff are paid actual expenses for domestic travel and receive a subsistence allowance for overseas travel. Where a subsistence allowance is paid, no additional claims will be paid.

The actual cost of meals will be reimbursed when meals are not included in the accommodation cost. Upper limits for the cost of meals within a 24 hour period (i.e. breakfast, lunch and dinner) are as prescribed by NSW Government policy.

Official Travel Policy 7

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⁶ NSW Health, *Cabcharge use – NSW Department of Health* (PD2005_102) www0.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/PD/2005/PD2005 102.html

⁷ Members should also refer to the HPCA *Member Payment and Remuneration Policy*.

Expenses are paid on receipt of a Reimbursement of Expenses Claim Form (Attachment 2). Claim forms must be signed and dated by the claimant and submitted within one month (where possible) with original receipts rather than a record of the transaction and any other documentation confirming the purpose of the expenditure to the Council Executive Officer, Tribunal Support Team or line manager/supervisor. Receipts must be obtained for such expenditure to enable substantiation, to assist with the approval and processing of payments and to meet audit requirements.

Actual expenses claims will be met **up to** the remuneration rate thresholds approved by the NSW Government. The relevant delegate will authorise the expenditure and submit the claim to HPCA Finance staff for payment. The claim will be checked to verify that it has not been previously paid; that it relates to pre-approved travel and/or expenditure; to ensure that the prescribed limits are not being exceeded and to confirm acceptability (e.g. costs associated with alcohol must not to be claimed).

Expenses above the approved rates will not be paid. Members will be required to pay any expenses incurred not in accordance with this policy or NSW Government guidelines.

Record keeping and reporting

The ATO requires that a travel diary must be kept for official overseas travel beyond five consecutive nights for Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT) substantiation requirements. A travel diary must also be kept where domestic travel is for more than five consecutive nights and where the travel is not exclusively for performing official duties. The number of nights away from home includes the transit time. More information about these requirements can be found at the ATO website. ⁸

A personal credit/charge card may be used and reimbursement claimed, but individual receipts are still required to be submitted. Expenses related to the operation of a personal credit/charge card are not claimable.

Expenses which cannot be claimed

The following expenses will not be covered by a claim for expenses:

- Alcohol expenses associated with travel and meals
- Tips or gratuity payments
- Mini-bar purchases and other in-house entertainment
- Gifts purchased by individuals. It may be appropriate for a Council to provide a small gift to a
 third party, such as a visiting speaker or dignitary. This is at Council discretion and must
 comply with the Council Gifts and Benefits Policy
- Claims, such as accommodation, for a third person , unless prior approval has been obtained, and
- Any expenditure that is of personal benefit to an individual member or staff, or a family member or friend.

GOVERNANCE

This policy complies with NSW Government and NSW Health policies and guidelines.

Remuneration and expense claims are monitored through the financial management reporting system. They are reported in the monthly management reports to Councils and in the annual

Official Travel Policy 8

⁸ www.ato.gov.au/businesses/content.aspx?doc=/content/52020.htm&page=9

financial statements to Parliament in accordance with the *Public Finance & Audit Act 1983* and the *Annual Reports (Statutory Bodies) Act 1984*.

Official travel is also reported in the Council Annual Report.

FURTHER ADVICE

Further advice on any of the terms and processes outlined in this policy can be discussed with the Assistant Director, Finance & Shared Services, the Council Executive Officer or Tribunal Support Coordinator.

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

- NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet (2013), Policy on Official Travel within Australia and Overseas, Memorandum M2013-08, August 2013, www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/announcements/ministerial_memoranda/2013/m2013-08 official travel within australia and overseas.
- NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet (2013), 2013 Australian and Overseas Travelling Allowances for Official Travel by Senior Officials, Circular, C2013-09, www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/ data/assets/pdf file/0011/157781/2013 Australian and Overseas Travelling Allowances for Offi 1.pdf
- 3. NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet (2013), *NSW Government Boards and Committees Guidelines*, July 2013, <u>www.boards.dpc.nsw.gov.au/publications-for-agencies</u>.
- 5. NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet (2009), *Work-Related Transport for NSW Public Sector Employees*, Circular (C2009-02), <u>www.dpc.nsw.gov.au/announcements/circulars/2009/c2009-02</u> work-related transport for nsw public sector employees.
- 6. NSW Health (2009), Official Travel Policy (PD 2009_016) www0.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/pd/2009/PD2009_016.html.
- 7. NSW Health (2005), *Cabcharge Use NSW Department of Health* (PD2005_102) www0.health.nsw.gov.au/policies/PD/2005/PD2005_102.html.
- 8. NSW Public Service Commission, Personnel Handbook, <u>www.psc.nsw.gov.au/Policies/Personnel-</u> Handbook.

ATTACHMENTS

- 1. Domestic Travel Application Form
- 2. Reimbursement of Expenses Claim Form

Official Travel Policy 9



Domestic Travel Application Form

Applicant details

Title	First Nam	ne		Last Name						
Phone				Council/HPCA	A.					
Email										
Reason for Travel										
Period of	f Travel	Start Date			End Date					
I confirm	that I hav	e read and c	omply with th	ne HPCA Officia	al Travel Pol	icy.				
Signature	е					Date				

Flight details

Date	From	ETD	То	ETA	Meals	Luggage			
Special R	Special Request								

Accommodation details

Date	Location	Room Type	Nights	Meals	Special Request

Hire car details

Date	Pick Up From	Drop Off To	Days	Special Request

Approval Authority

Application for travel endorsed and funds available (Executive Officer/Manager):

Name	Position	Signature	Date

Travel approved (Director/Assistant Director):

Name	Position	Signature	Date

Booked by HPCA staff member and Itinerary provided

Name	Signature	Phone No	Date



Reimbursement of Expenses Claim Form

Title	First name			Last name) 	
Address						
Email						
Phone			Council/HF	PCA		
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Purpose of	rExpense					
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TOTAL					\$	
						7
Total Priva	te Motor Vehicl	e Travel (kilom	netre breakdo	wn overleaf)	\$	J
Total Expe	nses Claimed (travel plus expe	nses)		\$	
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Signature:				[Date:	
NOTE: DIO	asa stanla origi	nal receipte to	a this form			

NOTE: Please staple original receipts to this form

Send to: Council Executive Officer/Tribunal Support Team/Line Manager

Date	Depar	ture			Α	rriva	ı		Kn	ns*	Tolls	Amo	ount	
dd/mm/yyyy	From		Time	(inc.	To total k lled)	ĸms		Time	Tot	al \$	\$		al \$ s \$* + s \$)	Accou Code (Office use)
TOTAL Private Motor Vehicle Tra		Travel	ravel								\$			
Engine Siz		Rate]									
1600 cc an			5.2 cents/km			Ve	hicl	е Туре						
			29.6 cents/km 30.0 cents/km											
Motor cycle			31.5 cents/km			Engine Size - cc								
	omprehensive Policy Held		YES		NO	Vehicle Cu Registered							YES N	
Date use of private motor vehicle approved		D	Date:			Date up to which use of private motor vehicle approved				Date:	Date:			
	Authority ed correct unde	er sec	tion 12	of the	Publ	ic Fi	nan	ce and	Audit	: Act,	1983 a	nd fun	ds ava	ilable
Name		I	Position				Signature					Date		
2. Payme	ent authorised	under	sectio	n 13 o	f the I	Publ	ic Fi	nance a	and A	Audit	Act, 19	83		
Name			Positio	n				Signa	ture				Date	
Finance Sed	ction use only: Ch	ecked	against	rates ar	nd douk	ole pa	yme	nt						
Name			Si	gnatu	re			Date						