



Australian Government

**Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority**

Assurance Review 2023/008

Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP

Member for Kingsford Smith

Assistant Minister for Defence, Assistant Minister for
Veterans' Affairs, Assistant Minister for the Republic

Adjustments to travel allowance for staff member

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Executive summary

Assurance review findings

1. IPEA conducted an Assurance Review in relation to adjustments to travel allowance claimed by a staff member from the office of the Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP. IPEA Assurance assessed the adjustments claimed over the period 18 July 2022 to 12 April 2023.
2. Following engagement with the Assistant Minister and the staff member, IPEA has concluded that the staff member's adjustments to travel allowance were claimed in accordance with the provisions of the legislative framework.
3. The staff member has been reminded that for future travel, they must ensure that the reason for claiming adjustments to travel allowance are clearly outlined when they submit their form so that it can be assessed against the requirements of the framework. Future adjustments may need to be repaid if accurate information is not provided at the time the claim is made.
4. The staff member has also attended the training requested by the Assistant Minister during the process of this Assurance Review.

Scope and purpose

5. This Assurance Review assessed the staff member's adjustments to travel allowance claimed over the period 18 July 2022 to 12 April 2023.
6. The purpose of this Assurance Review was to determine whether the staff member's adjustments to travel allowance were consistent with the provisions of the legislative framework.

Engagement with the Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP and staff member

7. IPEA engaged with the Assistant Minister and the relevant staff member on numerous occasions, including formal letters and emails, between 30 June 2023 and 20 December 2023. The details of these interactions are described in the Assessment section below and can also be followed at Attachments 1-12.

Audit and Assurance function

IPEA's statutory audit function

8. IPEA audits parliamentarians' work expenses and the travel expenses of their staff under section 12 of the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority Act 2017 (IPEA Act). IPEA conducts Assurance Reviews to assess the use of Commonwealth-funded resources against the legislative framework to determine whether there was misuse.

9. Potential outcomes of an Assurance Review include:

- a. no further action in circumstances where the review has concluded the use of resources was not inconsistent with the legislative framework, or
- b. administrative remedial action, including penalty where the review has concluded there is evidence the use of resources was not consistent with the legislative framework, or
- c. An IPEA initiated Ruling or Audit where there is evidence of systemic or substantial misuses of resources, or
- d. referral to the Australian Federal Police where compelling prima facie evidence of fraud or other criminal conduct is identified.

Responsibilities of members of parliament and their staff

10. Parliamentarians and their staff have a responsibility to understand the legal framework in which they are operating. Parliamentarians and staff can seek IPEA advice and attend or request information sessions to assist them in this understanding.

Legislative framework

11. Parliamentarians employ staff under the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* (MOP(S) Act). Staff are referred to as MOP(S) Act staff.
12. At the time the travel in scope was undertaken, arrangements pertaining to travel of the staff of parliamentarians were set out in the Commonwealth Member of Parliament Staff Enterprise Agreement 2020-23 (the Enterprise Agreement) and in Determination 2020/15: Staff Travel and Relief Staff Arrangement (the Determination).
13. Items 3 and 4 of the Determination state that employees may travel as directed anywhere within Australia on official business.
14. Sections 23 and 25 of the Travel Allowance Guidelines for staff travel (Guidelines) provide the requirements for adjustments to travel allowance:

23. Where:

- a. an employee is directed to travel with his or her employing Member on official business outside of Canberra;*
- b. the Member certifies that it is necessary for the employee to stay in the same hotel; and*

the amount of TA is insufficient to cover the cost, the rate of TA will be increased to cover the cost.

25. Where an employee considers that the rate of TA is insufficient to meet the reasonable costs of an overnight stay, e.g. where special circumstances such as a major international event result in an increase in the cost or availability of accommodation, the Minister or an IPEA official authorised by the Minister may approve an increase in TA.

Assurance review methodology

Background

15. On 13 April 2023, IPEA identified that a staff member from the office of the Assistant Minister had claimed an adjustment to the rate of their travel allowance in Sydney, where their employing parliamentarian was based.
16. An accommodation adjustment is payable when the employing parliamentarian certifies that it is necessary for the employee to stay in the same hotel for official business; and the amount of TA is insufficient to cover the cost.
17. In accordance with IPEA's protocol on dealing with potential misuse of expenses, a Preliminary Assessment into the staff member's use of travel expenses for the period in scope was completed.
18. Following the review of all travel data for the staff member, it was determined that the staff member had claimed an accommodation adjustment in Sydney during the period in scope.
19. On 11 May 2023, this matter progressed to an Assurance Review.

Scope of Assurance Review

20. This Assurance Review assessed whether the staff member's adjustments to travel allowance for the period in scope were consistent with the provisions of the legislative framework.

Method

21. IPEA conducted the Assurance Review by examining and assessing the direct communication with, and information provided by, the employing parliamentarian, the staff member, and internal data records held by IPEA.

Assessment of work expenses

Summary of findings

Analysis

22. The details of the adjustment to travel allowance for the staff member were obtained using the IPEA Admin Dashboard.
23. Analysis of the data revealed that there were 7 adjustments to travel allowance for which IPEA required information from the Assistant Minister and staff member to complete their assessment.
24. On 30 June 2023, IPEA contacted the Assistant Minister to request that he review the 7 adjustments, to ensure they were claimed in accordance with the Determination and the requirements of the Guidelines as outlined above (**Attachment 1**).

25. The correspondence also requested that the Assistant Minister:
- confirm that he directed the staff member to undertake the travel,
 - confirm that he directed the staff member to stay in the same hotel because it was necessary for official purposes, and
 - provide the commercial tax invoice for his own accommodation, if it had not been previously provided to IPEA.
26. A response was requested from the Assistant Minister by 17 July 2023. No response was received.
27. A reminder letter was sent to the Assistant Minister on 26 July 2023 (**Attachment 2**)
28. A response was received from the Assistant Minister on 10 August 2023 and assessed by IPEA (**Attachment 3**). It was determined that further information was required for 3 of the adjustments.
29. On 24 August 2023, a third letter was sent to the Assistant Minister with additional questions (**Attachment 4**).
30. These additional questions requested that the Assistant Minister:
- confirm he directed the staff member to stay in the same hotel as himself because it was necessary for official purposes, and
 - provide the commercial tax invoice for his own accommodation, as it had not been previously provided to IPEA.
31. A response was requested by 7 September 2023. No response was received.
32. A reminder letter was sent to the Assistant Minister on 14 September 2023 (**Attachment 5**).
33. The Assistant Minister called IPEA on 14 September 2023, seeking clarification on the information required.
34. The response from the Assistant Minister was received on 14 September 2023 (**Attachment 6**).
35. In his response, the Assistant Minister advised that the staff member was directed by him to travel to Sydney for ministerial matters and he directed the staff member to stay overnight in Sydney on 2 March 2023. He further advised that he was not at the same hotel because he lives in Sydney and stayed at home.
36. The Assistant Minister also requested that a training session in travel allowance claims be organised for the relevant staff. This request was fulfilled by the IPEA Education team.
37. On 5 October 2023, a staff member from the office of the Assistant Minister provided the requested accommodation tax invoice (**Attachment 7**).
38. Based on the response from the Assistant Minister, it was determined by IPEA that further information was required from the staff member to complete the assessment of the accommodation adjustment claimed in Sydney on 2 March 2023.
39. A letter was sent to the staff member on 23 November 2023 to request that they provide any additional relevant information for the assessment. A response was requested by 8 December 2023 (**Attachment 8**).

40. In this letter IPEA advised the staff member that:

- On the form they submitted for this transaction, they had indicated that they were staying in the same hotel as the Assistant Minister in Sydney, the city in which he is based.
- The Assistant Minister had confirmed that he had stayed at home on the night of 2 March 2023.
- From the information available to IPEA, no adjustment to travel allowance was payable for their stay in Sydney on 2 March 2023, and an invoice should be raised for this adjustment.

41. The staff member was invited to review the adjustment and provide any additional relevant information to assist with IPEA's review.

42. A response was received on 23 November 2023 (**Attachment 9**).

43. In their response the staff member stated:

The reason for the adjustment to the travel allowance above the cap was because there were events on at the time in this region of Sydney and this was the best priced accommodation close to the Electorate Office, in which myself and the Minister were leaving from very early the next morning in order to drive to drive in excess of 2 hours for a ministerial portfolio-related event. Our diary manager (██████████, copied) searched for the cheapest accommodation at the time that was within the cap and none was available. This was the most affordable option.

44. As the staff member acknowledged in their response, the adjustment was incorrectly claimed under section 23 of the Guidelines and IPEA determined that the adjustment must be reviewed under section 25, as outlined below:

25. Where an employee considers that the rate of TA is insufficient to meet the reasonable costs of an overnight stay, e.g. where special circumstances such as a major international event result in an increase in the cost or availability of accommodation, the Minister or an /PEA official authorised by the Minister may approve an increase in TA.

45. IPEA determined that more information was needed on the events in Sydney that the staff member referenced in their response, along with any evidence that different accommodation options were considered.

46. On 30 November 2023, a second letter was sent to the staff member requesting this information, with a response due 14 December 2023 (**Attachment 10**).

47. In this letter, the staff member was also reminded that on the form they submitted for the adjustment for 2 March 2023, they indicated that they were staying in the same hotel as the Assistant Minister in Sydney, the city in which he is based. This advice changed after IPEA confirmed that the Assistant Minister did not stay at that hotel. IPEA requested that for future travel, the staff member ensure that the reasons for claiming adjustments to travel allowance are clearly outlined when submitting the form.

48. The second response was received on 1 December 2023 (**Attachment 11**).

49. In this response, the staff member provided further context about why the adjustment was claimed.

50. In particular the response specified:

- how busy the area can get during peak seasons with festivals, events, markets, touring artists and other activities in this inner city, seaside location.
- that the staff member was required to drive the Assistant Minister the next morning, and doing so for 2.5 hours to Williamstown, NSW, leaving the Electorate Office at 7am.

51. The IPEA delegate assessed the additional information and determined that the staff member's adjustments to travel allowance would have been payable if the correct information was provided at the time the claim was made.

52. Based on this information, IPEA determined that the adjustment to travel allowance was claimed in accordance with the provisions of the legislative framework.

53. On 20 December 2023, IPEA Assurance wrote to the staff member to confirm that the matter was considered closed. However, they were advised that future adjustments may need to be repaid if accurate information is not provided at the time the claim is made (**Attachment 12**).

Conclusion

54. IPEA finds that the staff member's adjustments to travel allowance, excluding the adjustment for 2 March 2023, were claimed in accordance with the provisions of the legislative framework.

55. IPEA finds that the staff member's adjustment to travel allowance for 2 March 2023 was not claimed in accordance with the provisions of the legislative framework, however following further investigation it was determined that the adjustment would be payable under the provisions of the framework.

56. The staff member has been reminded that for future travel, they must ensure that the reason for claiming adjustments to travel allowance are clearly outlined when they submit the form so that they can be assessed against the requirements of the framework. Future adjustments may need to be repaid if accurate information is not provided at the time the claim is made.

57. The staff member has also attended the training requested by the Assistant Minister.

From: Assurance
Sent: Friday, 30 June 2023 9:05 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Assurance
Subject: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: IPEA to the Hon Matt Thistlethwaite - 30 June 2023.PDF; Attachment A.PDF; Attachment B - The Determination.PDF; Attachment C - Travel Allowance Guidelines.PDF; Attachment D - accommodation receipts for Wagga Wagga - 12 April 2023.PDF

OFFICIAL

Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP

Member for Kingsford Smith

Assistant Minister for Defence, Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Assistant Minister for the Republic

Dear Assistant Minister

Please find attached correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority in relation to an Assurance Review of staff use of adjustments to travel allowance.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Nicole Pearson

Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance and Legal

Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority

One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603

T: 02 6215 3000

E: assurance@ipea.gov.au

W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

Classification: OFFICIAL

Classified by: [REDACTED] **on:** 30/06/2023 8:49:31 AM



Australian Government
Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority

29 June 2023

Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP
Member for Kingsford Smith
Assistant Minister for Defence, Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Assistant Minister
for the Republic

Shop 6
205 Maroubra Road
Maroubra, NSW, 2035

Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Assistant Minister

Assurance Review of adjustments to travel allowance

The Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) is responsible for monitoring the use of travel resources used in connection with travel by staff employed under the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984*.

IPEA is currently undertaking an Assurance Review of adjustments to travel allowance claimed by your staff member [REDACTED] employed in your office since 23 June 2022.

At **Attachment A** is a list of [REDACTED] adjustments to travel allowance for which we require additional information to assess against the legislative framework.

To facilitate your review, we have attached:

- Determination 2020/15 - Staff Travel and Relief Staff Arrangements (**Attachment B** - the Determination). The Determination details the circumstances under which staff travel allowances may be used, including the requirements of travel.
- The Travel Allowance Guidelines for staff travel (**Attachment C** – the Guidelines).
- Accommodation receipts for Wagga Wagga on 12 April 2023 (**Attachment D**).

Items 3 and 4 of the Determination state that employees may travel as directed anywhere within Australia on official business.

Sections 23 and 25 of the Guidelines provide the requirements for adjustments to travel allowance:

23. Where:

a. an employee is directed to travel with his or her employing Member on official business outside of Canberra;

b. the Member certifies that it is necessary for the employee to stay in the same hotel; and

the amount of TA is insufficient to cover the cost, the rate of TA will be increased to cover the cost.

25. Where an employee considers that the rate of TA is insufficient to meet the reasonable costs of an overnight stay, e.g. where special circumstances such as a major international event result in an increase in the cost or availability of accommodation, the Minister or an IPEA official authorised by the Minister may approve an increase in TA.

At Attachment A we have divided the accommodation adjustments into three sections. For each section we require different information from you, to ensure the adjustments were claimed in accordance with the Determination and the requirements of the Guidelines as outlined above.

Section 1

For these transactions we require you to confirm you directed [REDACTED] to stay in the same hotel as yourself because it was necessary for official purposes, as required by section 23 of the Guidelines. We require this information as the original travel allowance claim form for these transactions was signed by an authorised person, not yourself.

Section 2

For this transaction on 12 April 2023, [REDACTED] indicated that [REDACTED] was staying in the same hotel as yourself on the form [REDACTED] submitted. However, the commercial tax invoices that you each provided indicate that you stayed at different hotels. Your commercial tax invoice is for the [REDACTED] Wagga and [REDACTED] is for the [REDACTED] (Attachment D).

If you did not stay at the same commercial accommodation, the adjustment to travel allowance would not meet the requirements of section 23 of the Guidelines. Under this section, an adjustment to travel allowance is only payable when an employee is directed to travel with his or her employing Member on official business outside of Canberra, and the Member certifies that it is necessary for the employee to stay in the same hotel.

It is important to note that under section 25 of the Guidelines, an adjustment to travel allowance is also payable when there is an increase in cost or lack of availability of accommodation due to a special event, and an IPEA official authorised by the Minister approves the adjustment. From the information available to IPEA, this has not occurred for this transaction.

For us to complete our assessment we require you to review the transaction and the commercial tax invoices at Attachment D and then either:

- confirm that you directed [REDACTED] to stay at the hotel with yourself and provide evidence that the adjustment was correctly claimed, such as additional commercial tax invoices that show you stayed at the same hotel, or
- provide an explanation for why the adjustment has been claimed by [REDACTED]

Section 3

Under regulation 10 of the Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017 (the Regulations), Australian travel allowance is prescribed for each night the member stays in accommodation in Australia that is not the member's home base. Under regulation 4 of the Regulations, *home base* is defined as the member's principal place of residence as nominated to IPEA by the member.

This means you may direct your staff member to stay at commercial accommodation in Sydney if you are staying at the same property, and if your travel meets the relevant conditions and obligations of the Parliamentary Business Resource framework, including that the dominant purpose of the travel was for conducting parliamentary business.

Please note, the adjustment claimed by [REDACTED] for 2 March 2023 was claimed in Sydney, the city in which you are based, but there is no record of IPEA receiving a travel allowance claim for yourself.

For these transactions, therefore, we require you to:

- confirm you directed [REDACTED] to stay in the same hotel as yourself because it was necessary for official purposes, and
- provide the commercial tax invoice for your own accommodation as it has not been previously provided to IPEA.

Subject to your response to this correspondence, IPEA may require further information to assess the dominant purpose and nature of your parliamentary business in Sydney on this date.

I would be grateful if you could provide your response via email to assurance@ipea.gov.au, by close of business on 17 July 2023, or advise us prior to the date if you need more time.

Please note that IPEA publishes its Assurance Reviews on its website at www.ipea.gov.au. Should you wish to discuss this matter, please contact [REDACTED] on (02) 6215 3000.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Nicole Pearson
Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance & Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603

Attachment A**Assurance Review of accommodation adjustments**

To assist with your review, we have divided the accommodation adjustments into three sections. Please review each transaction and provide the requested information in the 'Confirmation of Travel' column. Where it has not been provided previously, we have also requested that you provide the commercial tax invoice for your accommodation.

Section 1

For these transactions we require you to confirm you directed [REDACTED] to stay in the same hotel as yourself because it was necessary for official purposes, as required by section 23 of the Guidelines. We require this information as the original travel allowance claim form for these transactions was signed by an authorised person, not yourself.

Transaction Type	Travel Date	Arrival Location	Hotel	Number of nights	Total Amount of Travel Allowance	Confirmation of Travel <i>Provide confirmation you directed the employee to stay in the same hotel because it was necessary for official purposes</i>
Domestic Travel Allowance	18 July 2022	Brisbane	[REDACTED]	2	\$724.30	
Domestic Travel Allowance	15 November 2022	Brisbane	[REDACTED]	1	\$307.15	
Domestic Travel Allowance	17 November 2022	Melbourne	[REDACTED]	1	\$297.15	
Domestic Travel Allowance	12 March 2023	Perth	[REDACTED]	2	\$707.60	

Section 2

The commercial receipts that you and your staff member provided for this travel indicate that you did not stay at the same commercial accommodation.

Your commercial tax invoice is for the [REDACTED] Wagga and [REDACTED] is for the [REDACTED] (Attachment D)

For us to complete our assessment we require you to review the transaction and the commercial tax invoices at Attachment D and then either:

- confirm that you directed [REDACTED] to stay at the hotel with yourself and provide evidence that the adjustment was correctly claimed, such as additional commercial tax invoices that show you stayed at the same hotel, or
- provide an explanation for why the adjustment was claimed for IPEA to assess.

Transaction Type	Travel Date	Arrival Location	Hotel	Number of nights	Total Amount of Travel Allowance	Confirmation of Travel <i>Provide confirmation you directed the employee to stay in the same hotel because it was necessary for official purposes and provide evidence of the accommodation</i>
Domestic Travel Allowance	12 April 2023	Wagga Wagga	[REDACTED]	1	\$318.15	

Section 3

For these transactions we require you to:

- confirm you directed [REDACTED] to stay in the same hotel as yourself because it was necessary for official purposes, and
- provide the commercial tax invoice for your accommodation as it has not been previously provided to IPEA.

Transaction Type	Travel Date	Arrival Location	Hotel	Number of nights	Total Amount of Travel Allowance	Confirmation of Travel <i>Provide confirmation you directed the employee to stay in the same hotel because it was necessary for official purposes and provide the commercial tax invoice</i>
Domestic Travel Allowance	9 August 2022	Adelaide	[REDACTED]	2	\$766.30	
Domestic Travel Allowance	2 March 2023	Sydney	[REDACTED]	1	\$392.15	

DETERMINATION 2020/15

*Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984***STAFF TRAVEL AND RELIEF STAFF ARRANGEMENTS**

I, MATHIAS CORMANN, Minister for Finance, for and on behalf of the Prime Minister, determine under subsection 13(2) and subsection 20(2) of the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* (the Act) that, with effect on and from the date of this Determination:

- Determination 2018/30 made on 12 December 2018 is revoked;
- the travel arrangements set out in Schedule A of this determination apply to the staff of Senators and Members employed under Part III and Part IV of the Act;
- the relief staff arrangements set out in Schedule B of this determination apply; and
- the Electorate Support Budget is calculated as set out in Schedule C of this determination.

Dated this

29th

day of

June

2020



MATHIAS CORMANN
Minister for Finance

SCHEDULE A

Domestic Travel

1. Employees may only travel by the most efficient direct route available.
2. Subject to item 16, it is an employee's responsibility (and hence the employee's cost) to transport him or herself to and from work for his or her normal hours of duty. This responsibility includes travel between accommodation and the office when travelling on parliamentary or electorate business away from the employee's work base. This also includes travel to attend work when the employee's work base is distant from the employee's home.
3. All personal employees may travel as directed anywhere within Australia on official business.
4. Subject to available funds in the Electorate Support Budget (where applicable), electorate employees may travel as directed anywhere within Australia on official business. All travel costs under this determination and associated travelling allowance and motor vehicle allowance under the *Commonwealth Members of Parliament Staff Enterprise Agreement 2016-2019* or successor agreements (Enterprise Agreement) are debited against the Electorate Support Budget (where applicable).
5. One nominated electorate employee working for a Minister, a Parliamentary Secretary, an Opposition Office Holder, a Leader or Deputy Leader of a Minority Party, a Chair of a Parliamentary Committee, or, with the approval of the Special Minister of State, a Chair of a Parliamentary Sub-Committee, may travel as directed anywhere within Australia on official business without debit against the Electorate Support Budget.
 - (a) The nomination of an electorate employee is to be a settled arrangement, that is, the expectation is that the nomination would not change within 12 months. The name of the nominated employee must be notified to the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) in writing¹. All travel under this Schedule by the nominated employee that was undertaken prior to the date that the nomination took effect will be debited against the Electorate Support Budget.
 - (b) A Senator or Member may nominate only one electorate employee who may travel as directed anywhere within Australia on official business without debit against the Electorate Support Budget at any one time, irrespective of the number of office holder positions (as specified in this item) held by the Senator or Member.
 - (c) The general travel conditions set out in this Schedule continue to apply, where appropriate, to the nominated employee.
 - (d) All travel by the electorate employees of the Senator or Member, other than the nominated employee, will be debited against the Electorate Support Budget, subject to item 6.

¹ Using the *Electorate Employee Travel Nomination* form on the IPEA website.

6. A Presiding Officer, including a Deputy Presiding Officer, Parliamentary Secretary², Whip or a Shadow Minister, other than an Opposition Office Holder, may nominate a personal employee whose travel will be debited against the Electorate Support Budget, in place of a nominated electorate employee, whose travel will not be debited against the Electorate Support Budget.
 - (a) The nomination of a personal and electorate employee is to be a settled arrangement, that is, the expectation is that the nomination would not change within 12 months. The names of the nominated personal and electorate employees must be notified to IPEA in writing³. Travel by the nominated electorate employee that was undertaken prior to the date that the nomination took effect will be debited against the Electorate Support Budget.
7. Official travel is restricted to Australia (excluding the external territories), unless the employing Senator or Member has a specific work expense for travel to an Australian external territory.
8. Travel may not be undertaken at Commonwealth expense for the personal benefit of an employee.
9. With the approval of the employing Senator or Member, an employee is permitted to make a stopover for personal reasons in the course of travel on official business by the most efficient direct route available, provided:
 - (a) the stopover is for a maximum of two nights only;
 - (b) no annual leave is taken by an employee as part of the stopover; and
 - (c) any additional costs for fares or costs related to the stopover are paid by the employee at the time of booking the travel.
10. Travelling allowance is not payable during a personal stopover. A personal stopover is defined as personal time spent at a destination where an employee has been directed to travel on official business⁴ or a break in travel at a usual point en route to the final travel destination⁵.
11. An employee may only use charter services when accompanying their employing Senator or Member under the Senator's or Member's charter work expense or where scheduled transport services (including air, rail, sea and bus) are not available.
 - (a) If the charter service also carries other passengers, the Commonwealth will only pay the pro rata cost of the travel of the employee.
 - (b) Charter services may not be used for the sole reason that scheduled services are fully booked, or are not available at the most convenient time.
 - (c) Some regions of Australia have infrequent scheduled services and/or no scheduled air services. Employees travelling to these locations should plan their travel with regard to these constraints.

² A Parliamentary Secretary may nominate an electorate employee whose travel will not be debited from the ESB under item 5 and, concurrently, nominate a personal employee whose travel will be debited from the ESB in place of a nominated different electorate employee whose travel will not be debited under item 6.

³ Using the *Electorate Employee Travel Nomination* form on the IPEA website.

⁴ For example, a Canberra-based employee travels to Brisbane on official business on Friday. The employee stays in Brisbane on Saturday and Sunday nights and returns on Monday. In this case, the Saturday and Sunday are counted as a personal stopover and return airfare will be covered by the Electorate Support Budget. However, if the employee returns on Tuesday or later, it is at their own expense.

⁵ For example, travel from Hobart to Canberra may have a usual stop in Melbourne en route.

12. Employees are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure, where applicable, that departure and destination travel arrangements are compatible with scheduled transport services.

Class of Travel

13. Senior staff (employees above the level of Adviser) who are required by the employing Senator or Member to travel on official business by air, rail, road or sea are limited to a fare which shall not exceed the cost of a business class airfare for the most reasonable and usual route between the departure and destination points. Where a business class airfare is not published for the destination point, the cost to the Commonwealth of travel by air, rail, road or sea must not exceed the economy class airfare for the most reasonable and usual route, between the departure and destination points.
14. Employees, other than senior staff, who are required by the employing Senator or Member to travel on official business by air, rail, road or sea are limited to a fare which shall not exceed the cost of an economy class airfare for the most reasonable and usual route between the departure and destination points, unless otherwise determined by the Special Minister of State.
15. A Minister, Parliamentary Secretary, Opposition Office Holder or Presiding Officer (but not a Deputy Presiding Officer) may direct a member of his or her staff who is on the same aircraft to travel at the same class as him or her, where there is a working need to do so. It is expected that no more than one employee will do so on any particular trip.

Car Transport

16. As set out in item 2 of this Schedule, it is an employee's responsibility (and hence the employee's cost) to transport him or herself to and from work for his or her normal hours of duty. Exceptions to this rule apply to the use of car transport in the following circumstances:
 - (a) the trip is approved for personal safety reasons (for example, where the risk to personal safety is significantly increased due to the requirement to work late); or
 - (b) the employee is travelling on official business and scheduled public transport services are not readily available; or
 - (c) the employee is travelling on official business and is carrying luggage to and/or from the office for the purpose of the trip.
17. Employees, when travelling as directed on official business, or under the exceptions at item 16, subject to the restrictions at items 1 to 9, may use⁶:
 - (a) taxis;
 - (b) regulated ridesharing services;
 - (c) hire cars; and

⁶ Motor vehicle allowance (MVA) may also be payable under Enterprise Agreement where an employee travels under the provisions of this determination in their privately owned vehicle or self-drive hire vehicle, at their own expense.

- (d) short-term self-drive cars hired through the travel services provider, or with any car hire company, provided that:
 - (i) the hire is of no more than 10 days duration;
 - (ii) the vehicle is not used for journeys within Canberra (other than to collect and/or return the vehicle);
 - (iii) the vehicle is not used for journeys within a city/town where the employer's electorate or other office is located (other than to collect and/or return the vehicle), except by employees of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, or the leader of a minority party;
 - (iv) for the purposes of short-term self-drive car hire under this determination, a capital city, other than Canberra, is defined by the boundaries of the electorates identified as urban on the Federal Electoral Boundaries map published from time to time by the Australian Electoral Commission. Canberra includes locations within a 30km radius of Parliament House; and
 - (v) the cost of insurance will be met by the Commonwealth where it is purchased as part of the vehicle hire. It is the responsibility of employees to ensure that they arrange the appropriate level of insurance for the circumstances of the hire. To reduce liability to the Commonwealth in case of loss or damage to the vehicle, this will usually be the highest level of insurance cover available.
- 18. Self-drive hire cars should be used on weekdays only unless exceptional circumstances apply and the Senator or Member has approved the use. Employees may not use taxis, regulated ridesharing services, hire cars or short-term self-drive hire cars at Commonwealth expense for private use, other than as set out at item 16.

Tolls and Parking Costs

- 19. Employees authorised by the employing Senator or Member to travel on official business may be reimbursed their toll and parking costs. Such costs must be reasonable to be eligible for full reimbursement⁷.
- 20. Toll and parking costs will not be reimbursed where incurred during a personal stopover or a period of leave. Administrative charges or penalties for late payment or non-payment of tolls and parking costs will not be reimbursed.
- 21. Employees will not be reimbursed for valet parking costs, with the exception of valet parking costs incurred at the accommodation occupied by the employee for travel on official business involving an overnight stay away from their work base.

Travel for Training

- 22. Senators and Members whose electorate offices are outside the greater metropolitan area of capital cities (including satellite cities), or within the Northern Territory or Tasmania, have access to four trips per financial year (five trips per financial year where the Member has a second official electorate office or six trips per financial year where the Member has a third official electorate office) for their electorate employees to travel to the nearest capital city to attend training under the

⁷ For example, it is generally expected that long-stay parking will be used at an airport.

Professional Development Program or approved ad hoc training and professional development opportunities, IT training or training for Work Health and Safety roles.

- (a) For electorate offices located in the Northern Territory, employees may also use the trips to travel to Adelaide or Brisbane.
- (b) For electorate offices located in Tasmania, employees may also use the trips to travel to Melbourne.

23. The Senators and Members whose employees are eligible for the trips in item 22 will be listed on the Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (M&PS) website.

Travel for ECG Representatives and WHS Committee Members

24. Associated travel costs⁸ of employees who are Employee Consultative Group⁹ (ECG) representatives and Work Health and Safety (WHS) Committee¹⁰ members, and whose travel is subject to the Electorate Support Budget, will not be debited against the Electorate Support Budget when the employee travels for the purpose of attending an ECG meeting or WHS Committee meeting, provided that the travel to the meeting location is not also for other official business.
25. Where the travel is also for other official business, only the *additional* travel costs associated with the ECG meeting or WHS Committee meeting will not be debited against the Electorate Support Budget.

COMCAR Services for Employees of the Prime Minister

26. All employees of the Prime Minister may use a COMCAR to travel to or from Defence Establishment Fairbairn when embarking or returning from travel with or on behalf of the Prime Minister.
27. With prior notification to the COMCAR Client Liaison Manager, the Prime Minister's employees may also travel in a COMCAR, when the car would otherwise be travelling without passengers, in the following circumstances:
- (a) if a COMCAR is travelling out of zone to meet the Prime Minister¹¹, and employees need to travel along the same route to meet the Prime Minister; or
 - (b) if a COMCAR is travelling as part of the Prime Minister's advance party and employees need to travel along the same route.
28. In using COMCAR for these purposes, the COMCAR booking will be based solely on the Prime Minister's requirements. Employees must make their own way to and from any pick up/drop off point that COMCAR advise, which will be on the direct intended route. The COMCAR schedule cannot be altered to incur waiting time on behalf of an employee.

⁸ 'Associated travel costs' are costs under this determination (or its successor determinations), including domestic flights and car travel, and as provided under the Enterprise Agreement, including travelling allowance and motor vehicle allowance.

⁹ As described at clause 5 of the Enterprise Agreement.

¹⁰ A Health and Safety Committee for MOP(S) Act employees for the purposes of Division 4 of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

¹¹ For example, from Canberra to Merimbula.

SCHEDULE B

Relief Staff Arrangements

29. Each Senator and Member may engage relief staff as electorate employees with a work base of the electorate office, Parliament House office, or office holder's office as described at item 30, in accordance with the Enterprise Agreement, up to the limit of his or her Electorate Support Budget. The Special Minister of State may approve an alternative work base for a person employed against the Electorate Support Budget in special circumstances.
30. For the purpose of item 29, an office holder's office is an office, other than the electorate office/s and Parliament House office, provided at Commonwealth expense to the employing Senator or Member within the state or territory of their electorate and who is:
- (a) a Minister;
 - (b) an Opposition Office Holder;
 - (c) a Leader of a Minority Party; or
 - (d) a Presiding Officer.
31. The employment of electorate staff against an established position will not be debited against the Electorate Support Budget under the following circumstances:
- (a) filling of positions that are vacant due to resignation, retirement or termination;
 - (b) filling of positions that are temporarily vacant due to an employee being temporarily progressed to a personal employee position;
 - (c) absences of one week¹² or more on personal leave¹³;
 - (d) all absences on the following types of leave:
 - (i) unpaid carer's leave;
 - (ii) compassionate leave;
 - (iii) community service leave;
 - (iv) miscellaneous or other leave paid in accordance with the Enterprise Agreement (including Defence Force service, participation in major international sporting events, war service sick leave, political exchange leave, and other special purposes, but not including study leave);
 - (v) long service leave;
 - (vi) maternity leave¹⁴;
 - (vii) adoption leave;

¹² The term 'one week' means an absence of 38 hours regardless of whether the employee is full-time or part-time.

¹³ Where an employee who is absent due to personal illness or injury or carers duties has exhausted their paid personal leave and therefore uses annual or long service leave, they may be replaced without debit against the Electorate Support Budget.

¹⁴ Where other forms of paid leave are used within the 52 week maternity leave period, the Electorate Support Budget provisions that apply to maternity leave take precedence over the Electorate Support Budget provisions that apply to the type of leave used.

- (viii) supporting partner leave;
 - (ix) unpaid parental leave; and
 - (x) leave without pay.
32. Where an electorate employee is partially incapacitated (i.e. working fewer than their usual weekly hours on the basis of medical advice), working up to but not exceeding 20 hours per week, that employee will be treated as totally incapacitated and full-time relief arrangements will apply (to the maximum of the usual weekly hours of the employee) for a maximum period of six months without debit against the Electorate Support Budget. After six months, or when the affected employee's work hours exceed 20 hours per week (but are less than their usual weekly hours), relief staff may be engaged part-time in order to fully staff the position without debit against the Electorate Support Budget.
33. Senators and Members who hold a 'relevant office', as defined under section 3 of the Act, engage relief staff as electorate employees against the Electorate Support Budget under Part III of the Act. Senators and Members who do not hold a 'relevant office' engage relief staff as electorate employees against the Electorate Support Budget under Part IV of the Act.

SCHEDULE C

Calculation of the Electorate Support Budget

34. Subject to items 35 to 38, the Electorate Support Budget is calculated at the commencement of each financial year as the sum of:
- (a) the electorate staff travel component; and
 - (b) the relief staff component.
35. The Electorate Support Budget is calculated pro rata, on the basis of the number of calendar days remaining, for the financial year in which a Senator or Member commences his or her term.
36. The relief staff component will be adjusted in line with changes to the base salary point of the Electorate Officer B classification.
37. The relief staff component will be adjusted pro rata where a Member is allocated, or ceases to be allocated, an additional position for a second and/or third official electorate office.
38. The Special Minister of State may approve changes to the Electorate Support Budget for any Senator or Member.
39. If the Electorate Support Budget for a year is exhausted, a Senator or Member may not draw from the Electorate Support Budget for the following year. The costs beyond the Electorate Support Budget are a debt owed to the Commonwealth and must be repaid by the Senator or Member. Unused funds may not be carried over to the following year.

Electorate staff travel component

40. Except as provided at items 41, 42 and 43, the electorate staff travel component is calculated on the basis of:
- (a) 20 return economy airfares (fully flexible) between the primary electorate office and Canberra;
 - (b) 110 nights of travelling allowance at the rate applicable to Canberra;
 - (c) taxi fares and/or motor vehicle allowance to and from the relevant airports for the 20 flights above; and
 - (d) an amount for other travel as follows:

Senator/Member	Electorate Size	\$
Member	0-199 km ²	\$300
Member	200-999 km ²	\$500
Member	1,000-9,999 km ²	\$700
Member	10,000-99,999 km ²	\$1,000
Member	100,000-199,999 km ²	\$8,132
Member	200,000-499,999 km ²	\$10,132
Member	500,000 km ² or greater	\$12,132
Senators for the NT	—	\$9,000
All other Senators	—	\$500

41. Where a Senator or Member's primary electorate office is located within 150km of Canberra by road, the electorate staff travel component is calculated at the commencement of each financial year on the basis of:
 - (a) the value of motor vehicle allowance payable for 20 return motor vehicle trips between the primary electorate office and Canberra;
 - (b) 110 nights of travelling allowance at the rate applicable to Canberra; and
 - (c) an amount for other travel as set out at item 40(d).
42. The electorate staff travel component for each financial year for the Member for Bean and Senators for the ACT is calculated on the basis of:
 - (a) three return economy airfares (fully flexible) between Canberra and Norfolk Island;
 - (b) eight nights of travelling allowance at the commercial rate applicable to Norfolk Island; and
 - (c) an amount of \$2,000 for other travel.
43. The electorate staff travel component for each financial year for the following Senators and Members is calculated as follows:

Senator/Member	\$
Member for Canberra	\$2,000
Member for Fenner	\$2,000
Member for Eden-Monaro	\$5,000
Senator whose electorate office is in Queanbeyan	\$5,000

Relief staff component

44. The relief staff component is calculated on the basis of:
 - (a) 150 days' salary at the base salary point of the Electorate Officer B classification; and
 - (b) an additional 50 days' salary at the base salary point of the Electorate Officer B classification where a Member is allocated an additional position for a second official electorate office; and
 - (c) an additional 50 days' salary at the base salary point of the Electorate Officer B classification where a Member is allocated an additional position for a third official electorate office.

Terms and Definitions

45. In this determination, terms have the meaning set out in the Enterprise Agreement. In addition, the terms below have the following meanings:

Opposition Office Holder means:

- (a) the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the House of Representatives; or
- (b) the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate.

Leader or Deputy Leader of a Minority Party means the Leader or Deputy Leader of a recognised non-Government party of at least five members, but does not include an Opposition Office Holder.

Professional Development Program means a scheduled program of training courses for MOP(S) Act employees, administered by the Department of Finance.

Regulated ridesharing services means a ridesharing service operating under regulation in the State or Territory in which the travel occurs.



Travel allowance

Background

1. Employees are paid travel allowance (TA) by the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) in accordance with clause 55 of the Enterprise Agreement.
2. TA can be paid in the form of an advance (a claim made prior to the completion of travel) or as an acquittal (a claim made after the completion of travel).

Commercial and non-commercial TA rates

3. Payment of TA for an overnight stay in Canberra is a single flat rate for both commercial and non-commercial accommodation, with the exception of the circumstance outlined in paragraph 7, and there is no requirement for employees to submit receipts for acquittal purposes. The TA rate covers personal costs not otherwise met by IPEA, e.g. personal telephone calls, laundry, dry cleaning, mini bar and newspapers
4. For each overnight stay other than in Canberra, employees who claim the commercial rate must provide a receipt for the commercial accommodation or certify that a receipt can be produced if requested by IPEA.
5. The following documents are accepted as evidence of commercial accommodation by IPEA:
 - a. A copy of a GST tax invoice for the place of commercial accommodation; or
 - b. A non-GST receipt or written statement from the place of commercial accommodation, that is clear and unobscured, and indicates the following:
 - i. the claimant's name;
 - ii. the place that they stayed at;
 - iii. the dates of the stay;
 - iv. evidence indicating that payment has been made in full; and
 - v. the full cost of the commercial accommodation.
6. Ordinarily, a receipt for commercial accommodation will be a tax invoice showing an Australian Business Number (ABN) and inclusive of Goods and Services Tax (GST). If the receipt is not a tax invoice, IPEA will seek to verify that the receipt is for commercial accommodation, i.e. accommodation offered to the public at large in the pursuit of profit.

Properties booked at arm's length through websites such as Airbnb and Stays would meet this requirement. An arrangement to stay with family or acquaintances would not meet this requirement, even if a receipt was provided, because the accommodation is not offered to the public at large on the same terms. If this cannot be verified, the non-commercial rate of TA will be paid.

7. Where an employee's accommodation is otherwise paid for by the Australian Government (e.g. an employee's portfolio department), the employee may be paid the non-commercial rate of TA in accordance with clause 55.7(b) of the Enterprise Agreement to cover meals and incidental expenses. In the case that the overnight stay is in Canberra, the employee receives 1/3rd of the Canberra TA rate to cover meals and incidental expenses.

Eligibility for TA in certain circumstances

8. No TA is generally payable at an employee's work base, including an approved alternative work base
9. Where an employee travels by a scheduled commercial service that includes an accommodation component, e.g. The Ghan, TA will not be paid. Refer to the Domestic Travel Guideline for further information.
10. An employee will be paid TA for the preceding night when:
 - a. the scheduled or actual departure time to the destination is between midnight and 3.00am (in which case TA is paid at the rate for the departure location and is not paid if the employee is not eligible for TA at that location), or
 - b. the scheduled or actual arrival time at their destination is 6:00am or earlier (in which case TA is paid at the rate for the destination and is not paid if the employee is not eligible for TA at that location).
11. TA will not be paid at more than one location for the same night. If an employee qualifies under both circumstances above, the commercial rate of TA will only be paid at the location for which the employee has a receipt for commercial accommodation, while the non-commercial rate of TA may be paid at either location, but not both.

Mandatory quarantine arrangements

12. Where an employee is directed by the employing member, for the purpose of official business, to travel to, or return from, a place that requires mandatory quarantine under a commercial arrangement, the employee may claim the commercial rate of TA. Where the commercial rate of TA is not sufficient to cover the mandatory quarantine costs, a discretionary payment may be sought in accordance with the Enterprise Agreement.

Capital cities for TA purposes

13. For TA purposes Canberra is as defined in the *Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017* and other capital cities are as defined in the *Remuneration Tribunal (Members of Parliament) Determination 2021* as amended or replaced from time to time:
 - a. 'Canberra' includes locations within a 30 kilometre radius of Parliament House; 'Sydney', 'Melbourne', 'Brisbane', 'Perth' and 'Adelaide' mean locations within a ten kilometre radius of the General Post Office of the city or within a five kilometre radius of the city's principal airport; and
 - b. 'Darwin' and 'Hobart' mean locations within a five kilometre radius of the General Post Office of the city or within a five kilometre radius of the city's principal airport.
- ▶ [IPEA – Capital city zones](#)

Claiming TA

14. To claim TA, a completed *Travelling and/or Motor Vehicle Allowance Claim*, certified by the employing Member or authorised person, must be lodged with IPEA. The completed form and relevant supporting documentation, such as accommodation receipts, should be attached to the claim.
15. IPEA regularly conducts assurance activities of TA claims, therefore, it is recommended that employees who have certified that they can produce a receipt on request, retain receipts and/or other documentation relating to TA payments for an appropriate period, including after employment ceases, noting that IPEA is obliged to retain its records documenting records of claims history for 10 years after the receipt of a final claim or departure from parliament. Refer to paragraph 29 regarding a potential overpayment where a receipt is unable to be produced.
16. Offices should also retain original employee travel claims for an appropriate period.

TA advance

17. If a claim for TA is certified by the employing Member or authorised person before the official travel has been completed, the claim is treated as an advance. The trip is completed when the employee finishes the last leg of travel (e.g. the employee returns home).
18. TA will be paid in advance as close as possible to the time of official travel, via electronic funds transfer to the employee's nominated account.
19. An employee who is paid an advance of TA must acquit the travel as soon as possible and no later than 28 days after the official travel is completed. Once 28 days has

elapsed, future payments of TA will not be made to the employee until the advance has been acquitted.

TA acquittal

20. If the claim for TA is certified by the employing Member or authorised person after the official travel has been completed, the claim is treated as an acquittal.
21. TA will be paid as soon as possible after the receipt of an approved claim form, via electronic funds transfer to the employee's nominated account.
22. It is recommended that employees lodge their claim for TA as soon as possible after the completion of official travel. Claims signed by the employing Member or authorised person more than 60 days after the date of completion of the travel, will not be paid unless a statement from the employing Member providing reasons for the late TA claim is provided (in the case of a Minister, Parliamentary Secretary or Opposition Office Holder, a statement from the Chief of Staff, Principal Adviser or Senior Adviser will be accepted if they are authorised to approve staff travel). The decision whether to pay a late TA claim rests with IPEA.

Adjustment to rate of TA

23. Where:
 - a. an employee is directed to travel with his or her employing Member on official business outside of Canberra;
 - b. the Member certifies that it is necessary for the employee to stay in the same hotel; and

the amount of TA is insufficient to cover the cost, the rate of TA will be increased to cover the cost.
24. Where:
 - a. an employee of the Prime Minister or the Leader of the Opposition is directed to travel up to three nights in advance of his or her employer on official business outside of Canberra;
 - b. the employer certifies that it is necessary for the employee to stay in the same hotel that the employer intends to stay at on arrival at the location; and
 - c. the amount of TA is insufficient to cover the cost,

the rate of TA will be increased to cover the cost.
25. Where an employee considers that the rate of TA is insufficient to meet the reasonable costs of an overnight stay, e.g. where special circumstances such as a major

international event result in an increase in the cost or availability of accommodation, the Minister or an IPEA official authorised by the Minister may approve an increase in TA.

26. In cases outlined in paragraphs 23 to 25, TA will be increased by the difference between the rate for accommodation determined by an independent organisation and the actual cost of accommodation, on appropriate certification by the employing Member or authorised person. If necessary, the rates for relevant meals will be included in the calculation (refer paragraph 27(b)).
27. Where an employee seeks an increase in TA, the employee must provide IPEA with either:
 - (a) an itemised receipt for each overnight stay, showing the cost of the accommodation separate to any meals or other costs; or
 - (b) where an 'accommodation package' that includes only room and meals has been purchased - a receipt and evidence that only these items are included in the accommodation package.

Descriptors such as 'accommodation package' alone on receipts do not contain sufficient information to enable an increase in TA to be calculated.

Cancellation costs for accommodation

28. Employees should consider cancellation policies when booking accommodation, especially when booking accommodation well in advance of official travel and/or for an extended period of time. Accommodation that allows a booking to be cancelled with minimal cost up until a few days prior to the stay should be preferred. Any decision on whether to reimburse an employee for the cost of cancelled accommodation as a discretionary payment under the Enterprise Agreement may take into account the cancellation policy applying to the booking.

Overpayment of TA

29. Any overpayment of TA, e.g. arising from changes to official travel arrangements, failure to acquit an advance of TA or failure by an employee to provide receipts to IPEA when requested, represents a debt to the Commonwealth and is subject to the debt recovery arrangements at clause 28 of the Enterprise Agreement.
30. Consistent with the Enterprise Agreement, recovery of an overpayment of TA will be made in accordance with the following arrangements:
 - a. at the election of the employee, the employee may remit the amount in full to IPEA; or
 - b. if it is likely that the employee will travel within the next 60 days, the amount may be deducted from future MVA or TA claims; or
 - c. if it is not likely that the employee will travel within the next 60 days, the amount may be recovered from pay or salary in accordance with clause 28.1(a) of the Enterprise Agreement.

31. If MOP(S) Act employment ceases then any outstanding overpayment of TA will be recovered from the former employee as a debt to the Commonwealth.

Personal leave during travel

32. If an employee needs to take personal leave for reasons of personal illness or injury (but not caring responsibilities) while undertaking official travel and is unable to return home, the employee may be reimbursed for costs up to the amount of TA that would have been payable if the employee had been able to complete the travel, including adjusted rates in accordance with paragraphs 23 to 25.
33. Where such a period of personal leave exceeds the approved period of travel and therefore the amount of TA, the extra costs may be met on approval from the employing Member and IPEA, subject to the employee producing a medical certificate or statutory declaration, and a receipt for the commercial accommodation.

120 overnight stays – clauses 55.8 and 55.9 of the Enterprise Agreement

34. Clauses 55.8 and 55.9 of the Enterprise Agreement limit the payment of TA in Canberra and, in some circumstances, in other locations, to a maximum of 120 overnight stays for certain employees.
35. The 120 overnight stays are assigned to the employee, not the position, and are not pro rata where an employee commences during the financial year. Therefore, in the event that the employee is employed by another Member, the remaining balance will transfer with the employee unless the 120 night limit does not apply to that employee with the new Member, for example, if their work base is Canberra.
36. Under clause 55.10, the Minister may vary the limit on 120 overnight stays, noting a significant increase beyond 120 nights may affect how an employee's work base is defined for the purposes of the Enterprise Agreement.

TAXINVOICE

Canberra, ACT 2600
Australia

Room	Invoice	CheckIn	CheckOut	Balance
35	156738	12/04/2023	13/04/2023	0.00
Master Folio		Best Available Daily Rate		

Your Reference: BBN-BB23040613643832

Date	Room	Description / Voucher	Charges	Credits	Balance
12/04/2023	35	Accommodation	176.00	0.00	176.00
12/04/2023	35		0.00	176.00	0.00
		Balance Due			0.00
		Summary and Taxes			
		Taxable Sales	160.00		
		GST - 10%	16.00		

TAX INVOICE

Company :
Address : X
Attention :
Room : 03B
Room Type : Studio Apartment
Arrive : 12 Apr 2023
Depart : 13 Apr 2023
Guest : MATTHEW MR THISTLETHWAITE

Reservation : 1968285
Reg/AB N No. :
Guest Ref ID :
Invoice No. : 818351
Voucher No. :
Print Date/Time : 13 Apr 2023 08:49 AM
Cashier :
Page : 1

DATE	ROOM	DESCRIPTION	GST AMOUNT (AUD)	
12 Apr 2023	03B	Accommodation - (12-Apr-23).	19.55	215.10
13 Apr 2023	03B			-215.10
			Sub-Total Before GST	195.55
			GST	19.55
			Total Amount Inc GST	215.10
			Payment	-215.10
			Balance	0.00

*** PAYMENT TERMS -- 30 DAYS ***

Branch Code :
SWIFT Code :
Bank Address :

I ACCEPT THAT MY LIABILITY FOR THIS BILL IS NOT WAIVED AND AGREE TO BE HELD PERSONALLY LIABLE IN THE EVENT THAT THE INDICATED PERSON COMPANY OR ASSOCIATION FAILS TO PAY FOR ANY PART OF THE FULL AMOUNT OF THESE CHARGES

SIGNATURE: _____

From: Assurance
Sent: Wednesday, 26 July 2023 2:55 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Assurance
Subject: Reminder - Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: IPEA to Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP - July 2023.pdf; Attachment A.PDF

OFFICIAL

Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP

Member for Kingsford Smith

Assistant Minister for Defence, Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Assistant Minister for the Republic

Dear Assistant Minister

Please find attached correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority in relation to an Assurance Review of staff use of adjustments to travel allowance.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Nicole Pearson

Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance and Legal

Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority

One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603

T: 02 6215 3000

E: assurance@ipea.gov.au

W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

Classification: OFFICIAL

Classified by: assurance@ipea.gov.au on: 30/06/2023 9:05:03 AM

From: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>

Sent: Friday, 30 June 2023 9:05 AM

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>

Cc: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>

Subject: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP

Member for Kingsford Smith

Assistant Minister for Defence, Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Assistant Minister for the Republic

Dear Assistant Minister

Please find attached correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority in relation to an Assurance Review of staff use of adjustments to travel allowance.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Nicole Pearson

Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603

T: 02 6215 3000

E: assurance@ipea.gov.au

W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

Classification: OFFICIAL

Classified by: [REDACTED] **on:** 30/06/2023 8:49:31 AM



Australian Government
Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority

26 July 2023

Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP
Member for Kingsford Smith
Assistant Minister for Defence, Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Assistant Minister
for the Republic

Shop 6
205 Maroubra Road
Maroubra, NSW, 2035

Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Assistant Minister

Assurance Review of adjustments to travel allowance

On 30 June 2023, I wrote to you in relation to adjustments to travel allowance claimed by your staff member, [REDACTED] (Attachment A)

In that letter, a response was requested from you by 17 July 2023 and there was a provision for you to request an extension if you required more time to prepare a written response. An extension was not requested, and your response is now overdue.

I would be grateful if you could provide your response via email to assurance@ipea.gov.au, by close of business on 9 August 2023, or advise us prior to the date if you need more time.

Please note that IPEA publishes its Assurance Reviews on its website at www.ipea.gov.au. Should you wish to discuss this matter, please contact Sian Thomas on (02) 6215 3000.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Nicole Pearson
Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance & Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603



Australian Government
Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority

29 June 2023

Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP
Member for Kingsford Smith
Assistant Minister for Defence, Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Assistant Minister
for the Republic

Shop 6
205 Maroubra Road
Maroubra, NSW, 2035

Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Assistant Minister

Assurance Review of adjustments to travel allowance

The Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) is responsible for monitoring the use of travel resources used in connection with travel by staff employed under the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984*.

IPEA is currently undertaking an Assurance Review of adjustments to travel allowance claimed by your staff member [REDACTED] employed in your office since 23 June 2022.

At **Attachment A** is a list of [REDACTED] adjustments to travel allowance for which we require additional information to assess against the legislative framework.

To facilitate your review, we have attached:

- Determination 2020/15 - Staff Travel and Relief Staff Arrangements (**Attachment B** - the Determination). The Determination details the circumstances under which staff travel allowances may be used, including the requirements of travel.
- The Travel Allowance Guidelines for staff travel (**Attachment C** – the Guidelines).
- Accommodation receipts for Wagga Wagga on 12 April 2023 (**Attachment D**).

Items 3 and 4 of the Determination state that employees may travel as directed anywhere within Australia on official business.

Sections 23 and 25 of the Guidelines provide the requirements for adjustments to travel allowance:

23. Where:

a. an employee is directed to travel with his or her employing Member on official business outside of Canberra;

b. the Member certifies that it is necessary for the employee to stay in the same hotel; and

the amount of TA is insufficient to cover the cost, the rate of TA will be increased to cover the cost.

25. Where an employee considers that the rate of TA is insufficient to meet the reasonable costs of an overnight stay, e.g. where special circumstances such as a major international event result in an increase in the cost or availability of accommodation, the Minister or an IPEA official authorised by the Minister may approve an increase in TA.

At **Attachment A** we have divided the accommodation adjustments into three sections. For each section we require different information from you, to ensure the adjustments were claimed in accordance with the Determination and the requirements of the Guidelines as outlined above.

Section 1

For these transactions we require you to confirm you directed [REDACTED] to stay in the same hotel as yourself because it was necessary for official purposes, as required by section 23 of the Guidelines. We require this information as the original travel allowance claim form for these transactions was signed by an authorised person, not yourself.

Section 2

For this transaction on 12 April 2023, [REDACTED] indicated that [REDACTED] was staying in the same hotel as yourself on the form [REDACTED] submitted. However, the commercial tax invoices that you each provided indicate that you stayed at different hotels. Your commercial tax invoice is for the [REDACTED] Wagga and [REDACTED] is for the [REDACTED] (**Attachment D**).

If you did not stay at the same commercial accommodation, the adjustment to travel allowance would not meet the requirements of section 23 of the Guidelines. Under this section, an adjustment to travel allowance is only payable when an employee is directed to travel with his or her employing Member on official business outside of Canberra, and the Member certifies that it is necessary for the employee to stay in the same hotel.

It is important to note that under section 25 of the Guidelines, an adjustment to travel allowance is also payable when there is an increase in cost or lack of availability of accommodation due to a special event, and an IPEA official authorised by the Minister approves the adjustment. From the information available to IPEA, this has not occurred for this transaction.

For us to complete our assessment we require you to review the transaction and the commercial tax invoices at **Attachment D** and then either:

- confirm that you directed [REDACTED] to stay at the hotel with yourself and provide evidence that the adjustment was correctly claimed, such as additional commercial tax invoices that show you stayed at the same hotel, or
- provide an explanation for why the adjustment has been claimed by [REDACTED]

Section 3

Under regulation 10 of the Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017 (the Regulations), Australian travel allowance is prescribed for each night the member stays in accommodation in Australia that is not the member's home base. Under regulation 4 of the Regulations, **home base** is defined as the member's principal place of residence as nominated to IPEA by the member.

This means you may direct your staff member to stay at commercial accommodation in Sydney if you are staying at the same property, and if your travel meets the relevant conditions and obligations of the Parliamentary Business Resource framework, including that the dominant purpose of the travel was for conducting parliamentary business.

Please note, the adjustment claimed by [REDACTED] for 2 March 2023 was claimed in Sydney, the city in which you are based, but there is no record of IPEA receiving a travel allowance claim for yourself.

For these transactions, therefore, we require you to:

- confirm you directed [REDACTED] to stay in the same hotel as yourself because it was necessary for official purposes, and
- provide the commercial tax invoice for your own accommodation as it has not been previously provided to IPEA.

Subject to your response to this correspondence, IPEA may require further information to assess the dominant purpose and nature of your parliamentary business in Sydney on this date.

I would be grateful if you could provide your response via email to assurance@ipea.gov.au, by close of business on **17 July 2023**, or advise us prior to the date if you need more time.

Please note that IPEA publishes its Assurance Reviews on its website at www.ipea.gov.au. Should you wish to discuss this matter, please contact [REDACTED] on (02) 6215 3000.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Nicole Pearson
Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance & Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603

Attachment A**Assurance Review of accommodation adjustments**

To assist with your review, we have divided the accommodation adjustments into three sections. Please review each transaction and provide the requested information in the 'Confirmation of Travel' column. Where it has not been provided previously, we have also requested that you provide the commercial tax invoice for your accommodation.

Section 1

For these transactions we require you to confirm you directed [REDACTED] to stay in the same hotel as yourself because it was necessary for official purposes, as required by section 23 of the Guidelines. We require this information as the original travel allowance claim form for these transactions was signed by an authorised person, not yourself.

Transaction Type	Travel Date	Arrival Location	Hotel	Number of nights	Total Amount of Travel Allowance	Confirmation of Travel <i>Provide confirmation you directed the employee to stay in the same hotel because it was necessary for official purposes</i>
Domestic Travel Allowance	18 July 2022	Brisbane	[REDACTED]	2	\$724.30	
Domestic Travel Allowance	15 November 2022	Brisbane	[REDACTED]	1	\$307.15	
Domestic Travel Allowance	17 November 2022	Melbourne	[REDACTED]	1	\$297.15	
Domestic Travel Allowance	12 March 2023	Perth	[REDACTED]	2	\$707.60	

Section 2

The commercial receipts that you and your staff member provided for this travel indicate that you did not stay at the same commercial accommodation.

Your commercial tax invoice is for the [REDACTED] Wagga and [REDACTED] is for the [REDACTED] (Attachment D)

For us to complete our assessment we require you to review the transaction and the commercial tax invoices at Attachment D and then either:

- confirm that you directed [REDACTED] to stay at the hotel with yourself and provide evidence that the adjustment was correctly claimed, such as additional commercial tax invoices that show you stayed at the same hotel, or
- provide an explanation for why the adjustment was claimed for IPEA to assess.

Transaction Type	Travel Date	Arrival Location	Hotel	Number of nights	Total Amount of Travel Allowance	Confirmation of Travel <i>Provide confirmation you directed the employee to stay in the same hotel because it was necessary for official purposes and provide evidence of the accommodation</i>
Domestic Travel Allowance	12 April 2023	Wagga Wagga	[REDACTED]	1	\$318.15	

Section 3

For these transactions we require you to:

- confirm you directed [REDACTED] to stay in the same hotel as yourself because it was necessary for official purposes, and
- provide the commercial tax invoice for your accommodation as it has not been previously provided to IPEA.

Transaction Type	Travel Date	Arrival Location	Hotel	Number of nights	Total Amount of Travel Allowance	Confirmation of Travel <i>Provide confirmation you directed the employee to stay in the same hotel because it was necessary for official purposes and provide the commercial tax invoice</i>
Domestic Travel Allowance	9 August 2022	Adelaide	[REDACTED]	2	\$766.30	
Domestic Travel Allowance	2 March 2023	Sydney	[REDACTED]	1	\$392.15	

DETERMINATION 2020/15

*Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984***STAFF TRAVEL AND RELIEF STAFF ARRANGEMENTS**

I, MATHIAS CORMANN, Minister for Finance, for and on behalf of the Prime Minister, determine under subsection 13(2) and subsection 20(2) of the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* (the Act) that, with effect on and from the date of this Determination:

- Determination 2018/30 made on 12 December 2018 is revoked;
- the travel arrangements set out in Schedule A of this determination apply to the staff of Senators and Members employed under Part III and Part IV of the Act;
- the relief staff arrangements set out in Schedule B of this determination apply; and
- the Electorate Support Budget is calculated as set out in Schedule C of this determination.

Dated this

29th

day of

June

2020



MATHIAS CORMANN
Minister for Finance

SCHEDULE A

Domestic Travel

1. Employees may only travel by the most efficient direct route available.
2. Subject to item 16, it is an employee's responsibility (and hence the employee's cost) to transport him or herself to and from work for his or her normal hours of duty. This responsibility includes travel between accommodation and the office when travelling on parliamentary or electorate business away from the employee's work base. This also includes travel to attend work when the employee's work base is distant from the employee's home.
3. All personal employees may travel as directed anywhere within Australia on official business.
4. Subject to available funds in the Electorate Support Budget (where applicable), electorate employees may travel as directed anywhere within Australia on official business. All travel costs under this determination and associated travelling allowance and motor vehicle allowance under the *Commonwealth Members of Parliament Staff Enterprise Agreement 2016-2019* or successor agreements (Enterprise Agreement) are debited against the Electorate Support Budget (where applicable).
5. One nominated electorate employee working for a Minister, a Parliamentary Secretary, an Opposition Office Holder, a Leader or Deputy Leader of a Minority Party, a Chair of a Parliamentary Committee, or, with the approval of the Special Minister of State, a Chair of a Parliamentary Sub-Committee, may travel as directed anywhere within Australia on official business without debit against the Electorate Support Budget.
 - (a) The nomination of an electorate employee is to be a settled arrangement, that is, the expectation is that the nomination would not change within 12 months. The name of the nominated employee must be notified to the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) in writing¹. All travel under this Schedule by the nominated employee that was undertaken prior to the date that the nomination took effect will be debited against the Electorate Support Budget.
 - (b) A Senator or Member may nominate only one electorate employee who may travel as directed anywhere within Australia on official business without debit against the Electorate Support Budget at any one time, irrespective of the number of office holder positions (as specified in this item) held by the Senator or Member.
 - (c) The general travel conditions set out in this Schedule continue to apply, where appropriate, to the nominated employee.
 - (d) All travel by the electorate employees of the Senator or Member, other than the nominated employee, will be debited against the Electorate Support Budget, subject to item 6.

¹ Using the *Electorate Employee Travel Nomination* form on the IPEA website.

6. A Presiding Officer, including a Deputy Presiding Officer, Parliamentary Secretary², Whip or a Shadow Minister, other than an Opposition Office Holder, may nominate a personal employee whose travel will be debited against the Electorate Support Budget, in place of a nominated electorate employee, whose travel will not be debited against the Electorate Support Budget.
 - (a) The nomination of a personal and electorate employee is to be a settled arrangement, that is, the expectation is that the nomination would not change within 12 months. The names of the nominated personal and electorate employees must be notified to IPEA in writing³. Travel by the nominated electorate employee that was undertaken prior to the date that the nomination took effect will be debited against the Electorate Support Budget.
7. Official travel is restricted to Australia (excluding the external territories), unless the employing Senator or Member has a specific work expense for travel to an Australian external territory.
8. Travel may not be undertaken at Commonwealth expense for the personal benefit of an employee.
9. With the approval of the employing Senator or Member, an employee is permitted to make a stopover for personal reasons in the course of travel on official business by the most efficient direct route available, provided:
 - (a) the stopover is for a maximum of two nights only;
 - (b) no annual leave is taken by an employee as part of the stopover; and
 - (c) any additional costs for fares or costs related to the stopover are paid by the employee at the time of booking the travel.
10. Travelling allowance is not payable during a personal stopover. A personal stopover is defined as personal time spent at a destination where an employee has been directed to travel on official business⁴ or a break in travel at a usual point en route to the final travel destination⁵.
11. An employee may only use charter services when accompanying their employing Senator or Member under the Senator's or Member's charter work expense or where scheduled transport services (including air, rail, sea and bus) are not available.
 - (a) If the charter service also carries other passengers, the Commonwealth will only pay the pro rata cost of the travel of the employee.
 - (b) Charter services may not be used for the sole reason that scheduled services are fully booked, or are not available at the most convenient time.
 - (c) Some regions of Australia have infrequent scheduled services and/or no scheduled air services. Employees travelling to these locations should plan their travel with regard to these constraints.

² A Parliamentary Secretary may nominate an electorate employee whose travel will not be debited from the ESB under item 5 and, concurrently, nominate a personal employee whose travel will be debited from the ESB in place of a nominated different electorate employee whose travel will not be debited under item 6.

³ Using the *Electorate Employee Travel Nomination* form on the IPEA website.

⁴ For example, a Canberra-based employee travels to Brisbane on official business on Friday. The employee stays in Brisbane on Saturday and Sunday nights and returns on Monday. In this case, the Saturday and Sunday are counted as a personal stopover and return airfare will be covered by the Electorate Support Budget. However, if the employee returns on Tuesday or later, it is at their own expense.

⁵ For example, travel from Hobart to Canberra may have a usual stop in Melbourne en route.

12. Employees are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure, where applicable, that departure and destination travel arrangements are compatible with scheduled transport services.

Class of Travel

13. Senior staff (employees above the level of Adviser) who are required by the employing Senator or Member to travel on official business by air, rail, road or sea are limited to a fare which shall not exceed the cost of a business class airfare for the most reasonable and usual route between the departure and destination points. Where a business class airfare is not published for the destination point, the cost to the Commonwealth of travel by air, rail, road or sea must not exceed the economy class airfare for the most reasonable and usual route, between the departure and destination points.
14. Employees, other than senior staff, who are required by the employing Senator or Member to travel on official business by air, rail, road or sea are limited to a fare which shall not exceed the cost of an economy class airfare for the most reasonable and usual route between the departure and destination points, unless otherwise determined by the Special Minister of State.
15. A Minister, Parliamentary Secretary, Opposition Office Holder or Presiding Officer (but not a Deputy Presiding Officer) may direct a member of his or her staff who is on the same aircraft to travel at the same class as him or her, where there is a working need to do so. It is expected that no more than one employee will do so on any particular trip.

Car Transport

16. As set out in item 2 of this Schedule, it is an employee's responsibility (and hence the employee's cost) to transport him or herself to and from work for his or her normal hours of duty. Exceptions to this rule apply to the use of car transport in the following circumstances:
 - (a) the trip is approved for personal safety reasons (for example, where the risk to personal safety is significantly increased due to the requirement to work late); or
 - (b) the employee is travelling on official business and scheduled public transport services are not readily available; or
 - (c) the employee is travelling on official business and is carrying luggage to and/or from the office for the purpose of the trip.
17. Employees, when travelling as directed on official business, or under the exceptions at item 16, subject to the restrictions at items 1 to 9, may use⁶:
 - (a) taxis;
 - (b) regulated ridesharing services;
 - (c) hire cars; and

⁶ Motor vehicle allowance (MVA) may also be payable under Enterprise Agreement where an employee travels under the provisions of this determination in their privately owned vehicle or self-drive hire vehicle, at their own expense.

- (d) short-term self-drive cars hired through the travel services provider, or with any car hire company, provided that:
 - (i) the hire is of no more than 10 days duration;
 - (ii) the vehicle is not used for journeys within Canberra (other than to collect and/or return the vehicle);
 - (iii) the vehicle is not used for journeys within a city/town where the employer's electorate or other office is located (other than to collect and/or return the vehicle), except by employees of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, or the leader of a minority party;
 - (iv) for the purposes of short-term self-drive car hire under this determination, a capital city, other than Canberra, is defined by the boundaries of the electorates identified as urban on the Federal Electoral Boundaries map published from time to time by the Australian Electoral Commission. Canberra includes locations within a 30km radius of Parliament House; and
 - (v) the cost of insurance will be met by the Commonwealth where it is purchased as part of the vehicle hire. It is the responsibility of employees to ensure that they arrange the appropriate level of insurance for the circumstances of the hire. To reduce liability to the Commonwealth in case of loss or damage to the vehicle, this will usually be the highest level of insurance cover available.
- 18. Self-drive hire cars should be used on weekdays only unless exceptional circumstances apply and the Senator or Member has approved the use. Employees may not use taxis, regulated ridesharing services, hire cars or short-term self-drive hire cars at Commonwealth expense for private use, other than as set out at item 16.

Tolls and Parking Costs

- 19. Employees authorised by the employing Senator or Member to travel on official business may be reimbursed their toll and parking costs. Such costs must be reasonable to be eligible for full reimbursement⁷.
- 20. Toll and parking costs will not be reimbursed where incurred during a personal stopover or a period of leave. Administrative charges or penalties for late payment or non-payment of tolls and parking costs will not be reimbursed.
- 21. Employees will not be reimbursed for valet parking costs, with the exception of valet parking costs incurred at the accommodation occupied by the employee for travel on official business involving an overnight stay away from their work base.

Travel for Training

- 22. Senators and Members whose electorate offices are outside the greater metropolitan area of capital cities (including satellite cities), or within the Northern Territory or Tasmania, have access to four trips per financial year (five trips per financial year where the Member has a second official electorate office or six trips per financial year where the Member has a third official electorate office) for their electorate employees to travel to the nearest capital city to attend training under the

⁷ For example, it is generally expected that long-stay parking will be used at an airport.

Professional Development Program or approved ad hoc training and professional development opportunities, IT training or training for Work Health and Safety roles.

- (a) For electorate offices located in the Northern Territory, employees may also use the trips to travel to Adelaide or Brisbane.
- (b) For electorate offices located in Tasmania, employees may also use the trips to travel to Melbourne.

23. The Senators and Members whose employees are eligible for the trips in item 22 will be listed on the Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (M&PS) website.

Travel for ECG Representatives and WHS Committee Members

24. Associated travel costs⁸ of employees who are Employee Consultative Group⁹ (ECG) representatives and Work Health and Safety (WHS) Committee¹⁰ members, and whose travel is subject to the Electorate Support Budget, will not be debited against the Electorate Support Budget when the employee travels for the purpose of attending an ECG meeting or WHS Committee meeting, provided that the travel to the meeting location is not also for other official business.
25. Where the travel is also for other official business, only the *additional* travel costs associated with the ECG meeting or WHS Committee meeting will not be debited against the Electorate Support Budget.

COMCAR Services for Employees of the Prime Minister

26. All employees of the Prime Minister may use a COMCAR to travel to or from Defence Establishment Fairbairn when embarking or returning from travel with or on behalf of the Prime Minister.
27. With prior notification to the COMCAR Client Liaison Manager, the Prime Minister's employees may also travel in a COMCAR, when the car would otherwise be travelling without passengers, in the following circumstances:
- (a) if a COMCAR is travelling out of zone to meet the Prime Minister¹¹, and employees need to travel along the same route to meet the Prime Minister; or
 - (b) if a COMCAR is travelling as part of the Prime Minister's advance party and employees need to travel along the same route.
28. In using COMCAR for these purposes, the COMCAR booking will be based solely on the Prime Minister's requirements. Employees must make their own way to and from any pick up/drop off point that COMCAR advise, which will be on the direct intended route. The COMCAR schedule cannot be altered to incur waiting time on behalf of an employee.

⁸ 'Associated travel costs' are costs under this determination (or its successor determinations), including domestic flights and car travel, and as provided under the Enterprise Agreement, including travelling allowance and motor vehicle allowance.

⁹ As described at clause 5 of the Enterprise Agreement.

¹⁰ A Health and Safety Committee for MOP(S) Act employees for the purposes of Division 4 of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

¹¹ For example, from Canberra to Merimbula.

SCHEDULE B

Relief Staff Arrangements

29. Each Senator and Member may engage relief staff as electorate employees with a work base of the electorate office, Parliament House office, or office holder's office as described at item 30, in accordance with the Enterprise Agreement, up to the limit of his or her Electorate Support Budget. The Special Minister of State may approve an alternative work base for a person employed against the Electorate Support Budget in special circumstances.
30. For the purpose of item 29, an office holder's office is an office, other than the electorate office/s and Parliament House office, provided at Commonwealth expense to the employing Senator or Member within the state or territory of their electorate and who is:
- (a) a Minister;
 - (b) an Opposition Office Holder;
 - (c) a Leader of a Minority Party; or
 - (d) a Presiding Officer.
31. The employment of electorate staff against an established position will not be debited against the Electorate Support Budget under the following circumstances:
- (a) filling of positions that are vacant due to resignation, retirement or termination;
 - (b) filling of positions that are temporarily vacant due to an employee being temporarily progressed to a personal employee position;
 - (c) absences of one week¹² or more on personal leave¹³;
 - (d) all absences on the following types of leave:
 - (i) unpaid carer's leave;
 - (ii) compassionate leave;
 - (iii) community service leave;
 - (iv) miscellaneous or other leave paid in accordance with the Enterprise Agreement (including Defence Force service, participation in major international sporting events, war service sick leave, political exchange leave, and other special purposes, but not including study leave);
 - (v) long service leave;
 - (vi) maternity leave¹⁴;
 - (vii) adoption leave;

¹² The term 'one week' means an absence of 38 hours regardless of whether the employee is full-time or part-time.

¹³ Where an employee who is absent due to personal illness or injury or carers duties has exhausted their paid personal leave and therefore uses annual or long service leave, they may be replaced without debit against the Electorate Support Budget.

¹⁴ Where other forms of paid leave are used within the 52 week maternity leave period, the Electorate Support Budget provisions that apply to maternity leave take precedence over the Electorate Support Budget provisions that apply to the type of leave used.

- (viii) supporting partner leave;
 - (ix) unpaid parental leave; and
 - (x) leave without pay.
32. Where an electorate employee is partially incapacitated (i.e. working fewer than their usual weekly hours on the basis of medical advice), working up to but not exceeding 20 hours per week, that employee will be treated as totally incapacitated and full-time relief arrangements will apply (to the maximum of the usual weekly hours of the employee) for a maximum period of six months without debit against the Electorate Support Budget. After six months, or when the affected employee's work hours exceed 20 hours per week (but are less than their usual weekly hours), relief staff may be engaged part-time in order to fully staff the position without debit against the Electorate Support Budget.
33. Senators and Members who hold a 'relevant office', as defined under section 3 of the Act, engage relief staff as electorate employees against the Electorate Support Budget under Part III of the Act. Senators and Members who do not hold a 'relevant office' engage relief staff as electorate employees against the Electorate Support Budget under Part IV of the Act.

SCHEDULE C

Calculation of the Electorate Support Budget

34. Subject to items 35 to 38, the Electorate Support Budget is calculated at the commencement of each financial year as the sum of:
- (a) the electorate staff travel component; and
 - (b) the relief staff component.
35. The Electorate Support Budget is calculated pro rata, on the basis of the number of calendar days remaining, for the financial year in which a Senator or Member commences his or her term.
36. The relief staff component will be adjusted in line with changes to the base salary point of the Electorate Officer B classification.
37. The relief staff component will be adjusted pro rata where a Member is allocated, or ceases to be allocated, an additional position for a second and/or third official electorate office.
38. The Special Minister of State may approve changes to the Electorate Support Budget for any Senator or Member.
39. If the Electorate Support Budget for a year is exhausted, a Senator or Member may not draw from the Electorate Support Budget for the following year. The costs beyond the Electorate Support Budget are a debt owed to the Commonwealth and must be repaid by the Senator or Member. Unused funds may not be carried over to the following year.

Electorate staff travel component

40. Except as provided at items 41, 42 and 43, the electorate staff travel component is calculated on the basis of:
- (a) 20 return economy airfares (fully flexible) between the primary electorate office and Canberra;
 - (b) 110 nights of travelling allowance at the rate applicable to Canberra;
 - (c) taxi fares and/or motor vehicle allowance to and from the relevant airports for the 20 flights above; and
 - (d) an amount for other travel as follows:

Senator/Member	Electorate Size	\$
Member	0-199 km ²	\$300
Member	200-999 km ²	\$500
Member	1,000-9,999 km ²	\$700
Member	10,000-99,999 km ²	\$1,000
Member	100,000-199,999 km ²	\$8,132
Member	200,000-499,999 km ²	\$10,132
Member	500,000 km ² or greater	\$12,132
Senators for the NT	—	\$9,000
All other Senators	—	\$500

41. Where a Senator or Member's primary electorate office is located within 150km of Canberra by road, the electorate staff travel component is calculated at the commencement of each financial year on the basis of:
 - (a) the value of motor vehicle allowance payable for 20 return motor vehicle trips between the primary electorate office and Canberra;
 - (b) 110 nights of travelling allowance at the rate applicable to Canberra; and
 - (c) an amount for other travel as set out at item 40(d).
42. The electorate staff travel component for each financial year for the Member for Bean and Senators for the ACT is calculated on the basis of:
 - (a) three return economy airfares (fully flexible) between Canberra and Norfolk Island;
 - (b) eight nights of travelling allowance at the commercial rate applicable to Norfolk Island; and
 - (c) an amount of \$2,000 for other travel.
43. The electorate staff travel component for each financial year for the following Senators and Members is calculated as follows:

Senator/Member	\$
Member for Canberra	\$2,000
Member for Fenner	\$2,000
Member for Eden-Monaro	\$5,000
Senator whose electorate office is in Queanbeyan	\$5,000

Relief staff component

44. The relief staff component is calculated on the basis of:
 - (a) 150 days' salary at the base salary point of the Electorate Officer B classification; and
 - (b) an additional 50 days' salary at the base salary point of the Electorate Officer B classification where a Member is allocated an additional position for a second official electorate office; and
 - (c) an additional 50 days' salary at the base salary point of the Electorate Officer B classification where a Member is allocated an additional position for a third official electorate office.

Terms and Definitions

45. In this determination, terms have the meaning set out in the Enterprise Agreement. In addition, the terms below have the following meanings:

Opposition Office Holder means:

- (a) the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the House of Representatives; or
- (b) the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate.

Leader or Deputy Leader of a Minority Party means the Leader or Deputy Leader of a recognised non-Government party of at least five members, but does not include an Opposition Office Holder.

Professional Development Program means a scheduled program of training courses for MOP(S) Act employees, administered by the Department of Finance.

Regulated ridesharing services means a ridesharing service operating under regulation in the State or Territory in which the travel occurs.



Travel allowance

Background

1. Employees are paid travel allowance (TA) by the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) in accordance with clause 55 of the Enterprise Agreement.
2. TA can be paid in the form of an advance (a claim made prior to the completion of travel) or as an acquittal (a claim made after the completion of travel).

Commercial and non-commercial TA rates

3. Payment of TA for an overnight stay in Canberra is a single flat rate for both commercial and non-commercial accommodation, with the exception of the circumstance outlined in paragraph 7, and there is no requirement for employees to submit receipts for acquittal purposes. The TA rate covers personal costs not otherwise met by IPEA, e.g. personal telephone calls, laundry, dry cleaning, mini bar and newspapers
4. For each overnight stay other than in Canberra, employees who claim the commercial rate must provide a receipt for the commercial accommodation or certify that a receipt can be produced if requested by IPEA.
5. The following documents are accepted as evidence of commercial accommodation by IPEA:
 - a. A copy of a GST tax invoice for the place of commercial accommodation; or
 - b. A non-GST receipt or written statement from the place of commercial accommodation, that is clear and unobscured, and indicates the following:
 - i. the claimant's name;
 - ii. the place that they stayed at;
 - iii. the dates of the stay;
 - iv. evidence indicating that payment has been made in full; and
 - v. the full cost of the commercial accommodation.
6. Ordinarily, a receipt for commercial accommodation will be a tax invoice showing an Australian Business Number (ABN) and inclusive of Goods and Services Tax (GST). If the receipt is not a tax invoice, IPEA will seek to verify that the receipt is for commercial accommodation, i.e. accommodation offered to the public at large in the pursuit of profit.

Properties booked at arm's length through websites such as Airbnb and Stays would meet this requirement. An arrangement to stay with family or acquaintances would not meet this requirement, even if a receipt was provided, because the accommodation is not offered to the public at large on the same terms. If this cannot be verified, the non-commercial rate of TA will be paid.

7. Where an employee's accommodation is otherwise paid for by the Australian Government (e.g. an employee's portfolio department), the employee may be paid the non-commercial rate of TA in accordance with clause 55.7(b) of the Enterprise Agreement to cover meals and incidental expenses. In the case that the overnight stay is in Canberra, the employee receives 1/3rd of the Canberra TA rate to cover meals and incidental expenses.

Eligibility for TA in certain circumstances

8. No TA is generally payable at an employee's work base, including an approved alternative work base
9. Where an employee travels by a scheduled commercial service that includes an accommodation component, e.g. The Ghan, TA will not be paid. Refer to the Domestic Travel Guideline for further information.
10. An employee will be paid TA for the preceding night when:
 - a. the scheduled or actual departure time to the destination is between midnight and 3.00am (in which case TA is paid at the rate for the departure location and is not paid if the employee is not eligible for TA at that location), or
 - b. the scheduled or actual arrival time at their destination is 6:00am or earlier (in which case TA is paid at the rate for the destination and is not paid if the employee is not eligible for TA at that location).
11. TA will not be paid at more than one location for the same night. If an employee qualifies under both circumstances above, the commercial rate of TA will only be paid at the location for which the employee has a receipt for commercial accommodation, while the non-commercial rate of TA may be paid at either location, but not both.

Mandatory quarantine arrangements

12. Where an employee is directed by the employing member, for the purpose of official business, to travel to, or return from, a place that requires mandatory quarantine under a commercial arrangement, the employee may claim the commercial rate of TA. Where the commercial rate of TA is not sufficient to cover the mandatory quarantine costs, a discretionary payment may be sought in accordance with the Enterprise Agreement.

Capital cities for TA purposes

13. For TA purposes Canberra is as defined in the *Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017* and other capital cities are as defined in the *Remuneration Tribunal (Members of Parliament) Determination 2021* as amended or replaced from time to time:
 - a. 'Canberra' includes locations within a 30 kilometre radius of Parliament House; 'Sydney', 'Melbourne', 'Brisbane', 'Perth' and 'Adelaide' mean locations within a ten kilometre radius of the General Post Office of the city or within a five kilometre radius of the city's principal airport; and
 - b. 'Darwin' and 'Hobart' mean locations within a five kilometre radius of the General Post Office of the city or within a five kilometre radius of the city's principal airport.
- ▶ [IPEA – Capital city zones](#)

Claiming TA

14. To claim TA, a completed *Travelling and/or Motor Vehicle Allowance Claim*, certified by the employing Member or authorised person, must be lodged with IPEA. The completed form and relevant supporting documentation, such as accommodation receipts, should be attached to the claim.
15. IPEA regularly conducts assurance activities of TA claims, therefore, it is recommended that employees who have certified that they can produce a receipt on request, retain receipts and/or other documentation relating to TA payments for an appropriate period, including after employment ceases, noting that IPEA is obliged to retain its records documenting records of claims history for 10 years after the receipt of a final claim or departure from parliament. Refer to paragraph 29 regarding a potential overpayment where a receipt is unable to be produced.
16. Offices should also retain original employee travel claims for an appropriate period.

TA advance

17. If a claim for TA is certified by the employing Member or authorised person before the official travel has been completed, the claim is treated as an advance. The trip is completed when the employee finishes the last leg of travel (e.g. the employee returns home).
18. TA will be paid in advance as close as possible to the time of official travel, via electronic funds transfer to the employee's nominated account.
19. An employee who is paid an advance of TA must acquit the travel as soon as possible and no later than 28 days after the official travel is completed. Once 28 days has

elapsed, future payments of TA will not be made to the employee until the advance has been acquitted.

TA acquittal

20. If the claim for TA is certified by the employing Member or authorised person after the official travel has been completed, the claim is treated as an acquittal.
21. TA will be paid as soon as possible after the receipt of an approved claim form, via electronic funds transfer to the employee's nominated account.
22. It is recommended that employees lodge their claim for TA as soon as possible after the completion of official travel. Claims signed by the employing Member or authorised person more than 60 days after the date of completion of the travel, will not be paid unless a statement from the employing Member providing reasons for the late TA claim is provided (in the case of a Minister, Parliamentary Secretary or Opposition Office Holder, a statement from the Chief of Staff, Principal Adviser or Senior Adviser will be accepted if they are authorised to approve staff travel). The decision whether to pay a late TA claim rests with IPEA.

Adjustment to rate of TA

23. Where:
 - a. an employee is directed to travel with his or her employing Member on official business outside of Canberra;
 - b. the Member certifies that it is necessary for the employee to stay in the same hotel; and

the amount of TA is insufficient to cover the cost, the rate of TA will be increased to cover the cost.
24. Where:
 - a. an employee of the Prime Minister or the Leader of the Opposition is directed to travel up to three nights in advance of his or her employer on official business outside of Canberra;
 - b. the employer certifies that it is necessary for the employee to stay in the same hotel that the employer intends to stay at on arrival at the location; and
 - c. the amount of TA is insufficient to cover the cost,

the rate of TA will be increased to cover the cost.
25. Where an employee considers that the rate of TA is insufficient to meet the reasonable costs of an overnight stay, e.g. where special circumstances such as a major

international event result in an increase in the cost or availability of accommodation, the Minister or an IPEA official authorised by the Minister may approve an increase in TA.

26. In cases outlined in paragraphs 23 to 25, TA will be increased by the difference between the rate for accommodation determined by an independent organisation and the actual cost of accommodation, on appropriate certification by the employing Member or authorised person. If necessary, the rates for relevant meals will be included in the calculation (refer paragraph 27(b)).
27. Where an employee seeks an increase in TA, the employee must provide IPEA with either:
 - (a) an itemised receipt for each overnight stay, showing the cost of the accommodation separate to any meals or other costs; or
 - (b) where an 'accommodation package' that includes only room and meals has been purchased - a receipt and evidence that only these items are included in the accommodation package.

Descriptors such as 'accommodation package' alone on receipts do not contain sufficient information to enable an increase in TA to be calculated.

Cancellation costs for accommodation

28. Employees should consider cancellation policies when booking accommodation, especially when booking accommodation well in advance of official travel and/or for an extended period of time. Accommodation that allows a booking to be cancelled with minimal cost up until a few days prior to the stay should be preferred. Any decision on whether to reimburse an employee for the cost of cancelled accommodation as a discretionary payment under the Enterprise Agreement may take into account the cancellation policy applying to the booking.

Overpayment of TA

29. Any overpayment of TA, e.g. arising from changes to official travel arrangements, failure to acquit an advance of TA or failure by an employee to provide receipts to IPEA when requested, represents a debt to the Commonwealth and is subject to the debt recovery arrangements at clause 28 of the Enterprise Agreement.
30. Consistent with the Enterprise Agreement, recovery of an overpayment of TA will be made in accordance with the following arrangements:
 - a. at the election of the employee, the employee may remit the amount in full to IPEA; or
 - b. if it is likely that the employee will travel within the next 60 days, the amount may be deducted from future MVA or TA claims; or
 - c. if it is not likely that the employee will travel within the next 60 days, the amount may be recovered from pay or salary in accordance with clause 28.1(a) of the Enterprise Agreement.

31. If MOP(S) Act employment ceases then any outstanding overpayment of TA will be recovered from the former employee as a debt to the Commonwealth.

Personal leave during travel

32. If an employee needs to take personal leave for reasons of personal illness or injury (but not caring responsibilities) while undertaking official travel and is unable to return home, the employee may be reimbursed for costs up to the amount of TA that would have been payable if the employee had been able to complete the travel, including adjusted rates in accordance with paragraphs 23 to 25.
33. Where such a period of personal leave exceeds the approved period of travel and therefore the amount of TA, the extra costs may be met on approval from the employing Member and IPEA, subject to the employee producing a medical certificate or statutory declaration, and a receipt for the commercial accommodation.

120 overnight stays – clauses 55.8 and 55.9 of the Enterprise Agreement

34. Clauses 55.8 and 55.9 of the Enterprise Agreement limit the payment of TA in Canberra and, in some circumstances, in other locations, to a maximum of 120 overnight stays for certain employees.
35. The 120 overnight stays are assigned to the employee, not the position, and are not pro rata where an employee commences during the financial year. Therefore, in the event that the employee is employed by another Member, the remaining balance will transfer with the employee unless the 120 night limit does not apply to that employee with the new Member, for example, if their work base is Canberra.
36. Under clause 55.10, the Minister may vary the limit on 120 overnight stays, noting a significant increase beyond 120 nights may affect how an employee's work base is defined for the purposes of the Enterprise Agreement.

TAXINVOICE

Canberra, ACT 2600
Australia

Room	Invoice	CheckIn	CheckOut	Balance
35	156738	12/04/2023	13/04/2023	0.00
Master Folio		Best Available Daily Rate		

Your Reference: BBN-BB23040613643832

Date	Room	Description / Voucher	Charges	Credits	Balance
12/04/2023	35	Accommodation	176.00	0.00	176.00
12/04/2023	35		0.00	176.00	0.00
		Balance Due			0.00
		Summary and Taxes			
		Taxable Sales	160.00		
		GST - 10%	16.00		



TAX INVOICE

Company :
Address : X
Attention :
Room : 03B
Room Type : Studio Apartment
Arrive : 12 Apr 2023
Depart : 13 Apr 2023
Guest : MATTHEW MR THISTLETHWAITE

Reservation : 1958285
Reg/AB N No. :
Guest Ref ID :
Invoice No. : 818351
Voucher No. :
Print Date/Time : 13 Apr 2023 08:49 AM
Cashier :
Page : 1

DATE	ROOM	DESCRIPTION	GST AMOUNT (AUD)	
12 Apr 2023	03B	Accommodation - (12-Apr-23).	19.55	215.10
13 Apr 2023	03B			-215.10
			Sub-Total Before GST	195.55
			GST	19.55
			Total Amount Inc GST	215.10
			Payment	-215.10
			Balance	0.00

*** PAYMENT TERMS -- 30 DAYS ***



Branch Code :
SWIFT Code :
Bank Address :

I ACCEPT THAT MY LIABILITY FOR THIS BILL IS NOT WAIVED AND AGREE TO BE HELD PERSONALLY LIABLE IN THE EVENT THAT THE INDICATED PERSON COMPANY OR ASSOCIATION FAILS TO PAY FOR ANY PART OF THE FULL AMOUNT OF THESE CHARGES

SIGNATURE: _____



From: Thistlethwaite, Matt (Private) [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 10 August 2023 1:32 PM
To: Assurance
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: IPEA to the Hon Matt Thistlethwaite - 30 June 2023.PDF; Attachment A.PDF; Attachment B - The Determination.PDF; Attachment C - Travel Allowance Guidelines.PDF; Attachment D - accommodation receipts for Wagga Wagga - 12 April 2023.PDF

Categories:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding an assurance review of adjustments to travel allowance for [REDACTED] from my office. I am sorry I have not replied earlier. I did not receive your email until yesterday. In future if you need to contact me please email me directly at [REDACTED]

Regarding each of the matters outlined in your correspondence:

Section 1

For the trips outlined in your correspondence [REDACTED] was required to travel with me on ministerial duties as my chief of staff and I directed [REDACTED] to stay at the same hotel as it was necessary for official purposes.

Section 2

For the trip to Wagga Wagga on 12 April 2023 [REDACTED] was required to travel with me on Ministerial duties as my [REDACTED] stayed in a different hotel to me as it was school holidays, and there were no other rooms left at the hotel I was staying at so [REDACTED] had to stay in another hotel.

Section 3

Regarding 9 August 2022 I directed [REDACTED] to stay at the same hotel as it was necessary for official purposes. Regarding 2 March 2023 [REDACTED] and was required to travel to Sydney for ministerial duties with me in Sydney.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Thanks

Matt



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 10, 2023 1:28 PM
To: Thistlethwaite, Matt (Private) [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

From: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, June 30, 2023 9:05 AM
To: Thistlethwaite, Matt (MP) [REDACTED] >
Cc: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Subject: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP
Member for Kingsford Smith
Assistant Minister for Defence, Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Assistant Minister for the Republic

Dear Assistant Minister

Please find attached correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority in relation to an Assurance Review of staff use of adjustments to travel allowance.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely


Nicole Pearson
Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603
T: 02 6215 3000
E: assurance@ipea.gov.au
W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

Classification: [REDACTED] on: 30/06/2023 8:49:31 AM

Be careful with this message

External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

From: Assurance
Sent: Thursday, 24 August 2023 4:11 PM
To: 'Thistlethwaite, Matt (Private)'; Assurance
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: IPEA to Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP - 24 August 2023.pdf; Attachment A.PDF; Attachment B.PDF

OFFICIAL

Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP

Member for Kingsford Smith

Assistant Minister for Defence, Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Assistant Minister for the Republic

Dr Assistant Minister

Please find attached correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority in relation to the Assurance Review of staff use of adjustments to travel allowance.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
 Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance and Legal
 Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
 One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603

T: 02 6215 3000

E: assurance@ipea.gov.au

W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

Classification: OFFICIAL

Classified by: [REDACTED] **on:** 24/08/2023 3:33:26 PM

From: Thistlethwaite, Matt (Private) [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, August 10, 2023 1:32 PM

To: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: FW: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Thank you for your recent letter regarding an assurance review of adjustments to travel allowance for [REDACTED] from my office. I am sorry I have not replied earlier. I did not receive your email until yesterday. In future if you need to contact me please email me directly at [REDACTED]

Regarding each of the matters outlined in your correspondence:

Section1

For the trips outlined in your correspondence [REDACTED] was required to travel with me on ministerial duties as my chief of staff and I directed [REDACTED] to stay at the same hotel as it was necessary for official purposes.

Section 2

For the trip to Wagga Wagga on 12 April 2023 [REDACTED] was required to travel with me on Ministerial duties as my [REDACTED] [REDACTED] stayed in a different hotel to me as it was school holidays, and there were no other rooms left at the hotel I was staying at so [REDACTED] had to stay in another hotel.

Section 3

Regarding 9 August 2022 I directed [REDACTED] to stay at the same hotel as it was necessary for official purposes.

Regarding 2 March 2023 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and was required to travel to Sydney for ministerial duties with me in Sydney.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Thanks

Matt



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 10, 2023 1:28 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

From: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, June 30, 2023 9:05 AM
To: Thistlethwaite, Matt (MP) [REDACTED]
Cc: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Subject: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP
Member for Kingsford Smith
Assistant Minister for Defence, Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Assistant Minister for the Republic

Dear Assistant Minister

Please find attached correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority in relation to an Assurance Review of staff use of adjustments to travel allowance.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Nicole Pearson
Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603
T: 02 6215 3000
E: assurance@ipea.gov.au
W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

Classification: OFFICIAL

Classified by: [REDACTED] **on:** 30/06/2023 8:49:31 AM

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External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.



Australian Government
Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority

24 August 2023

Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP
Member for Kingsford Smith
Assistant Minister for Defence, Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Assistant Minister
for the Republic

Shop 6
205 Maroubra Road
Maroubra, NSW, 2035

Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Assistant Minister

Assurance Review of adjustments to travel allowance

Thank you for your response of 10 August 2023, in relation to the Assurance Review of adjustments to travel allowance claimed by your staff member [REDACTED].

Following a review of your responses, IPEA requires additional information to assist in finalising this matter.

Section 2

In your response you advised that for the trip to Wagga Wagga on 12 April 2023:

[REDACTED] *was required to travel with me on Ministerial duties as my [REDACTED] stayed in a different hotel to me as it was school holidays, and there were no other rooms left at the hotel I was staying at so [REDACTED] had to stay in another hotel."*

As advised in our letter of 30 June 2023 (**Attachment A**), under section 25 of the Travel Allowance Guidelines, an adjustment to travel allowance is also payable when there is an increase in cost or lack of availability of accommodation due to a special event, and an IPEA official authorised by the Minister approves the adjustment. From the information available to IPEA, this has not occurred for this transaction.

To assist with our review, we ask that you confirm that you directed [REDACTED] to stay at the same hotel as yourself because it was necessary for official purposes. We will then have the claim reviewed by an IPEA official authorised by the Minister to approve adjustments, as per section 25 of the Guidelines. Please note, additional information may be required from [REDACTED] to finalise this adjustment.

Section 3

In our original correspondence of 30 June 2023, we requested that for these transactions you:

- confirm you directed [REDACTED] to stay in the same hotel as yourself because it was necessary for official purposes, and
- provide the commercial tax invoice for your own accommodation, as it has not been previously provided to IPEA.

You have not provided the requested invoices for your own accommodation in Adelaide on 9 August 2022 and in Sydney on 2 March 2023. Please provide this documentation for our review.

Further, for the adjustment claimed for 2 March 2023, you have advised that:

"[REDACTED] is [REDACTED] and was required to travel to Sydney for ministerial duties with me in Sydney."

You have not confirmed that you directed [REDACTED] to stay in the same hotel as yourself because it was necessary for official purposes, as requested.

Please review the adjustments at Attachment B and provide the requested information.

I would be grateful if you could provide your response via email to assurance@ipea.gov.au, by close of business on 7 September 2023, or advise us prior to the date if you need more time.

Please note that IPEA publishes its Assurance Reviews on its website at www.ipea.gov.au. Should you wish to discuss this matter, please contact [REDACTED] on (02) 6215 3000.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Branch Manager (A/g), Transparency, Assurance & Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603



Australian Government
Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority

29 June 2023

Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP
Member for Kingsford Smith
Assistant Minister for Defence, Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Assistant Minister
for the Republic

Shop 6
205 Maroubra Road
Maroubra, NSW, 2035

Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Assistant Minister

Assurance Review of adjustments to travel allowance

The Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) is responsible for monitoring the use of travel resources used in connection with travel by staff employed under the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984*.

IPEA is currently undertaking an Assurance Review of adjustments to travel allowance claimed by your staff member [REDACTED] employed in your office since 23 June 2022.

At **Attachment A** is a list of [REDACTED] adjustments to travel allowance for which we require additional information to assess against the legislative framework.

To facilitate your review, we have attached:

- Determination 2020/15 - Staff Travel and Relief Staff Arrangements (**Attachment B** - the Determination). The Determination details the circumstances under which staff travel allowances may be used, including the requirements of travel.
- The Travel Allowance Guidelines for staff travel (**Attachment C** – the Guidelines).
- Accommodation receipts for Wagga Wagga on 12 April 2023 (**Attachment D**).

Items 3 and 4 of the Determination state that employees may travel as directed anywhere within Australia on official business.

Sections 23 and 25 of the Guidelines provide the requirements for adjustments to travel allowance:

23. Where:

a. an employee is directed to travel with his or her employing Member on official business outside of Canberra;

b. the Member certifies that it is necessary for the employee to stay in the same hotel; and

the amount of TA is insufficient to cover the cost, the rate of TA will be increased to cover the cost.

25. Where an employee considers that the rate of TA is insufficient to meet the reasonable costs of an overnight stay, e.g. where special circumstances such as a major international event result in an increase in the cost or availability of accommodation, the Minister or an IPEA official authorised by the Minister may approve an increase in TA.

At **Attachment A** we have divided the accommodation adjustments into three sections. For each section we require different information from you, to ensure the adjustments were claimed in accordance with the Determination and the requirements of the Guidelines as outlined above.

Section 1

For these transactions we require you to confirm you directed [REDACTED] to stay in the same hotel as yourself because it was necessary for official purposes, as required by section 23 of the Guidelines. We require this information as the original travel allowance claim form for these transactions was signed by an authorised person, not yourself.

Section 2

For this transaction on 12 April 2023 [REDACTED] indicated that [REDACTED] was staying in the same hotel as yourself on the form [REDACTED] submitted. However, the commercial tax invoices that you each provided indicate that you stayed at different hotels. Your commercial tax invoice is for the [REDACTED] Wagga and [REDACTED] is for the [REDACTED] (**Attachment D**).

If you did not stay at the same commercial accommodation, the adjustment to travel allowance would not meet the requirements of section 23 of the Guidelines. Under this section, an adjustment to travel allowance is only payable when an employee is directed to travel with his or her employing Member on official business outside of Canberra, and the Member certifies that it is necessary for the employee to stay in the same hotel.

It is important to note that under section 25 of the Guidelines, an adjustment to travel allowance is also payable when there is an increase in cost or lack of availability of accommodation due to a special event, and an IPEA official authorised by the Minister approves the adjustment. From the information available to IPEA, this has not occurred for this transaction.

For us to complete our assessment we require you to review the transaction and the commercial tax invoices at Attachment D and then either:

- confirm that you directed [REDACTED] to stay at the hotel with yourself and provide evidence that the adjustment was correctly claimed, such as additional commercial tax invoices that show you stayed at the same hotel, or
- provide an explanation for why the adjustment has been claimed by [REDACTED]

Section 3

Under regulation 10 of the Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017 (the Regulations), Australian travel allowance is prescribed for each night the member stays in accommodation in Australia that is not the member's home base. Under regulation 4 of the Regulations, *home base* is defined as the member's principal place of residence as nominated to IPEA by the member.

This means you may direct your staff member to stay at commercial accommodation in Sydney if you are staying at the same property, and if your travel meets the relevant conditions and obligations of the Parliamentary Business Resource framework, including that the dominant purpose of the travel was for conducting parliamentary business.

Please note, the adjustment claimed by [REDACTED] for 2 March 2023 was claimed in Sydney, the city in which you are based, but there is no record of IPEA receiving a travel allowance claim for yourself.

For these transactions, therefore, we require you to:

- confirm you directed [REDACTED] to stay in the same hotel as yourself because it was necessary for official purposes, and
- provide the commercial tax invoice for your own accommodation as it has not been previously provided to IPEA.

Subject to your response to this correspondence, IPEA may require further information to assess the dominant purpose and nature of your parliamentary business in Sydney on this date.

I would be grateful if you could provide your response via email to assurance@ipea.gov.au, by close of business on 17 July 2023, or advise us prior to the date if you need more time.

Please note that IPEA publishes its Assurance Reviews on its website at www.ipea.gov.au. Should you wish to discuss this matter, please contact [REDACTED] on (02) 6215 3000.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Nicole Pearson
Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance & Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603

Attachment A**Assurance Review of accommodation adjustments**

To assist with your review, we have divided the accommodation adjustments into three sections. Please review each transaction and provide the requested information in the 'Confirmation of Travel' column. Where it has not been provided previously, we have also requested that you provide the commercial tax invoice for your accommodation.

Section 1

For these transactions we require you to confirm you directed [REDACTED] to stay in the same hotel as yourself because it was necessary for official purposes, as required by section 23 of the Guidelines. We require this information as the original travel allowance claim form for these transactions was signed by an authorised person, not yourself.

Transaction Type	Travel Date	Arrival Location	Hotel	Number of nights	Total Amount of Travel Allowance	Confirmation of Travel <i>Provide confirmation you directed the employee to stay in the same hotel because it was necessary for official purposes</i>
Domestic Travel Allowance	18 July 2022	Brisbane	[REDACTED]	2	\$724.30	
Domestic Travel Allowance	15 November 2022	Brisbane	[REDACTED]	1	\$307.15	
Domestic Travel Allowance	17 November 2022	Melbourne	[REDACTED]	1	\$297.15	
Domestic Travel Allowance	12 March 2023	Perth	[REDACTED]	2	\$707.60	

Section 2

The commercial receipts that you and your staff member provided for this travel indicate that you did not stay at the same commercial accommodation.

Your commercial tax invoice is for the [REDACTED] t Wagga and [REDACTED] is for the [REDACTED] (Attachment D)

For us to complete our assessment we require you to review the transaction and the commercial tax invoices at **Attachment D** and then either:

- confirm that you directed [REDACTED] to stay at the hotel with yourself and provide evidence that the adjustment was correctly claimed, such as additional commercial tax invoices that show you stayed at the same hotel, or
- provide an explanation for why the adjustment was claimed for IPEA to assess.

Transaction Type	Travel Date	Arrival Location	Hotel	Number of nights	Total Amount of Travel Allowance	Confirmation of Travel <i>Provide confirmation you directed the employee to stay in the same hotel because it was necessary for official purposes and provide evidence of the accommodation</i>
Domestic Travel Allowance	12 April 2023	Wagga Wagga	[REDACTED]	1	\$318.15	

Section 3

For these transactions we require you to:

- confirm you directed [REDACTED] to stay in the same hotel as yourself because it was necessary for official purposes, and
- provide the commercial tax invoice for your accommodation as it has not been previously provided to IPEA.

Transaction Type	Travel Date	Arrival Location	Hotel	Number of nights	Total Amount of Travel Allowance	Confirmation of Travel <i>Provide confirmation you directed the employee to stay in the same hotel because it was necessary for official purposes and provide the commercial tax invoice</i>
Domestic Travel Allowance	9 August 2022	Adelaide	[REDACTED]	2	\$766.30	
Domestic Travel Allowance	2 March 2023	Sydney	[REDACTED]	1	\$392.15	

DETERMINATION 2020/15

*Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984***STAFF TRAVEL AND RELIEF STAFF ARRANGEMENTS**

I, MATHIAS CORMANN, Minister for Finance, for and on behalf of the Prime Minister, determine under subsection 13(2) and subsection 20(2) of the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* (the Act) that, with effect on and from the date of this Determination:

- Determination 2018/30 made on 12 December 2018 is revoked;
- the travel arrangements set out in Schedule A of this determination apply to the staff of Senators and Members employed under Part III and Part IV of the Act;
- the relief staff arrangements set out in Schedule B of this determination apply; and
- the Electorate Support Budget is calculated as set out in Schedule C of this determination.

Dated this

29th

day of

June

2020



MATHIAS CORMANN
Minister for Finance

SCHEDULE A

Domestic Travel

1. Employees may only travel by the most efficient direct route available.
2. Subject to item 16, it is an employee's responsibility (and hence the employee's cost) to transport him or herself to and from work for his or her normal hours of duty. This responsibility includes travel between accommodation and the office when travelling on parliamentary or electorate business away from the employee's work base. This also includes travel to attend work when the employee's work base is distant from the employee's home.
3. All personal employees may travel as directed anywhere within Australia on official business.
4. Subject to available funds in the Electorate Support Budget (where applicable), electorate employees may travel as directed anywhere within Australia on official business. All travel costs under this determination and associated travelling allowance and motor vehicle allowance under the *Commonwealth Members of Parliament Staff Enterprise Agreement 2016-2019* or successor agreements (Enterprise Agreement) are debited against the Electorate Support Budget (where applicable).
5. One nominated electorate employee working for a Minister, a Parliamentary Secretary, an Opposition Office Holder, a Leader or Deputy Leader of a Minority Party, a Chair of a Parliamentary Committee, or, with the approval of the Special Minister of State, a Chair of a Parliamentary Sub-Committee, may travel as directed anywhere within Australia on official business without debit against the Electorate Support Budget.
 - (a) The nomination of an electorate employee is to be a settled arrangement, that is, the expectation is that the nomination would not change within 12 months. The name of the nominated employee must be notified to the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) in writing¹. All travel under this Schedule by the nominated employee that was undertaken prior to the date that the nomination took effect will be debited against the Electorate Support Budget.
 - (b) A Senator or Member may nominate only one electorate employee who may travel as directed anywhere within Australia on official business without debit against the Electorate Support Budget at any one time, irrespective of the number of office holder positions (as specified in this item) held by the Senator or Member.
 - (c) The general travel conditions set out in this Schedule continue to apply, where appropriate, to the nominated employee.
 - (d) All travel by the electorate employees of the Senator or Member, other than the nominated employee, will be debited against the Electorate Support Budget, subject to item 6.

¹ Using the *Electorate Employee Travel Nomination* form on the IPEA website.

6. A Presiding Officer, including a Deputy Presiding Officer, Parliamentary Secretary², Whip or a Shadow Minister, other than an Opposition Office Holder, may nominate a personal employee whose travel will be debited against the Electorate Support Budget, in place of a nominated electorate employee, whose travel will not be debited against the Electorate Support Budget.
 - (a) The nomination of a personal and electorate employee is to be a settled arrangement, that is, the expectation is that the nomination would not change within 12 months. The names of the nominated personal and electorate employees must be notified to IPEA in writing³. Travel by the nominated electorate employee that was undertaken prior to the date that the nomination took effect will be debited against the Electorate Support Budget.
7. Official travel is restricted to Australia (excluding the external territories), unless the employing Senator or Member has a specific work expense for travel to an Australian external territory.
8. Travel may not be undertaken at Commonwealth expense for the personal benefit of an employee.
9. With the approval of the employing Senator or Member, an employee is permitted to make a stopover for personal reasons in the course of travel on official business by the most efficient direct route available, provided:
 - (a) the stopover is for a maximum of two nights only;
 - (b) no annual leave is taken by an employee as part of the stopover; and
 - (c) any additional costs for fares or costs related to the stopover are paid by the employee at the time of booking the travel.
10. Travelling allowance is not payable during a personal stopover. A personal stopover is defined as personal time spent at a destination where an employee has been directed to travel on official business⁴ or a break in travel at a usual point en route to the final travel destination⁵.
11. An employee may only use charter services when accompanying their employing Senator or Member under the Senator's or Member's charter work expense or where scheduled transport services (including air, rail, sea and bus) are not available.
 - (a) If the charter service also carries other passengers, the Commonwealth will only pay the pro rata cost of the travel of the employee.
 - (b) Charter services may not be used for the sole reason that scheduled services are fully booked, or are not available at the most convenient time.
 - (c) Some regions of Australia have infrequent scheduled services and/or no scheduled air services. Employees travelling to these locations should plan their travel with regard to these constraints.

² A Parliamentary Secretary may nominate an electorate employee whose travel will not be debited from the ESB under item 5 and, concurrently, nominate a personal employee whose travel will be debited from the ESB in place of a nominated different electorate employee whose travel will not be debited under item 6.

³ Using the *Electorate Employee Travel Nomination* form on the IPEA website.

⁴ For example, a Canberra-based employee travels to Brisbane on official business on Friday. The employee stays in Brisbane on Saturday and Sunday nights and returns on Monday. In this case, the Saturday and Sunday are counted as a personal stopover and return airfare will be covered by the Electorate Support Budget. However, if the employee returns on Tuesday or later, it is at their own expense.

⁵ For example, travel from Hobart to Canberra may have a usual stop in Melbourne en route.

12. Employees are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure, where applicable, that departure and destination travel arrangements are compatible with scheduled transport services.

Class of Travel

13. Senior staff (employees above the level of Adviser) who are required by the employing Senator or Member to travel on official business by air, rail, road or sea are limited to a fare which shall not exceed the cost of a business class airfare for the most reasonable and usual route between the departure and destination points. Where a business class airfare is not published for the destination point, the cost to the Commonwealth of travel by air, rail, road or sea must not exceed the economy class airfare for the most reasonable and usual route, between the departure and destination points.
14. Employees, other than senior staff, who are required by the employing Senator or Member to travel on official business by air, rail, road or sea are limited to a fare which shall not exceed the cost of an economy class airfare for the most reasonable and usual route between the departure and destination points, unless otherwise determined by the Special Minister of State.
15. A Minister, Parliamentary Secretary, Opposition Office Holder or Presiding Officer (but not a Deputy Presiding Officer) may direct a member of his or her staff who is on the same aircraft to travel at the same class as him or her, where there is a working need to do so. It is expected that no more than one employee will do so on any particular trip.

Car Transport

16. As set out in item 2 of this Schedule, it is an employee's responsibility (and hence the employee's cost) to transport him or herself to and from work for his or her normal hours of duty. Exceptions to this rule apply to the use of car transport in the following circumstances:
 - (a) the trip is approved for personal safety reasons (for example, where the risk to personal safety is significantly increased due to the requirement to work late); or
 - (b) the employee is travelling on official business and scheduled public transport services are not readily available; or
 - (c) the employee is travelling on official business and is carrying luggage to and/or from the office for the purpose of the trip.
17. Employees, when travelling as directed on official business, or under the exceptions at item 16, subject to the restrictions at items 1 to 9, may use⁶:
 - (a) taxis;
 - (b) regulated ridesharing services;
 - (c) hire cars; and

⁶ Motor vehicle allowance (MVA) may also be payable under Enterprise Agreement where an employee travels under the provisions of this determination in their privately owned vehicle or self-drive hire vehicle, at their own expense.

- (d) short-term self-drive cars hired through the travel services provider, or with any car hire company, provided that:
 - (i) the hire is of no more than 10 days duration;
 - (ii) the vehicle is not used for journeys within Canberra (other than to collect and/or return the vehicle);
 - (iii) the vehicle is not used for journeys within a city/town where the employer's electorate or other office is located (other than to collect and/or return the vehicle), except by employees of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, or the leader of a minority party;
 - (iv) for the purposes of short-term self-drive car hire under this determination, a capital city, other than Canberra, is defined by the boundaries of the electorates identified as urban on the Federal Electoral Boundaries map published from time to time by the Australian Electoral Commission. Canberra includes locations within a 30km radius of Parliament House; and
 - (v) the cost of insurance will be met by the Commonwealth where it is purchased as part of the vehicle hire. It is the responsibility of employees to ensure that they arrange the appropriate level of insurance for the circumstances of the hire. To reduce liability to the Commonwealth in case of loss or damage to the vehicle, this will usually be the highest level of insurance cover available.
- 18. Self-drive hire cars should be used on weekdays only unless exceptional circumstances apply and the Senator or Member has approved the use. Employees may not use taxis, regulated ridesharing services, hire cars or short-term self-drive hire cars at Commonwealth expense for private use, other than as set out at item 16.

Tolls and Parking Costs

- 19. Employees authorised by the employing Senator or Member to travel on official business may be reimbursed their toll and parking costs. Such costs must be reasonable to be eligible for full reimbursement⁷.
- 20. Toll and parking costs will not be reimbursed where incurred during a personal stopover or a period of leave. Administrative charges or penalties for late payment or non-payment of tolls and parking costs will not be reimbursed.
- 21. Employees will not be reimbursed for valet parking costs, with the exception of valet parking costs incurred at the accommodation occupied by the employee for travel on official business involving an overnight stay away from their work base.

Travel for Training

- 22. Senators and Members whose electorate offices are outside the greater metropolitan area of capital cities (including satellite cities), or within the Northern Territory or Tasmania, have access to four trips per financial year (five trips per financial year where the Member has a second official electorate office or six trips per financial year where the Member has a third official electorate office) for their electorate employees to travel to the nearest capital city to attend training under the

⁷ For example, it is generally expected that long-stay parking will be used at an airport.

Professional Development Program or approved ad hoc training and professional development opportunities, IT training or training for Work Health and Safety roles.

- (a) For electorate offices located in the Northern Territory, employees may also use the trips to travel to Adelaide or Brisbane.
 - (b) For electorate offices located in Tasmania, employees may also use the trips to travel to Melbourne.
23. The Senators and Members whose employees are eligible for the trips in item 22 will be listed on the Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (M&PS) website.

Travel for ECG Representatives and WHS Committee Members

24. Associated travel costs⁸ of employees who are Employee Consultative Group⁹ (ECG) representatives and Work Health and Safety (WHS) Committee¹⁰ members, and whose travel is subject to the Electorate Support Budget, will not be debited against the Electorate Support Budget when the employee travels for the purpose of attending an ECG meeting or WHS Committee meeting, provided that the travel to the meeting location is not also for other official business.
25. Where the travel is also for other official business, only the *additional* travel costs associated with the ECG meeting or WHS Committee meeting will not be debited against the Electorate Support Budget.

COMCAR Services for Employees of the Prime Minister

26. All employees of the Prime Minister may use a COMCAR to travel to or from Defence Establishment Fairbairn when embarking or returning from travel with or on behalf of the Prime Minister.
27. With prior notification to the COMCAR Client Liaison Manager, the Prime Minister's employees may also travel in a COMCAR, when the car would otherwise be travelling without passengers, in the following circumstances:
- (a) if a COMCAR is travelling out of zone to meet the Prime Minister¹¹, and employees need to travel along the same route to meet the Prime Minister; or
 - (b) if a COMCAR is travelling as part of the Prime Minister's advance party and employees need to travel along the same route.
28. In using COMCAR for these purposes, the COMCAR booking will be based solely on the Prime Minister's requirements. Employees must make their own way to and from any pick up/drop off point that COMCAR advise, which will be on the direct intended route. The COMCAR schedule cannot be altered to incur waiting time on behalf of an employee.

⁸ 'Associated travel costs' are costs under this determination (or its successor determinations), including domestic flights and car travel, and as provided under the Enterprise Agreement, including travelling allowance and motor vehicle allowance.

⁹ As described at clause 5 of the Enterprise Agreement.

¹⁰ A Health and Safety Committee for MOP(S) Act employees for the purposes of Division 4 of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

¹¹ For example, from Canberra to Merimbula.

SCHEDULE B

Relief Staff Arrangements

29. Each Senator and Member may engage relief staff as electorate employees with a work base of the electorate office, Parliament House office, or office holder's office as described at item 30, in accordance with the Enterprise Agreement, up to the limit of his or her Electorate Support Budget. The Special Minister of State may approve an alternative work base for a person employed against the Electorate Support Budget in special circumstances.
30. For the purpose of item 29, an office holder's office is an office, other than the electorate office/s and Parliament House office, provided at Commonwealth expense to the employing Senator or Member within the state or territory of their electorate and who is:
- (a) a Minister;
 - (b) an Opposition Office Holder;
 - (c) a Leader of a Minority Party; or
 - (d) a Presiding Officer.
31. The employment of electorate staff against an established position will not be debited against the Electorate Support Budget under the following circumstances:
- (a) filling of positions that are vacant due to resignation, retirement or termination;
 - (b) filling of positions that are temporarily vacant due to an employee being temporarily progressed to a personal employee position;
 - (c) absences of one week¹² or more on personal leave¹³;
 - (d) all absences on the following types of leave:
 - (i) unpaid carer's leave;
 - (ii) compassionate leave;
 - (iii) community service leave;
 - (iv) miscellaneous or other leave paid in accordance with the Enterprise Agreement (including Defence Force service, participation in major international sporting events, war service sick leave, political exchange leave, and other special purposes, but not including study leave);
 - (v) long service leave;
 - (vi) maternity leave¹⁴;
 - (vii) adoption leave;

¹² The term 'one week' means an absence of 38 hours regardless of whether the employee is full-time or part-time.

¹³ Where an employee who is absent due to personal illness or injury or carers duties has exhausted their paid personal leave and therefore uses annual or long service leave, they may be replaced without debit against the Electorate Support Budget.

¹⁴ Where other forms of paid leave are used within the 52 week maternity leave period, the Electorate Support Budget provisions that apply to maternity leave take precedence over the Electorate Support Budget provisions that apply to the type of leave used.

- (viii) supporting partner leave;
 - (ix) unpaid parental leave; and
 - (x) leave without pay.
32. Where an electorate employee is partially incapacitated (i.e. working fewer than their usual weekly hours on the basis of medical advice), working up to but not exceeding 20 hours per week, that employee will be treated as totally incapacitated and full-time relief arrangements will apply (to the maximum of the usual weekly hours of the employee) for a maximum period of six months without debit against the Electorate Support Budget. After six months, or when the affected employee's work hours exceed 20 hours per week (but are less than their usual weekly hours), relief staff may be engaged part-time in order to fully staff the position without debit against the Electorate Support Budget.
33. Senators and Members who hold a 'relevant office', as defined under section 3 of the Act, engage relief staff as electorate employees against the Electorate Support Budget under Part III of the Act. Senators and Members who do not hold a 'relevant office' engage relief staff as electorate employees against the Electorate Support Budget under Part IV of the Act.

SCHEDULE C

Calculation of the Electorate Support Budget

34. Subject to items 35 to 38, the Electorate Support Budget is calculated at the commencement of each financial year as the sum of:
- (a) the electorate staff travel component; and
 - (b) the relief staff component.
35. The Electorate Support Budget is calculated pro rata, on the basis of the number of calendar days remaining, for the financial year in which a Senator or Member commences his or her term.
36. The relief staff component will be adjusted in line with changes to the base salary point of the Electorate Officer B classification.
37. The relief staff component will be adjusted pro rata where a Member is allocated, or ceases to be allocated, an additional position for a second and/or third official electorate office.
38. The Special Minister of State may approve changes to the Electorate Support Budget for any Senator or Member.
39. If the Electorate Support Budget for a year is exhausted, a Senator or Member may not draw from the Electorate Support Budget for the following year. The costs beyond the Electorate Support Budget are a debt owed to the Commonwealth and must be repaid by the Senator or Member. Unused funds may not be carried over to the following year.

Electorate staff travel component

40. Except as provided at items 41, 42 and 43, the electorate staff travel component is calculated on the basis of:
- (a) 20 return economy airfares (fully flexible) between the primary electorate office and Canberra;
 - (b) 110 nights of travelling allowance at the rate applicable to Canberra;
 - (c) taxi fares and/or motor vehicle allowance to and from the relevant airports for the 20 flights above; and
 - (d) an amount for other travel as follows:

Senator/Member	Electorate Size	\$
Member	0-199 km ²	\$300
Member	200-999 km ²	\$500
Member	1,000-9,999 km ²	\$700
Member	10,000-99,999 km ²	\$1,000
Member	100,000-199,999 km ²	\$8,132
Member	200,000-499,999 km ²	\$10,132
Member	500,000 km ² or greater	\$12,132
Senators for the NT	—	\$9,000
All other Senators	—	\$500

41. Where a Senator or Member's primary electorate office is located within 150km of Canberra by road, the electorate staff travel component is calculated at the commencement of each financial year on the basis of:
- (a) the value of motor vehicle allowance payable for 20 return motor vehicle trips between the primary electorate office and Canberra;
 - (b) 110 nights of travelling allowance at the rate applicable to Canberra; and
 - (c) an amount for other travel as set out at item 40(d).
42. The electorate staff travel component for each financial year for the Member for Bean and Senators for the ACT is calculated on the basis of:
- (a) three return economy airfares (fully flexible) between Canberra and Norfolk Island;
 - (b) eight nights of travelling allowance at the commercial rate applicable to Norfolk Island; and
 - (c) an amount of \$2,000 for other travel.
43. The electorate staff travel component for each financial year for the following Senators and Members is calculated as follows:

Senator/Member	\$
Member for Canberra	\$2,000
Member for Fenner	\$2,000
Member for Eden-Monaro	\$5,000
Senator whose electorate office is in Queanbeyan	\$5,000

Relief staff component

44. The relief staff component is calculated on the basis of:
- (a) 150 days' salary at the base salary point of the Electorate Officer B classification; and
 - (b) an additional 50 days' salary at the base salary point of the Electorate Officer B classification where a Member is allocated an additional position for a second official electorate office; and
 - (c) an additional 50 days' salary at the base salary point of the Electorate Officer B classification where a Member is allocated an additional position for a third official electorate office.

Terms and Definitions

45. In this determination, terms have the meaning set out in the Enterprise Agreement. In addition, the terms below have the following meanings:

Opposition Office Holder means:

- (a) the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the House of Representatives; or
- (b) the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate.

Leader or Deputy Leader of a Minority Party means the Leader or Deputy Leader of a recognised non-Government party of at least five members, but does not include an Opposition Office Holder.

Professional Development Program means a scheduled program of training courses for MOP(S) Act employees, administered by the Department of Finance.

Regulated ridesharing services means a ridesharing service operating under regulation in the State or Territory in which the travel occurs.



Travel allowance

Background

1. Employees are paid travel allowance (TA) by the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) in accordance with clause 55 of the Enterprise Agreement.
2. TA can be paid in the form of an advance (a claim made prior to the completion of travel) or as an acquittal (a claim made after the completion of travel).

Commercial and non-commercial TA rates

3. Payment of TA for an overnight stay in Canberra is a single flat rate for both commercial and non-commercial accommodation, with the exception of the circumstance outlined in paragraph 7, and there is no requirement for employees to submit receipts for acquittal purposes. The TA rate covers personal costs not otherwise met by IPEA, e.g. personal telephone calls, laundry, dry cleaning, mini bar and newspapers
4. For each overnight stay other than in Canberra, employees who claim the commercial rate must provide a receipt for the commercial accommodation or certify that a receipt can be produced if requested by IPEA.
5. The following documents are accepted as evidence of commercial accommodation by IPEA:
 - a. A copy of a GST tax invoice for the place of commercial accommodation; or
 - b. A non-GST receipt or written statement from the place of commercial accommodation, that is clear and unobscured, and indicates the following:
 - i. the claimant's name;
 - ii. the place that they stayed at;
 - iii. the dates of the stay;
 - iv. evidence indicating that payment has been made in full; and
 - v. the full cost of the commercial accommodation.
6. Ordinarily, a receipt for commercial accommodation will be a tax invoice showing an Australian Business Number (ABN) and inclusive of Goods and Services Tax (GST). If the receipt is not a tax invoice, IPEA will seek to verify that the receipt is for commercial accommodation, i.e. accommodation offered to the public at large in the pursuit of profit.

Properties booked at arm's length through websites such as Airbnb and Stays would meet this requirement. An arrangement to stay with family or acquaintances would not meet this requirement, even if a receipt was provided, because the accommodation is not offered to the public at large on the same terms. If this cannot be verified, the non-commercial rate of TA will be paid.

7. Where an employee's accommodation is otherwise paid for by the Australian Government (e.g. an employee's portfolio department), the employee may be paid the non-commercial rate of TA in accordance with clause 55.7(b) of the Enterprise Agreement to cover meals and incidental expenses. In the case that the overnight stay is in Canberra, the employee receives 1/3rd of the Canberra TA rate to cover meals and incidental expenses.

Eligibility for TA in certain circumstances

8. No TA is generally payable at an employee's work base, including an approved alternative work base
9. Where an employee travels by a scheduled commercial service that includes an accommodation component, e.g. The Ghan, TA will not be paid. Refer to the Domestic Travel Guideline for further information.
10. An employee will be paid TA for the preceding night when:
 - a. the scheduled or actual departure time to the destination is between midnight and 3.00am (in which case TA is paid at the rate for the departure location and is not paid if the employee is not eligible for TA at that location), or
 - b. the scheduled or actual arrival time at their destination is 6:00am or earlier (in which case TA is paid at the rate for the destination and is not paid if the employee is not eligible for TA at that location).
11. TA will not be paid at more than one location for the same night. If an employee qualifies under both circumstances above, the commercial rate of TA will only be paid at the location for which the employee has a receipt for commercial accommodation, while the non-commercial rate of TA may be paid at either location, but not both.

Mandatory quarantine arrangements

12. Where an employee is directed by the employing member, for the purpose of official business, to travel to, or return from, a place that requires mandatory quarantine under a commercial arrangement, the employee may claim the commercial rate of TA. Where the commercial rate of TA is not sufficient to cover the mandatory quarantine costs, a discretionary payment may be sought in accordance with the Enterprise Agreement.

Capital cities for TA purposes

13. For TA purposes Canberra is as defined in the *Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017* and other capital cities are as defined in the *Remuneration Tribunal (Members of Parliament) Determination 2021* as amended or replaced from time to time:
 - a. 'Canberra' includes locations within a 30 kilometre radius of Parliament House; 'Sydney', 'Melbourne', 'Brisbane', 'Perth' and 'Adelaide' mean locations within a ten kilometre radius of the General Post Office of the city or within a five kilometre radius of the city's principal airport; and
 - b. 'Darwin' and 'Hobart' mean locations within a five kilometre radius of the General Post Office of the city or within a five kilometre radius of the city's principal airport.
- ▶ [IPEA – Capital city zones](#)

Claiming TA

14. To claim TA, a completed *Travelling and/or Motor Vehicle Allowance Claim*, certified by the employing Member or authorised person, must be lodged with IPEA. The completed form and relevant supporting documentation, such as accommodation receipts, should be attached to the claim.
15. IPEA regularly conducts assurance activities of TA claims, therefore, it is recommended that employees who have certified that they can produce a receipt on request, retain receipts and/or other documentation relating to TA payments for an appropriate period, including after employment ceases, noting that IPEA is obliged to retain its records documenting records of claims history for 10 years after the receipt of a final claim or departure from parliament. Refer to paragraph 29 regarding a potential overpayment where a receipt is unable to be produced.
16. Offices should also retain original employee travel claims for an appropriate period.

TA advance

17. If a claim for TA is certified by the employing Member or authorised person before the official travel has been completed, the claim is treated as an advance. The trip is completed when the employee finishes the last leg of travel (e.g. the employee returns home).
18. TA will be paid in advance as close as possible to the time of official travel, via electronic funds transfer to the employee's nominated account.
19. An employee who is paid an advance of TA must acquit the travel as soon as possible and no later than 28 days after the official travel is completed. Once 28 days has

elapsed, future payments of TA will not be made to the employee until the advance has been acquitted.

TA acquittal

20. If the claim for TA is certified by the employing Member or authorised person after the official travel has been completed, the claim is treated as an acquittal.
21. TA will be paid as soon as possible after the receipt of an approved claim form, via electronic funds transfer to the employee's nominated account.
22. It is recommended that employees lodge their claim for TA as soon as possible after the completion of official travel. Claims signed by the employing Member or authorised person more than 60 days after the date of completion of the travel, will not be paid unless a statement from the employing Member providing reasons for the late TA claim is provided (in the case of a Minister, Parliamentary Secretary or Opposition Office Holder, a statement from the Chief of Staff, Principal Adviser or Senior Adviser will be accepted if they are authorised to approve staff travel). The decision whether to pay a late TA claim rests with IPEA.

Adjustment to rate of TA

23. Where:
 - a. an employee is directed to travel with his or her employing Member on official business outside of Canberra;
 - b. the Member certifies that it is necessary for the employee to stay in the same hotel; and

the amount of TA is insufficient to cover the cost, the rate of TA will be increased to cover the cost.
24. Where:
 - a. an employee of the Prime Minister or the Leader of the Opposition is directed to travel up to three nights in advance of his or her employer on official business outside of Canberra;
 - b. the employer certifies that it is necessary for the employee to stay in the same hotel that the employer intends to stay at on arrival at the location; and
 - c. the amount of TA is insufficient to cover the cost,

the rate of TA will be increased to cover the cost.
25. Where an employee considers that the rate of TA is insufficient to meet the reasonable costs of an overnight stay, e.g. where special circumstances such as a major

international event result in an increase in the cost or availability of accommodation, the Minister or an IPEA official authorised by the Minister may approve an increase in TA.

26. In cases outlined in paragraphs 23 to 25, TA will be increased by the difference between the rate for accommodation determined by an independent organisation and the actual cost of accommodation, on appropriate certification by the employing Member or authorised person. If necessary, the rates for relevant meals will be included in the calculation (refer paragraph 27(b)).
27. Where an employee seeks an increase in TA, the employee must provide IPEA with either:
 - (a) an itemised receipt for each overnight stay, showing the cost of the accommodation separate to any meals or other costs; or
 - (b) where an 'accommodation package' that includes only room and meals has been purchased - a receipt and evidence that only these items are included in the accommodation package.

Descriptors such as 'accommodation package' alone on receipts do not contain sufficient information to enable an increase in TA to be calculated.

Cancellation costs for accommodation

28. Employees should consider cancellation policies when booking accommodation, especially when booking accommodation well in advance of official travel and/or for an extended period of time. Accommodation that allows a booking to be cancelled with minimal cost up until a few days prior to the stay should be preferred. Any decision on whether to reimburse an employee for the cost of cancelled accommodation as a discretionary payment under the Enterprise Agreement may take into account the cancellation policy applying to the booking.

Overpayment of TA

29. Any overpayment of TA, e.g. arising from changes to official travel arrangements, failure to acquit an advance of TA or failure by an employee to provide receipts to IPEA when requested, represents a debt to the Commonwealth and is subject to the debt recovery arrangements at clause 28 of the Enterprise Agreement.
30. Consistent with the Enterprise Agreement, recovery of an overpayment of TA will be made in accordance with the following arrangements:
 - a. at the election of the employee, the employee may remit the amount in full to IPEA; or
 - b. if it is likely that the employee will travel within the next 60 days, the amount may be deducted from future MVA or TA claims; or
 - c. if it is not likely that the employee will travel within the next 60 days, the amount may be recovered from pay or salary in accordance with clause 28.1(a) of the Enterprise Agreement.

31. If MOP(S) Act employment ceases then any outstanding overpayment of TA will be recovered from the former employee as a debt to the Commonwealth.

Personal leave during travel

32. If an employee needs to take personal leave for reasons of personal illness or injury (but not caring responsibilities) while undertaking official travel and is unable to return home, the employee may be reimbursed for costs up to the amount of TA that would have been payable if the employee had been able to complete the travel, including adjusted rates in accordance with paragraphs 23 to 25.
33. Where such a period of personal leave exceeds the approved period of travel and therefore the amount of TA, the extra costs may be met on approval from the employing Member and IPEA, subject to the employee producing a medical certificate or statutory declaration, and a receipt for the commercial accommodation.

120 overnight stays – clauses 55.8 and 55.9 of the Enterprise Agreement

34. Clauses 55.8 and 55.9 of the Enterprise Agreement limit the payment of TA in Canberra and, in some circumstances, in other locations, to a maximum of 120 overnight stays for certain employees.
35. The 120 overnight stays are assigned to the employee, not the position, and are not pro rata where an employee commences during the financial year. Therefore, in the event that the employee is employed by another Member, the remaining balance will transfer with the employee unless the 120 night limit does not apply to that employee with the new Member, for example, if their work base is Canberra.
36. Under clause 55.10, the Minister may vary the limit on 120 overnight stays, noting a significant increase beyond 120 nights may affect how an employee's work base is defined for the purposes of the Enterprise Agreement.

TAXINVOICE

Canberra, ACT 2600
Australia

Room	Invoice	CheckIn	CheckOut	Balance
35	156738	12/04/2023	13/04/2023	0.00
Master Folio		Best Available Daily Rate		

Your Reference: BBN-BB23040613643832

Date	Room	Description / Voucher	Charges	Credits	Balance
12/04/2023	35	Accommodation	176.00	0.00	176.00
12/04/2023	35		0.00	176.00	0.00
		Balance Due			0.00
		Summary and Taxes			
		Taxable Sales	160.00		
		GST - 10%	16.00		



TAX INVOICE

Company :
Address : X
Attention :
Room : 03B
Room Type : Studio Apartment
Arrive : 12 Apr 2023
Depart : 13 Apr 2023
Guest : MATTHEW MR THISTLETHWAITE

Reservation : 1968285
Reg/ABN No. :
Guest Ref ID :
Invoice No. : 818351
Voucher No. :
Print Date/Time : 13 Apr 2023 08:49 AM
Cashier :
Page : 1

DATE	ROOM	DESCRIPTION	GST AMOUNT (AUD)	
12 Apr 2023	03B	Accommodation - (12-Apr-23).	19.55	215.10
13 Apr 2023	03B			-215.10
			Sub-Total Before GST	195.55
			GST	19.55
			Total Amount Inc GST	215.10
			Payment	-215.10
			Balance	0.00

*** PAYMENT TERMS - 30 DAYS ***



Branch Code :
SWIFT Code :
Bank Address :

I ACCEPT THAT MY LIABILITY FOR THIS BILL IS NOT WAIVED AND AGREE TO BE HELD PERSONALLY LIABLE IN THE EVENT THAT THE INDICATED PERSON COMPANY OR ASSOCIATION FAILS TO PAY FOR ANY PART OF THE FULL AMOUNT OF THESE CHARGES

SIGNATURE: _____



Attachment B

Assurance Review of accommodation adjustments

Section 2

For us to complete our assessment of this adjustment, we require you to confirm that you directed [REDACTED] to stay at the hotel with yourself because it was necessary for official purposes.

Transaction Type	Travel Date	Arrival Location	Hotel	Number of nights	Total Amount of Travel Allowance	Confirmation of Travel <i>Provide confirmation you directed the employee to stay in the same hotel because it was necessary for official purposes and provide evidence of the accommodation</i>
Domestic Travel Allowance	12 April 2023	Wagga Wagga	[REDACTED]	1	\$318.15	

Section 3

For these transactions we require you to provide the commercial tax invoice for your accommodation as it has not been previously provided to IPEA.

We also require you to confirm that for the adjustment on 2 March 2023, you directed [REDACTED] to stay in the same hotel as yourself because it was necessary for official purposes.

Transaction Type	Travel Date	Arrival Location	Hotel	Number of nights	Total Amount of Travel Allowance	Confirmation of Travel <i>Provide confirmation you directed the employee to stay in the same hotel because it was necessary for official purposes and provide the commercial tax invoice</i>
Domestic Travel Allowance	9 August 2022	Adelaide	[REDACTED]	2	\$766.30	
Domestic Travel Allowance	2 March 2023	Sydney	[REDACTED]	1	\$392.15	

From: Assurance
Sent: Thursday, 14 September 2023 10:28 AM
To: 'Thistlethwaite, Matt (Private)'
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: IPEA to Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP - 7 September 2023.pdf; Attachment A - Correspondence of 24 August 2023.pdf

OFFICIAL

Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP

Member for Kingsford Smith

Assistant Minister for Defence, Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Assistant Minister for the Republic

Dear Assistant Minister

Please find attached correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority in relation to the Assurance Review of staff use of adjustments to travel allowance.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603

T: 02 6215 3000

E: assurance@ipea.gov.au

W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

Classification: OFFICIAL

Classified by: assurance@ipea.gov.au on: 24/08/2023 4:10:21 PM

From: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>

Sent: Thursday, August 24, 2023 4:11 PM

To: [REDACTED] Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP

Member for Kingsford Smith

Assistant Minister for Defence, Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Assistant Minister for the Republic

Dear Assistant Minister

Please find attached correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority in relation to the Assurance Review of staff use of adjustments to travel allowance.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603
T: 02 6215 3000
E: assurance@ipea.gov.au
W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

Classification: OFFICIAL

Classified by: [REDACTED] on: 24/08/2023 3:33:26 PM

From: Thistlethwaite, Matt (Private) <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Thursday, August 10, 2023 1:32 PM

To: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: FW: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Thank you for your recent letter regarding an assurance review of adjustments to travel allowance for [REDACTED] from my office. I am sorry I have not replied earlier. I did not receive your email until yesterday. In future if you need to contact me please email me directly at [REDACTED]

Regarding each of the matters outlined in your correspondence:

Section 1

For the trips outlined in your correspondence [REDACTED] was required to travel with me on ministerial duties as my chief of staff and I directed [REDACTED] to stay at the same hotel as it was necessary for official purposes.

Section 2

For the trip to Wagga Wagga on 12 April 2023 [REDACTED] was required to travel with me on Ministerial duties as my [REDACTED] stayed in a different hotel to me as it was school holidays, and there were no other rooms left at the hotel I was staying at so [REDACTED] had to stay in another hotel.

Section 3

Regarding 9 August 2022 I directed [REDACTED] to stay at the same hotel as it was necessary for official purposes.

Regarding 2 March 2023 [REDACTED] and was required to travel to Sydney for ministerial duties with me in Sydney.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Thanks

Matt



Matt Thistlethwaite MP

 (02) 9349 6007
 mattthistlethwaite.com.au
 Shop 6/205 Maroubra Rd, Maroubra, NSW, 2035

Assistant Minister for Defence
Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Assistant Minister for the Republic
Member for Kingsford Smith



From: [REDACTED] (M. Thistlethwaite, MP) [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 10, 2023 1:28 PM
To: Thistlethwaite, Matt (Private) <[REDACTED]>
Subject: FW: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

From: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, June 30, 2023 9:05 AM
To: Thistlethwaite, Matt (MP) [REDACTED]
Cc: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Subject: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP
Member for Kingsford Smith
Assistant Minister for Defence, Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Assistant Minister for the Republic

Dear Assistant Minister

Please find attached correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority in relation to an Assurance Review of staff use of adjustments to travel allowance.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Nicole Pearson
Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603
T: 02 6215 3000
E: assurance@ipea.gov.au
W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

Classification: OFFICIAL
Classified by: [REDACTED] on: 30/06/2023 8:49:31 AM

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Australian Government
Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority

13 September 2023

Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP
Member for Kingsford Smith
Assistant Minister for Defence, Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Assistant Minister
for the Republic

Shop 6
205 Maroubra Road
Maroubra, NSW, 2035

Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Assistant Minister

Assurance Review of adjustments to travel allowance

On 24 August 2023, I wrote to you in relation to adjustments to travel allowance claimed by your staff member, [REDACTED] (Attachment A).

In that letter, a response was requested from you by **7 September 2023** and there was a provision for you to request an extension if you required more time to prepare a written response. An extension was not requested, and your response is now overdue.

I would be grateful if you could provide your response via email to assurance@ipea.gov.au, by close of business on **27 September 2023**, or advise us prior to the date if you need more time.

Please note that IPEA publishes its Assurance Reviews on its website at www.ipea.gov.au. Should you wish to discuss this matter, please contact Sian Thomas on (02) 6215 3000.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Branch Manager (A/g), Transparency, Assurance & Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603

From: Thistlethwaite, Matt (Private) [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 14 September 2023 5:04 PM
To: Assurance
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Categories:

Regarding my chief of staff, [REDACTED] travelling with me for Ministerial business to Wagga Wagga on 12 April 2023 I confirm that I directed [REDACTED] to stay at the same hotel as me for official purposes.

Regarding the section 3 item [REDACTED] was directed by me to travel to Sydney as my [REDACTED] for ministerial matters and I directed [REDACTED] to stay overnight in Sydney on 2 March 2023. I was not at the same hotel because I live in Sydney and stayed at home.

Regarding the receipt for my accommodation in Adelaide on 9 August 2022 my staff member [REDACTED] shall email this to you tomorrow.

Also is it possible to provide a short training session for my relevant staff about travel allowance claims?

Thanks

Matt



From: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2023 10:28 AM
To: Thistlethwaite, Matt (Private) <[REDACTED]>
Cc: [REDACTED]
 Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Subject: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP

Member for Kingsford Smith

Assistant Minister for Defence, Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Assistant Minister for the Republic

Dear Assistant Minister

Please find attached correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority in relation to the Assurance Review of staff use of adjustments to travel allowance.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603
T: 02 6215 3000
E: assurance@ipea.gov.au
W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

Classification: OFFICIAL

Classified by: assurance@ipea.gov.au on: 24/08/2023 4:10:21 PM

From: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>

Sent: Thursday, August 24, 2023 4:11 PM

To: [REDACTED]; Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>

Cc: [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP

Member for Kingsford Smith

Assistant Minister for Defence, Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Assistant Minister for the Republic

Dear Assistant Minister

Please find attached correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority in relation to the Assurance Review of staff use of adjustments to travel allowance.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603
T: 02 6215 3000
E: assurance@ipea.gov.au
W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

Classification: OFFICIAL

Classified by: [REDACTED] on: 24/08/2023 3:33:26 PM

From: Thistlethwaite, Matt (Private) <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Thursday, August 10, 2023 1:32 PM

To: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>

Cc: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Thank you for your recent letter regarding an assurance review of adjustments to travel allowance for [REDACTED] from my office. I am sorry I have not replied earlier. I did not receive your email until yesterday. In future if you need to contact me please email me directly at [REDACTED]

Regarding each of the matters outlined in your correspondence:

Section 1

For the trips outlined in your correspondence [REDACTED] was required to travel with me on ministerial duties as my [REDACTED] and I directed [REDACTED] to stay at the same hotel as it was necessary for official purposes.

Section 2

For the trip to Wagga Wagga on 12 April 2023 [REDACTED] was required to travel with me on Ministerial duties as my [REDACTED] stayed in a different hotel to me as it was school holidays, and there were no other rooms left at the hotel I was staying at so [REDACTED] had to stay in another hotel.

Section 3

Regarding 9 August 2022 I directed [REDACTED] to stay at the same hotel as it was necessary for official purposes.

Regarding 2 March 2023 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] and was required to travel to Sydney for ministerial duties with me in Sydney.

Please let me know if you require any further information.

Thanks

Matt



From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, August 10, 2023 1:28 PM
To: Thistlethwaite, Matt (Private) <[REDACTED]>
Subject: FW: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

From: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, June 30, 2023 9:05 AM
To: Thistlethwaite, Matt (MP) [REDACTED]

Cc: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>

Subject: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP

Member for Kingsford Smith

Assistant Minister for Defence, Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Assistant Minister for the Republic

Dear Assistant Minister

Please find attached correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority in relation to an Assurance Review of staff use of adjustments to travel allowance.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Nicole Pearson

Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance and Legal

Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority

One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603

T: 02 6215 3000

E: assurance@ipea.gov.au

W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

Classification: OFFICIAL

Classified [REDACTED] on: 30/06/2023 8:49:31 AM

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From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 5 October 2023 6:36 PM
To: Assurance
Subject: Matt Thistlethwaite MP - Hotel Accommodation receipt 09/08/22
Attachments: gca_folio_logo34669460.pdf

Good afternoon

As requested, I am enclosing a copy of the Adelaide hotel "[REDACTED]" tax invoice for the nights of 08/08/22 and 10/08/22.

If you require any further information, please let me know by return.

Kind regards,



[REDACTED] Matt Thistlethwaite MP
Federal Member for Kingsford Smith
Assistant Minister for Defence
Assistant Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Assistant Minister for the Republic

T: [\(02\) 9349 6007](tel:(02)93496007)
E: [REDACTED]
W: <https://www.mattthistlethwaite.com.au/>
A: Shop 6/205 Maroubra Rd Maroubra, NSW, 2035



Be careful with this message

External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

ADELAIDE

Mr Matthew Thistlethwaite

INFORMATION COPY ONLY 641018

A/R Number :
Company Name :

Room No. : 0511
Arrival : 09-08-22
Departure : 11-08-22
Page No. : 1 of 1
Cashier :
Printed : 05/10/23 17:59
ABN : 31 137 974 586

Custom Ref :

Date	Description	Reference	Debit AUD	Credit AUD
09-08-22	Accommodation Package		155.00	
10-08-22	Accommodation Package		155.00	
11-08-22	Credit Card Surcharge		4.34	
11-08-22				314.34

* Indicates non-taxable supply

I agree that I am personally liable for the payment of the foregoing statement and if the person, company or association indicated by me as being responsible for payment of the same does not do so, that my liability for such payment shall be joint and several with such person, company or association.

Total	314.34	314.34
Balance	0.00 AUD	
Total includes GST of	28.58 AUD	

Guest Signature:

From: Assurance
Sent: Thursday, 23 November 2023 12:20 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Assurance
Subject: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: [REDACTED] - 23 November 2023.pdf; Attachment A.PDF; Attachment B - Travel Allowance Guidelines.PDF

OFFICIAL

Dear [REDACTED]

Please find attached correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority in relation to an assurance review on your adjustments to travel allowance.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603
T: 02 6215 3000
E: assurance@ipea.gov.au
W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed



Australian Government
Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority

23 November 2023

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

Assurance Review of adjustments to travel allowance

The Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) is responsible for monitoring the use of travel resources used in connection with travel by staff employed under the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984*.

IPEA is undertaking an Assurance Review of adjustments to travel allowance claimed by you during your employment in the office of the Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP.

To commence this Assurance Review, IPEA contacted the Assistant Minister and sought his assistance to examine a list of your adjustments to travel allowance, for which we required additional information to assess against the legislative framework.

The Assistant Minister has provided the requested information and we have completed our assessment of his response. There is one adjustment to travel allowance for which IPEA requires additional information from you, in order to complete the Assurance Review.

Adjustment to travel allowance – 2 March 2023

On the form you submitted for this transaction, you indicated that you were staying in the same hotel as the Assistant Minister in Sydney, the city in which he is based. Further details of this transaction are at **Attachment A**.

To assess this adjustment, we asked the Assistant Minister to:

- confirm he directed you to stay in the same hotel because it was necessary for official purposes, and
- provide the commercial tax invoice for his own accommodation as it had not been previously provided to IPEA.

The Assistant Minister confirmed that:

"[REDACTED] was directed by me to travel to Sydney as my [REDACTED] for ministerial matters and I directed [REDACTED] to stay overnight in Sydney on 2 March 2023. I was not at the same hotel because I live in Sydney and stayed at home."

Sections 23 and 25 of the Travel Allowance Guidelines for staff travel (**Attachment B** – the Guidelines) provide the requirements for adjustments to travel allowance:

23. *Where:*

a. an employee is directed to travel with his or her employing Member on official business outside of Canberra;

b. the Member certifies that it is necessary for the employee to stay in the same hotel; and

the amount of TA is insufficient to cover the cost, the rate of TA will be increased to cover the cost.

25. *Where an employee considers that the rate of TA is insufficient to meet the reasonable costs of an overnight stay, e.g. where special circumstances such as a major international event result in an increase in the cost or availability of accommodation, the Minister or an IPEA official authorised by the Minister may approve an increase in TA.*

From the information available to IPEA, no adjustment to travel allowance was payable for your stay in Sydney on 2 March 2023, and an invoice should be raised for this adjustment. If you believe this assessment is incorrect, please provide any additional relevant information to assist with our review.

I would be grateful if you could provide your response via email to assurance@ipea.gov.au, by close of business on **8 December 2023**, or advise us prior to the date if you need more time.

Please note that IPEA publishes its Assurance Reviews on its website at www.ipea.gov.au.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please contact [REDACTED] on (02) [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Acting Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance & Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603



Travel allowance

Background

1. Employees are paid travel allowance (TA) by the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) in accordance with clause 55 of the Enterprise Agreement.
2. TA can be paid in the form of an advance (a claim made prior to the completion of travel) or as an acquittal (a claim made after the completion of travel).

Commercial and non-commercial TA rates

3. Payment of TA for an overnight stay in Canberra is a single flat rate for both commercial and non-commercial accommodation, with the exception of the circumstance outlined in paragraph 7, and there is no requirement for employees to submit receipts for acquittal purposes. The TA rate covers personal costs not otherwise met by IPEA, e.g. personal telephone calls, laundry, dry cleaning, mini bar and newspapers
4. For each overnight stay other than in Canberra, employees who claim the commercial rate must provide a receipt for the commercial accommodation or certify that a receipt can be produced if requested by IPEA.
5. The following documents are accepted as evidence of commercial accommodation by IPEA:
 - a. A copy of a GST tax invoice for the place of commercial accommodation; or
 - b. A non-GST receipt or written statement from the place of commercial accommodation, that is clear and unobscured, and indicates the following:
 - i. the claimant's name;
 - ii. the place that they stayed at;
 - iii. the dates of the stay;
 - iv. evidence indicating that payment has been made in full; and
 - v. the full cost of the commercial accommodation.
6. Ordinarily, a receipt for commercial accommodation will be a tax invoice showing an Australian Business Number (ABN) and inclusive of Goods and Services Tax (GST). If the receipt is not a tax invoice, IPEA will seek to verify that the receipt is for commercial accommodation, i.e. accommodation offered to the public at large in the pursuit of profit.

Properties booked at arm's length through websites such as Airbnb and Stays would meet this requirement. An arrangement to stay with family or acquaintances would not meet this requirement, even if a receipt was provided, because the accommodation is not offered to the public at large on the same terms. If this cannot be verified, the non-commercial rate of TA will be paid.

7. Where an employee's accommodation is otherwise paid for by the Australian Government (e.g. an employee's portfolio department), the employee may be paid the non-commercial rate of TA in accordance with clause 55.7(b) of the Enterprise Agreement to cover meals and incidental expenses. In the case that the overnight stay is in Canberra, the employee receives 1/3rd of the Canberra TA rate to cover meals and incidental expenses.

Eligibility for TA in certain circumstances

8. No TA is generally payable at an employee's work base, including an approved alternative work base
9. Where an employee travels by a scheduled commercial service that includes an accommodation component, e.g. The Ghan, TA will not be paid. Refer to the Domestic Travel Guideline for further information.
10. An employee will be paid TA for the preceding night when:
 - a. the scheduled or actual departure time to the destination is between midnight and 3.00am (in which case TA is paid at the rate for the departure location and is not paid if the employee is not eligible for TA at that location), or
 - b. the scheduled or actual arrival time at their destination is 6:00am or earlier (in which case TA is paid at the rate for the destination and is not paid if the employee is not eligible for TA at that location).
11. TA will not be paid at more than one location for the same night. If an employee qualifies under both circumstances above, the commercial rate of TA will only be paid at the location for which the employee has a receipt for commercial accommodation, while the non-commercial rate of TA may be paid at either location, but not both.

Mandatory quarantine arrangements

12. Where an employee is directed by the employing member, for the purpose of official business, to travel to, or return from, a place that requires mandatory quarantine under a commercial arrangement, the employee may claim the commercial rate of TA. Where the commercial rate of TA is not sufficient to cover the mandatory quarantine costs, a discretionary payment may be sought in accordance with the Enterprise Agreement.

Capital cities for TA purposes

13. For TA purposes Canberra is as defined in the *Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017* and other capital cities are as defined in the *Remuneration Tribunal (Members of Parliament) Determination 2021* as amended or replaced from time to time:
 - a. 'Canberra' includes locations within a 30 kilometre radius of Parliament House; 'Sydney', 'Melbourne', 'Brisbane', 'Perth' and 'Adelaide' mean locations within a ten kilometre radius of the General Post Office of the city or within a five kilometre radius of the city's principal airport; and
 - b. 'Darwin' and 'Hobart' mean locations within a five kilometre radius of the General Post Office of the city or within a five kilometre radius of the city's principal airport.
- ▶ [IPEA – Capital city zones](#)

Claiming TA

14. To claim TA, a completed *Travelling and/or Motor Vehicle Allowance Claim*, certified by the employing Member or authorised person, must be lodged with IPEA. The completed form and relevant supporting documentation, such as accommodation receipts, should be attached to the claim.
15. IPEA regularly conducts assurance activities of TA claims, therefore, it is recommended that employees who have certified that they can produce a receipt on request, retain receipts and/or other documentation relating to TA payments for an appropriate period, including after employment ceases, noting that IPEA is obliged to retain its records documenting records of claims history for 10 years after the receipt of a final claim or departure from parliament. Refer to paragraph 29 regarding a potential overpayment where a receipt is unable to be produced.
16. Offices should also retain original employee travel claims for an appropriate period.

TA advance

17. If a claim for TA is certified by the employing Member or authorised person before the official travel has been completed, the claim is treated as an advance. The trip is completed when the employee finishes the last leg of travel (e.g. the employee returns home).
18. TA will be paid in advance as close as possible to the time of official travel, via electronic funds transfer to the employee's nominated account.
19. An employee who is paid an advance of TA must acquit the travel as soon as possible and no later than 28 days after the official travel is completed. Once 28 days has

elapsed, future payments of TA will not be made to the employee until the advance has been acquitted.

TA acquittal

20. If the claim for TA is certified by the employing Member or authorised person after the official travel has been completed, the claim is treated as an acquittal.
21. TA will be paid as soon as possible after the receipt of an approved claim form, via electronic funds transfer to the employee's nominated account.
22. It is recommended that employees lodge their claim for TA as soon as possible after the completion of official travel. Claims signed by the employing Member or authorised person more than 60 days after the date of completion of the travel, will not be paid unless a statement from the employing Member providing reasons for the late TA claim is provided (in the case of a Minister, Parliamentary Secretary or Opposition Office Holder, a statement from the Chief of Staff, Principal Adviser or Senior Adviser will be accepted if they are authorised to approve staff travel). The decision whether to pay a late TA claim rests with IPEA.

Adjustment to rate of TA

23. Where:
 - a. an employee is directed to travel with his or her employing Member on official business outside of Canberra;
 - b. the Member certifies that it is necessary for the employee to stay in the same hotel; and

the amount of TA is insufficient to cover the cost, the rate of TA will be increased to cover the cost.
24. Where:
 - a. an employee of the Prime Minister or the Leader of the Opposition is directed to travel up to three nights in advance of his or her employer on official business outside of Canberra;
 - b. the employer certifies that it is necessary for the employee to stay in the same hotel that the employer intends to stay at on arrival at the location; and
 - c. the amount of TA is insufficient to cover the cost,

the rate of TA will be increased to cover the cost.
25. Where an employee considers that the rate of TA is insufficient to meet the reasonable costs of an overnight stay, e.g. where special circumstances such as a major

international event result in an increase in the cost or availability of accommodation, the Minister or an IPEA official authorised by the Minister may approve an increase in TA.

26. In cases outlined in paragraphs 23 to 25, TA will be increased by the difference between the rate for accommodation determined by an independent organisation and the actual cost of accommodation, on appropriate certification by the employing Member or authorised person. If necessary, the rates for relevant meals will be included in the calculation (refer paragraph 27(b)).
27. Where an employee seeks an increase in TA, the employee must provide IPEA with either:
 - (a) an itemised receipt for each overnight stay, showing the cost of the accommodation separate to any meals or other costs; or
 - (b) where an 'accommodation package' that includes only room and meals has been purchased - a receipt and evidence that only these items are included in the accommodation package.

Descriptors such as 'accommodation package' alone on receipts do not contain sufficient information to enable an increase in TA to be calculated.

Cancellation costs for accommodation

28. Employees should consider cancellation policies when booking accommodation, especially when booking accommodation well in advance of official travel and/or for an extended period of time. Accommodation that allows a booking to be cancelled with minimal cost up until a few days prior to the stay should be preferred. Any decision on whether to reimburse an employee for the cost of cancelled accommodation as a discretionary payment under the Enterprise Agreement may take into account the cancellation policy applying to the booking.

Overpayment of TA

29. Any overpayment of TA, e.g. arising from changes to official travel arrangements, failure to acquit an advance of TA or failure by an employee to provide receipts to IPEA when requested, represents a debt to the Commonwealth and is subject to the debt recovery arrangements at clause 28 of the Enterprise Agreement.
30. Consistent with the Enterprise Agreement, recovery of an overpayment of TA will be made in accordance with the following arrangements:
 - a. at the election of the employee, the employee may remit the amount in full to IPEA; or
 - b. if it is likely that the employee will travel within the next 60 days, the amount may be deducted from future MVA or TA claims; or
 - c. if it is not likely that the employee will travel within the next 60 days, the amount may be recovered from pay or salary in accordance with clause 28.1(a) of the Enterprise Agreement.

31. If MOP(S) Act employment ceases then any outstanding overpayment of TA will be recovered from the former employee as a debt to the Commonwealth.

Personal leave during travel

32. If an employee needs to take personal leave for reasons of personal illness or injury (but not caring responsibilities) while undertaking official travel and is unable to return home, the employee may be reimbursed for costs up to the amount of TA that would have been payable if the employee had been able to complete the travel, including adjusted rates in accordance with paragraphs 23 to 25.
33. Where such a period of personal leave exceeds the approved period of travel and therefore the amount of TA, the extra costs may be met on approval from the employing Member and IPEA, subject to the employee producing a medical certificate or statutory declaration, and a receipt for the commercial accommodation.

120 overnight stays – clauses 55.8 and 55.9 of the Enterprise Agreement

34. Clauses 55.8 and 55.9 of the Enterprise Agreement limit the payment of TA in Canberra and, in some circumstances, in other locations, to a maximum of 120 overnight stays for certain employees.
35. The 120 overnight stays are assigned to the employee, not the position, and are not pro rata where an employee commences during the financial year. Therefore, in the event that the employee is employed by another Member, the remaining balance will transfer with the employee unless the 120 night limit does not apply to that employee with the new Member, for example, if their work base is Canberra.
36. Under clause 55.10, the Minister may vary the limit on 120 overnight stays, noting a significant increase beyond 120 nights may affect how an employee's work base is defined for the purposes of the Enterprise Agreement.

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, 23 November 2023 1:47 PM
To: Assurance
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Categories:

OFFICIAL

Dear [REDACTED]

Thanks for your email. I would like to include additional information for consideration under Section 25 of the Travel Allowance Guidance.

The reason for the adjustment to the travel allowance above the cap was because there were events on at the time in this region of Sydney and this was the best priced accommodation close to the Electorate Office, in which myself and the Minister were leaving from very early the next morning in order to drive to drive in excess of 2 hours for a ministerial portfolio-related event. Our diary manager ([REDACTED] copied) searched for the cheapest accommodation at the time that was within the cap and none was available. This was the most affordable option.

Apologies that I did not make this aspect of the claim clear in previous correspondence on the matter.

Regards

[REDACTED]
Office of the Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP
Assistant Minister for Defence, Veterans' Affairs & Republic

[REDACTED] | CANBERRA BC ACT 2600



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From: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 23 November 2023 12:20 PM
To: [REDACTED] >
Cc: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Subject: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Dear [REDACTED]

Please find attached correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority in relation to an assurance review on your adjustments to travel allowance.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603
T: 02 6215 3000
E: assurance@ipea.gov.au
W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

Be careful with this message

External email. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

From: Assurance
Sent: Thursday, 30 November 2023 3:27 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Assurance
Subject: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: IPEA to [REDACTED] - 30 November 2023.pdf

Categories:

OFFICIAL

Dear [REDACTED]

Please find attached correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority in relation to an assurance review on your adjustments to travel allowance.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
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One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603
T: 02 6215 3000
E: assurance@ipea.gov.au
W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, November 23, 2023 1:47 PM
To: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Cc: Thistlethwaite, Matt [REDACTED]
Subject: HPE CM: RE: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Dear [REDACTED]

Thanks for your email. I would like to include additional information for consideration under Section 25 of the Travel Allowance Guidance.

The reason for the adjustment to the travel allowance above the cap was because there were events on at the time in this region of Sydney and this was the best priced accommodation close to the Electorate Office, in which myself and the Minister were leaving from very early the next morning in order to drive to drive in excess of 2 hours for a ministerial portfolio-related event. Our diary manager ([REDACTED] copied) searched for the cheapest accommodation at the time that was within the cap and none was available. This was the most affordable option.

Apologies that I did not make this aspect of the claim clear in previous correspondence on the matter.

Regards

Office of the Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP
Assistant Minister for Defence, Veterans' Affairs & Republic

| CANBERRA BC ACT 2600



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From: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>

Sent: Thursday, 23 November 2023 12:20 PM

To:

Cc: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>

Subject: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Dear

Please find attached correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority in relation to an assurance review on your adjustments to travel allowance.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact on

Yours sincerely

Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
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Australian Government
Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority

30 November 2023



Email:



Dear



Assurance Review of adjustments to travel allowance

Thank you for your response dated 23 November 2023, in relation to the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority's (IPEA) review of your adjustments to travel allowance.

We have reviewed your response, which advises why the 2 March 2023 adjustment was claimed:

The reason for the adjustment to the travel allowance above the cap was because there were events on at the time in this region of Sydney and this was the best priced accommodation close to the Electorate Office, in which myself and the Minister were leaving from very early the next morning in order to drive to drive in excess of 2 hours for a ministerial portfolio-related event. Our diary manager [REDACTED] (copied) searched for the cheapest accommodation at the time that was within the cap and none was available. This was the most affordable option.

As you acknowledge in your response, the adjustment was incorrectly claimed under section 23 of the Travel allowance Guidelines (the Guidelines) and now must be reviewed under section 25, as outlined below:

25. Where an employee considers that the rate of TA is insufficient to meet the reasonable costs of an overnight stay, e.g. where special circumstances such as a major international event result in an increase in the cost or availability of accommodation, the Minister or an IPEA official authorised by the Minister may approve an increase in TA.

IPEA requires further information to complete our assessment of the adjustment under this section of the Guidelines.

For us to complete our assessment, can you please provide to IPEA:

- further information on the events in Sydney that you reference in your response, and
- any evidence that demonstrates which other accommodation options were considered in Sydney.

This information will then be provided to the IPEA official authorised to approve an increase in travel allowance for their review.

As advised in our letter of 23 November 2023, on the form you submitted for this transaction, you originally indicated that you were staying in the same hotel as the Assistant Minister in Sydney, the city in which he is based. This advice was subsequently changed, since IPEA has confirmed that the Assistant Minister did not stay at that hotel. For future travel, please ensure that the reason for claiming adjustments to travel allowance are clearly outlined when you submit your form.

I would be grateful if you could provide your response via email to assurance@ipea.gov.au, by close of business on 14 December 2023, or advise us prior to the date if you need more time.

Please note that IPEA publishes completed Assurance Reviews on its website at www.ipea.gov.au. Should you wish to discuss this matter, please contact [REDACTED] on (02) 6215 3000.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Branch Manager (A/g), Transparency, Assurance and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, 1 December 2023 12:26 PM
To: Assurance
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

Categories:

OFFICIAL

Dear [REDACTED]

Thanks for your follow up letter.

Further context:

- The accommodation allowance was for 2 March 2023. This is peak festival season in Sydney and my parliamentarian's office is very close to the city and a popular tourist destination. While the information has since been archived by the website hosts, website humanitix.com and searching 'Randwick' and 'Coogee' and surrounds or looking on www.randwick.nsw.gov.au or www.sydney.com (searching Randwick and Coogee) will highlight how busy the area can get during peak seasons with festivals, events, markets, touring artists and other activities in this inner city, seaside location. This is particularly so during Feb/March as it is the end of the northern winter so attracts many tourists to the region, and March being the start of the shoulder season.
- I was the one driving the Asst Min the next morning, and doing so for 2.5 hours to Williamstown, NSW, leaving the Electorate Office at 7am. I was then driving back to Sydney at the conclusion, during peak hour, after the portfolio matters in Sydney before travelling on a plane back to my home state of the ACT. To have been required to stay at accommodation within the cap would have added additional travel time on top of an already very long day. This is an unreasonable WH&S risk.
- I am happy to sign a stat dec on this matter to assure you that reasonable searches were undertaken.
- I recommend IPEA take further action to clarify for users the process for applying for reimbursement above the cap. I attended IPEA training upon starting in Parliament and this was not made clear to me. I have had to learn through doing and it has cost both ongoing time and effort to recover reasonable costs incurred in the course of my duties. This has been frustrating and a diversion of public resources. This needs to be factored in, as the Assurance team and myself, as well as our EO team, continue to correspond on this matter. I hope you interpret this feedback in the spirit in which it is intended.

I look forward to your reply.

Regards

[REDACTED]
Office of the Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP
Assistant Minister for Defence, Veterans' Affairs & Republic

[REDACTED] | CANBERRA BC ACT 2600

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From: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Sent: Thursday, 30 November 2023 3:27 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Subject: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Dear [REDACTED]

Please find attached correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority in relation to an assurance review on your adjustments to travel allowance.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact [REDACTED] on [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
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T: 02 6215 3000
E: assurance@ipea.gov.au
W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, November 23, 2023 1:47 PM
To: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Cc: Thistlethwaite, Matt [REDACTED]
Subject: HPE CM: RE: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Dear [REDACTED]

Thanks for your email. I would like to include additional information for consideration under Section 25 of the Travel Allowance Guidance.

The reason for the adjustment to the travel allowance above the cap was because there were events on at the time in this region of Sydney and this was the best priced accommodation close to the Electorate Office, in which myself and the Minister were leaving from very early the next morning in order to drive to drive in excess of 2 hours for a ministerial portfolio-related event. Our diary manager ([REDACTED] copied) searched for the cheapest accommodation at the time that was within the cap and none was available. This was the most affordable option.

Apologies that I did not make this aspect of the claim clear in previous correspondence on the matter.

Regards
[REDACTED]

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Assistant Minister for Defence, Veterans' Affairs & Republic

CANBERRA BC ACT 2600



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To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Subject: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Dear [REDACTED]

Please find attached correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority in relation to an assurance review on your adjustments to travel allowance.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact [REDACTED] on [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
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From: Assurance
Sent: Wednesday, 20 December 2023 2:07 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Attachments: [REDACTED] - 20 December 2023.pdf

OFFICIAL

Dear [REDACTED]

Please find attached correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority in relation to an assurance review on your adjustments to travel allowance.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
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One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603
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E: assurance@ipea.gov.au
W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 12:26 PM
To: Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

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Further context:

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after the portfolio matters in Sydney before travelling on a plane back to my home state of the ACT. To have been required to stay at accommodation within the cap would have added additional travel time on top of an already very long day. This is an unreasonable WH&S risk.

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I look forward to your reply.

Regards

Office of the Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP
Assistant Minister for Defence, Veterans' Affairs & Republic

CANBERRA BC ACT 2600

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Subject: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

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Should you wish to discuss this matter, please do not hesitate to contact [REDACTED] on [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely

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E: assurance@ipea.gov.au
W: www.ipea.gov.au & www.ipea.gov.au/ed

From: [REDACTED]
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Cc: Thistlethwaite, Matt [REDACTED]
Subject: HPE CM: RE: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

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Apologies that I did not make this aspect of the claim clear in previous correspondence on the matter.

Regards
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Office of the Hon Matt Thistlethwaite MP
Assistant Minister for Defence, Veterans' Affairs & Republic

[REDACTED] | CANBERRA BC ACT 2600



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Subject: Assurance Review - Adjustments to travel allowance [SEC=OFFICIAL]

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Australian Government
Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority

20 December 2023



Email:



Dear



Assurance Review of adjustments to travel allowance

Thank you for your response dated 1 December 2023, in relation to the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority's (IPEA) review of your adjustments to travel allowance.

This information was provided to the IPEA official authorised to approve an increase in travel allowance under section 25 of the Travel allowance Guidelines (the Guidelines).

The delegate has determined that if this information was originally provided when you made your claim in April 2023, the adjustment would have been paid under section 25 of the Guidelines. As advised in our letter of 23 November 2023, on the form you submitted for this transaction, you originally indicated that you were staying in the same hotel as the Assistant Minister in Sydney, the city in which he is based. This advice was subsequently changed, since IPEA has confirmed that the Assistant Minister did not stay at that hotel. For future travel, please ensure that the reason for claiming adjustments to travel allowance are clearly outlined when you submit your form so that they can be assessed against the requirements of the framework. Future adjustments may need to be repaid if accurate information is not provided at the time the claim is made.

In this instance, after consideration of the information available to IPEA, including your responses, we are closing this matter.

IPEA provides advice and assistance through a number of channels, but it remains the responsibility of parliamentarians and their staff to familiarise themselves with the features of the framework under which staff are employed. For future travel, we also strongly encourage you to seek personalised travel advice from IPEA's Advice team on (02) 6215 3000 or via email at enquiries@ipea.gov.au, to ensure that your travel, and any relevant travel claims, are in accordance with the legislative framework.

Please note that IPEA publishes completed Assurance Reviews on its website on the [Published audits, assurance reviews and rulings](#) page. A copy of the Assurance Review Memorandum, with IPEA's redactions, will be provided to you prior to publication.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please contact [REDACTED] on [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Branch Manager (A/g), Transparency, Assurance and Legal
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603