



Australian Government
**Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority**

Assurance Review 2025/015

**Mrs Melissa McIntosh MP – family reunion travel
1 July 2021 to 30 June 2023**

**Independent Parliamentary
Expenses Authority**

Contents

Executive summary	3
IPEA’s statutory audit function	4
Legislative framework	4
Review process	5
Conclusion	6

Mrs Melissa McIntosh MP – family reunion travel

Executive summary

1. The Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) conducted an assurance review of Mrs Melissa McIntosh MP's use of work resources for family reunion purposes (family reunion travel resources) between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2023 (the period in scope).

Scope

2. The scope of this assurance review is family reunion travel by Mrs McIntosh and her dependant between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2023.
3. The purpose of the assurance review was to determine whether the family reunion travel resources were used in accordance with the legislative framework.

Reason for review

4. As part of IPEA's review of parliamentarians' use of family reunion travel resources, IPEA undertook a preliminary assessment into family reunion travel by Mrs McIntosh and her family members during the period 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2023. After excluding family travel to and from Canberra, the preliminary assessment found that family reunion travel resources had been used by Mrs McIntosh for a trip from Sydney to the Gold Coast and return between 9 and 12 June 2023.
5. On 4 February 2025, IPEA commenced an assurance review of Mrs McIntosh's family reunion travel.

Outcome*

6. IPEA found that the use of family reunion travel resources was not inconsistent with the legislative framework.

*Potential outcomes

There are three potential outcomes of an assurance review:

1. Consistent with the rules

IPEA finds that the use of the relevant travel resource complied with the law.

This means the available evidence, including information provided by the member, clearly shows that all obligations under the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017* were met.

2. Not inconsistent with the rules

IPEA finds that the use of the relevant travel resource was not shown to be against the law.

This means IPEA has accepted the member's explanation that they met their obligations under the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*, and IPEA has not found any evidence to the contrary.

3. Not consistent with the rules

IPEA finds that the use of the relevant travel resource did not comply with the law.

This means there has been a misuse of a parliamentary work resource under the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017*. Where misuse is found, the value of the resource will be recovered, including any applicable penalty.

IPEA's statutory audit function

7. IPEA audits parliamentarians' use of their parliamentary business work resources and the use of travel resources by their staff under section 12 of the *Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority Act 2017*. IPEA conducts assurance reviews to assess the use of resources against the legislative framework to determine if there has been misuse.

Legislative framework

8. Section 6 of the *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017* (PBR Act) provides the following meaning of **parliamentary business**:

The parliamentary business of a member means any of the following:

- (a) the **parliamentary duties** of a member, being activities of the member that:
 - i. relate directly to the member's role as a member; and
 - ii. are determined for the purposes of paragraph (4)(a);
- (b) the **electorate duties** of the member, being activities of the member that:
 - i. support or serve the member's constituents; and
 - ii. are determined for the purposes of paragraph (4)(b);
- (c) the **party political duties** of the member, being activities determined for the purposes of paragraph (4)(c);
- (d) for a member who is an office holder or a Minister of State – the **official duties** of the member being activities that:
 - i. relate to the member's role as an office holder or Minister of State; and
 - ii. are determined for the purposes of paragraph (4)(d).

9. Subsection 6(4) of the PBR Act provides that the Minister must determine activities of a member that are parliamentary duties of the member, or electorate duties of the member, or party political duties of the member, or official duties of the member. The Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination 2017 (the Determination) determines the activities which fall within the four duty streams set out in section 6 of the PBR Act.

10. Section 6 of the Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017 (PBR Regulations) provides the meaning of **family reunion purposes** as:

A family member of a member travels for family reunion purposes if:

- (a) the member is travelling within Australia for the dominant purpose of conducting the member's parliamentary business; and
- (b) the family member travels to accompany or join the member; and
- (c) the travel by the family member is for the dominant purpose of facilitating the family life of the member's family.

11. Section 4 of the PBR Regulations provides the following meaning of **family member**:

- (a) the member's spouse or nominee;
- (b) a dependent child of the member;
- (c) a designated person in relation to the member.

Review process

12. Mrs McIntosh and her dependant flew from Sydney to the Gold Coast on Friday 9 June 2023 using parliamentary work resources for flights, ground transport and two nights of travel allowance. While Mrs McIntosh used parliamentary work resources for flights and ground transport on her return trip to Sydney on 12 June 2023, her dependant returned to Sydney separately at Mrs McIntosh's expense.
13. On 4 February 2025, IPEA wrote to Mrs McIntosh asking about the dominant purpose of her travel for the abovementioned trip and the nature of her parliamentary business, with reference to the Determination (**Attachment 1**). Mrs McIntosh was also asked to advise whether her family member's travel met the three-part test in section 6 of the PBR Regulations. A response was requested by 28 February 2025.
14. Mrs McIntosh advised IPEA that the dominant purpose of her travel to the Gold Coast in June 2023 was for duties in her then capacity as Shadow Assistant Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention, Deputy Chair of the House Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport and as the Federal Member for Lindsay.
15. The response detailed the duties that Mrs McIntosh undertook in the abovementioned roles, including attending community meetings, roundtables and events with other federal parliamentarians. The response also noted that on 11 June 2023, Mrs McIntosh presented medals at the National Judo Championships in Carrara, Gold Coast, as part of official duties in her role as Deputy Chair of the House Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport. The response included several attachments about Mrs McIntosh's engagements, including invitations and social media posts. IPEA noted that Mrs McIntosh's dependant participated in the National Judo Championships.
16. In response to IPEA's question about whether her dependant's travel met the three-part test regarding family reunion travel, Mrs McIntosh and her office advised IPEA that:

'[The dependant] attending the trip facilitated family life as he had a competition to attend for judo, assisting with his health matters and also assisted Mrs McIntosh in her official duties by photographing events.'
17. After reviewing the information provided, IPEA again wrote to Mrs McIntosh acknowledging that the activities she undertook fell within the definitions of parliamentary business. However, IPEA asked Mrs McIntosh to further clarify the dominant purpose of her travel to Queensland and whether, but for her dependant's participation in the National Judo Championships, she would have travelled to the Gold Coast for parliamentary business. IPEA provided Mrs McIntosh with the opportunity to comment, including about the timing of invitations to attend events, and the circumstances under which the invitations arose.
18. Mrs McIntosh provided IPEA with an email showing that a staff member from her office had corresponded about Mrs McIntosh's proposed visit to the Gold Coast and proposed meetings there with a staff member from the office of the Hon Mrs Karen Andrews MP, approximately three months prior to travelling. Mrs McIntosh confirmed that she would have travelled to Queensland regardless of her dependant's participation in the National Judo Championships and that Mrs Andrews initiated the visit.
19. Based on the information provided by Mrs McIntosh, IPEA notes that the dominant purpose of the travel undertaken by Mrs McIntosh to the Gold Coast was parliamentary business and that her dependant accompanied her for the dominant purpose of facilitating family life.
20. IPEA's correspondence with Mrs McIntosh in relation to the assurance review is at (**Attachments 1 to 6**).

Conclusion

21. Based on IPEA's records and the information available by Mrs McIntosh, IPEA found that the use of family reunion travel resources was not inconsistent with the legislative framework.