Australian Government
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority

JULY 2026

A quick reference guide to

Travel and office expenses for parliamentarians and their staff

ipea.gov.au **enquiries@ipea.gov.au** **02 6215 3000**

The Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority acknowledges the traditional owners and custodians of country throughout Australia and acknowledges their continuing connection to Land, Waters and Community.

We pay our respects to the people, the cultures and the Elders past, present and emerging.

Contents

About IPEA

IPEA was established on 1 July 2017, as an independent agency under the *Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority Act 2017 (IPEA Act)*. It is led by a CEO and Members of the Authority. The Members include the President of the Remuneration Tribunal and up to four additional independent Members appointed by the Governor-General.

IPEA administers and advises on travel and office expenses. We monitor, report on and audit all parliamentarians' work expenses.

Personal advice

We provide personal advice to parliamentarians and their staff on travel and office expense related queries.

Administering

We administer travel and office expenses for parliamentarians and their staff.

Reporting

We provide regular reports on all current and former parliamentarians' use of work expenses including staff travel.

Assurance

We provide assurance through post payment checking and a range of assurance activities. We audit parliamentarians' work expenses and the travel expenses of their staff.

Monitoring

We monitor the travel and office expenses of parliamentarians and their staff.

Our hours are Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Canberra time.

What to expect from IPEA

COURTESY AND RESPECT

- IPEA aims to pay your travel claims within **7 working days** and office expense claims within **20 days** of receiving all your correct and complete claim information.
- IPEA aims to contact you within **4 working days** if we require any further information for your travel claims.
- IPEA provides you with a regular expenditure report for review and certification prior to publication.
- IPEA provides up to date budget reports and other reports on request.
- IPEA aims to respond to any request for travel advice within **2 working days**.

What IPEA expects from you

COURTESY AND RESPECT

- Provide IPEA with all the required details when you seek advice.
- That you submit accurate, complete and timely expense claims.
- Certify your expenditure reports.
- Contact IPEA immediately if you find any anomalies in your reports.

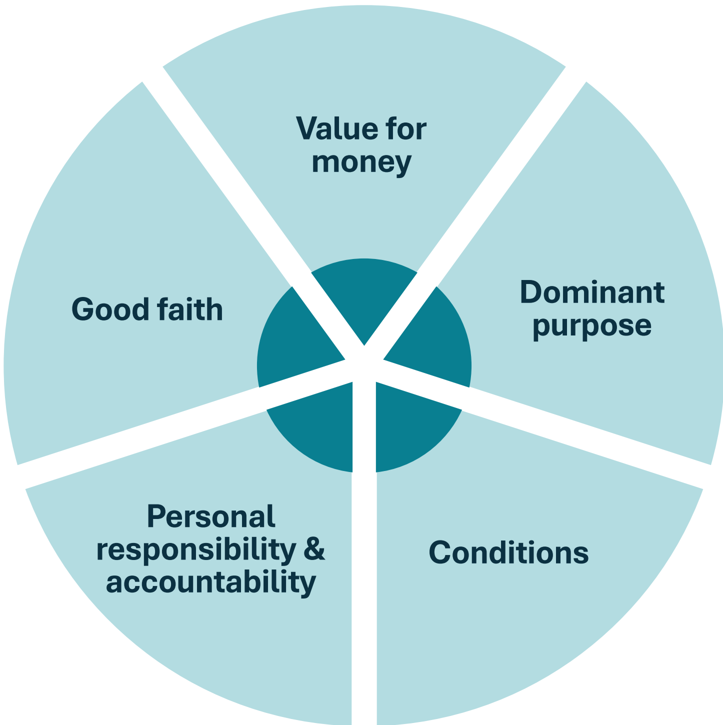
Framework—parliamentarians

The Parliamentary Business Resources framework (PBR framework) is the principles-based framework governing parliamentarians' work expenses.

The PBR framework is made up of the:

- *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017* (PBR Act)
- *Parliamentary Business Resources Regulations 2017* (PBR Regulations)
- Determinations made under the PBR Act.

Under the PBR framework, parliamentarians must ensure that work expenses for parliamentary business are consistent with the obligations under the PBR Act: value for money, dominant purpose, conditions, good faith and personal responsibility and accountability.



Each obligation has equal importance, with each contributing to the intent of the PBR framework.

Dominant purpose

A parliamentarian must ensure that any expenses incurred are for the dominant purpose of conducting parliamentary business.

The ‘dominant purpose test’ governs when a parliamentarian may access public resources. Where the parliamentarian’s main reason for undertaking the activity is parliamentary business, they will have satisfied the dominant purpose test.

The test is whether the parliamentarian would have undertaken the travel or incurred the expense 'but for' the parliamentary business, which must be the 'prevailing' or 'main' purpose of incurring the expense.

Expenses must not be claimed if they are for the dominant purpose of personal or commercial activities. Any personal activities attended to during parliamentary business travel must be incidental.

Value for money

A parliamentarian must use public resources for parliamentary business in a way that achieves value for money.

Value for money means using public money efficiently, effectively and economically requiring consideration of both financial and non-financial costs and benefits.

For example, value for money is met by selecting the lowest cost travel option that best meets the parliamentarian’s operational needs.

Similarly, for office expenses, where a product is available at a lower price through a contracted supplier, purchasing through that supplier would ordinarily represent value for money.

However, value for money is not determined by price alone. Where operational requirements - such as timeframes or availability - cannot be met, procuring from a local supplier may still represent value for money. In these circumstances, non financial factors such as timeliness, continuity of operations and the ability to effectively support parliamentary business are relevant considerations in determining the overall value of the expenditure.

Conditions

A parliamentarian must not make a claim, or incur an expense, in relation to a public resource if they have not met **all** of the conditions for its provision.

Conditions may include imposed limits and can be specific to individual work expenses. They are set out in the PBR Regulations and in Determinations made by the Remuneration Tribunal and the Special Minister of State, available on the Remuneration Tribunal and IPEA websites.

For example, all flights must be booked through the contracted service provider and printed material must not solicit a vote for another person (or any political party).

Good faith

A parliamentarian must act ethically and in good faith when using, or accounting for the use of, public resources.

Parliamentarians must not seek to disguise their personal or commercial business as parliamentary business.

Acting in good faith requires that parliamentarians act honestly and consider all of the reasons for claiming or using public resources in each circumstance.

Personal responsibility and accountability

A parliamentarian is personally responsible and accountable for their use of public resources and must consider how the public would perceive their use of those resources in particular circumstances.

Personal responsibility extends to the use of public resources in the parliamentarian's name by others who may be authorised to incur expenses within their office or for family reunion purposes.

If a parliamentarian is publicly questioned over their use of work expenses, including travel expenses, they are expected to publicly justify their use.

Simply stating that a parliamentarian's use of expenses in the circumstances in question was consistent with the rules may not be enough to meet the obligations of the framework.

What is parliamentary business?

There are 4 categories that make up parliamentary business.

- **Parliamentary duties:** a parliamentarian's activities that relate directly to their role as a member of Parliament.
- **Electorate duties:** a parliamentarian's activities that support or serve their constituents.
- **Party political duties:** a parliamentarian's formal activities that are connected with both their political party and their membership of the Parliament, or the redistribution or abolishment of their electoral division.
- **Official duties:** a parliamentarian's duties that relate to their role as an office holder or minister.

What are parliamentary duties?[1]

In a parliamentarian's capacity as a member of the Parliament, parliamentary duties include:

- preparing for, participating in and attending to business arising from proceedings of the Parliament, whether by committee of the whole or otherwise
- developing, reviewing or amending legislation or proposed legislation, and activities engaged in for that purpose
- undertaking research, communication (including with stakeholders) or administration connected with the business of the Parliament, the member's policy portfolio, or their role as a member
- preparing for, participating in, or attending to matters arising from an official government, parliamentary or vice regal meeting, event or function
- preparing for, participating in, or attending to matters arising from a meeting (including with stakeholders), event or function for the purposes of their role as a member, including in relation to the member's policy portfolio
- preparing for, participating in, or attending to matters arising from a non-Parliamentary committee, taskforce or other formal group in which the member participates
- representing the Parliament, in accordance with an approval of the Parliament or a House of the Parliament, and engaging in associated activities for that purpose
- representing a minister or office holder in their official capacity, at the request of that minister or office holder, at a meeting, event or function
- representing the Government or Australia, with the approval of the Prime Minister.

1. *Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination 2025*

What are electorate duties?[1]

In a parliamentarian's capacity as their constituents' elected representative, electorate duties include:

- facilitating and participating in debate, discussion, a meeting, event or function, or undertaking research or administrative functions relating to matters of importance or interest to constituents (including matters that do not relate exclusively to constituents, such as matters of national importance)
- otherwise communicating with constituents
- representing the views and interests of constituents.

What are party political duties?[1]

In a parliamentarian's capacity as a member of the Parliament, party political duties include:

- participating in a formal meeting of a political party (including a meeting of the party executive, a committee or a subcommittee)
- participating in a national, state or territory conference of a political party.

In a parliamentarian's capacity as an elected member of the Parliament and as a member of a political party, or in collaboration with another group of members:

- developing policies, proposals and plans, and engaging in related activities including when the policies, proposals and plans may be used by the member or a member's political party or group in the context of a federal election
- engaging or working with an administrative support function or headquarters used by a political party or by a group of members, including in the context of a federal election
- participating in an event, activity or function concerning matters identified above.

In a parliamentarian's capacity as a member of the House of Representatives whose electorate division will be abolished or changed because of redistribution:

- communicating with persons who would be constituents in a new or altered electorate division create or changed because of that redistribution, provided that the communication does not occur until the day after the date on which the final determination of the name and boundaries of the new electorate division is made in accordance with section 73 of the *Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918*.

1. *Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination 2025*

What are official duties? [1]

In a parliamentarian's official capacity as a minister or office holder, official duties include:

- exercising the powers or functions, or performing the duties, of the parliamentarian's office, or activities engaged in for the purposes of doing so
- attending an event to which the parliamentarian has been invited in their official capacity
- other activities directly related to, and engaged in for the purposes of, performing the parliamentarian's official role.

Did you know?

For ministers representing the Government or Australia in their capacity as a minister, it is considered part of their official duties.

Rulings

A ruling is a written determination establishing whether a parliamentarian has acted in accordance with the dominant purpose, value for money and specified conditions requirements of the PBR Act. Personal advice provides a clear answer on whether specific travel or use of office expenses meets or does not meet the requirements of the PBR framework. A parliamentarian may request a ruling relating to them, or one may be initiated by IPEA.

Personal advice

IPEA provides personal advice to parliamentarians and their authorised staff on the use of parliamentary work expenses. Personal advice provides a clear answer on whether specific travel or use of office expenses meets or does not meet the requirements of the PBR framework. Personal advice is available during Canberra business hours over the phone, in person or in writing.

Advice provided to a parliamentarian or their staff is relevant to the specific circumstances of that travel or use of office expense only.

1. *Parliamentary Business Resources (Parliamentary Business) Determination 2025*

Where circumstances change, updated advice should be sought. It is important to note that the advice will only apply to the parliamentarian or staff member who sought the advice.

IPEA's personal advice about parliamentary work expenses is not subject to disclosure under the *Freedom of Information Act 1982* (FOI Act). Personal advice for parliamentarians also attracts the safe harbour provisions under section 58 of the PBR Act.

The accuracy of IPEA's advice relies on the completeness of information provided by parliamentarians or their staff. Withholding relevant information may lead to incomplete or incorrect advice being provided. Where personal advice is given by IPEA on the basis of false or misleading information, the parliamentarian may incur a debt. A penalty of 25 per cent may be applied if subsequent travel is determined to fall outside of the framework.

If a parliamentarian follows IPEA's personal advice, and the advice is later found to be incorrect, debts caused by the incorrect advice will not apply.

Authorisation of representatives to seek and receive personal advice on behalf of a parliamentarian

A current or former parliamentarian must specifically authorise people that they wish to seek and receive advice on their behalf. This enables the advice to be provided as if it is given to the parliamentarian themselves and therefore still attracts:

- the disclosure exemption on personal advice under the FOI Act and
- the 'safe harbour' provisions under section 58 of the PBR Act.

If no authorisation is made, only the parliamentarian themselves may receive advice from IPEA. Current parliamentarians are able to authorise a MOP(S) Act employee employed by them and former parliamentarians are able to authorise any person. Authorisations can be added or removed through the Manage Authorisation tile in the Parliamentary Expenses Management System (PEMS).

Travel—parliamentarians

Travel on scheduled commercial transport

Parliamentarians may travel by scheduled commercial transport in Australia (including the external territories, but not Antarctica) when travelling for the dominant purpose of parliamentary business.

What is scheduled commercial transport?

- Scheduled flights on commercial or commuter air services
- Rail services
- Coaches operating as regular carriers
- Ferries operating as regular carriers
- Other vehicles operating as regular carriers

Travel may be undertaken up to the cost of business class for the most reasonable and usual route between the departure and destination points. All travel must represent value for money to the Commonwealth.

Travel on unscheduled commercial transport

What is unscheduled commercial transport?

- Taxis
- Regulated rideshare services
- Self-drive hire cars
- Chartered buses
- Chartered aircraft

Unscheduled commercial transport services cannot be used within the parliamentarian's electorate if the parliamentarian could reasonably use their private plated vehicle.

If the parliamentarian does not have a private plated vehicle and instead receives a private plated vehicle allowance, the parliamentarian should use this allowance to cover transport costs in circumstances where a private plated vehicle could otherwise have reasonably been used.

When can a taxi or regulated ridesharing service be used?

Parliamentarians need to decide about the 'reasonableness' of using taxis or other transport in their local area. In general, a private plated vehicle or the allowance in lieu should be used.

IPEA provides parliamentarians with a Cabcharge card as requested. If a taxi payment is made by other means, please lodge a Charter/Hire claim via PEMS, or complete the unscheduled commercial transport form available on IPEA's website and submit with a copy of your receipt to IPEA for processing.

When can a self-drive hire car be used?

Anywhere in Australia subject to meeting the framework principles.

When can a passenger travel with a parliamentarian on unscheduled commercial transport?

Where the passenger is reasonably required for the parliamentarian to conduct their parliamentary business (for example, a parliamentarian may need to be accompanied by a member of staff or industry expert), or where there are no additional costs for the passenger's travel.

If additional costs are incurred so a passenger who is not reasonably required can travel, the passenger or the parliamentarian must personally meet the additional costs. Requiring a larger aircraft or vehicle, or incurring extra landing fees may create additional costs.

A family member accompanying a parliamentarian is not a 'required' passenger, and can only travel if:

- there are no additional costs, or
- the parliamentarian meets the additional cost, or
- it is within the family travel provisions.

Travel on Commonwealth transport (COMCAR)

When can a COMCAR be used?

A parliamentarian can access COMCAR services within Australia to conduct parliamentary business. However, certain conditions apply. These include that the travel:

- is for the dominant purpose of conducting parliamentary business; and
- represents value for money to the Commonwealth.

COMCAR services must not be accessed to travel if you can reasonably use your Commonwealth provided private plated vehicle or the allowance provided in lieu of a private plated vehicle. IPEA is available for additional advice on the use of COMCAR.

Did you know?

IPEA provides advice on the use of COMCAR, while the Department of Finance administers the bookings and functions of COMCAR.

What is a private plated vehicle?

A private plated vehicle or an option to receive an allowance in lieu of a private plated vehicle is available for all parliamentarians. Further information is available on the Ministerial and Parliamentary Services website.

What is a Canberra-based vehicle?

A Canberra-based self drive vehicle (SDV) may be requested by certain office holders for use in and around Canberra for their parliamentary business. SDVs must be predominantly used and garaged in Canberra throughout each financial year. Where a SDV is reasonably available, a parliamentarian cannot claim other transport costs such as COMCAR or taxis.

Privately owned vehicle

What is a private vehicle allowance?

Private vehicle allowance is an allowance, based on a rate per kilometre travelled, that may be claimed for trips using a privately owned vehicle from a parliamentarian's home base to Canberra (or part way) and return for parliamentary business, where this represents value for money. The Remuneration Tribunal determines the rate for the allowance which is published on the IPEA website. The allowance covers fuel and all running costs.

Did you know?

In certain circumstances other expenses may be claimed when using a privately owned vehicle:

- parking fees
- costs for relief drivers
- car ferry costs

Payments for private vehicle allowances that exceed 5,000 km in a financial year, or exceed the Australian Taxation Office motor vehicle allowance deductible expense rate, will be subject to Pay As You Go (PAYG) withholding tax.

Minor travel expenses

What other travel expenses can be claimed?

A parliamentarian may claim reimbursement of minor travel expenses incurred when travelling in accordance with the provisions of the framework. These may include parking costs, public transport costs and fuel and toll costs for self-drive hire cars.

Travel allowance

A travel allowance covering accommodation, meals and incidental expenses is payable to a parliamentarian for each overnight stay in Australia while undertaking their parliamentary business that is not at their registered home base.

Travel allowance is paid at a commercial, non-commercial or Canberra rate. Rates are set by the Remuneration Tribunal and vary depending on the travel location. All rates are published on IPEA's website.

- **Commercial** accommodation means accommodation in a commercial establishment such as a hotel, motel, or serviced apartment. Parliamentarians must provide a receipt for the commercial accommodation or indicate that the receipt is available on request.
- **Non-commercial** rates are paid for stays in non-commercial accommodation, such as the home of a family member or friend.
- In **Canberra**, there is one standard travel allowance rate and therefore no distinction between commercial and non-commercial rates. Receipts are not required for overnight stays in Canberra.

Travel allowance is limited to 10 nights per financial year when travelling for the dominant purpose of conducting party political duties at a location other than Canberra or, electorate duties outside the parliamentarian's electorate.

Booking

The current travel provider for parliamentarians is Corporate Travel Management (CTM). All scheduled flight bookings must be made with CTM.

Parliamentarians are issued with a travel profile number (TPN) to use when making travel bookings. This also records individual travel preferences such as seating and special dietary requirements.

Contact Corporate Travel Management (CTM):

Email: ipea@travelctm.com
Phone: 1800 187 584
CTM operates 24 hours per day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

For information on COMCAR bookings:

maps.finance.gov.au/cars
The COMCAR centre operates 24 hours per day, 7 days a week.

Did you know?

CTM can arrange all modes of transport on scheduled and unscheduled services, including charter flights, ferries, self-drive car hire, trains and coaches. They also provide an accommodation booking service and assistance with other travel related services.

Claiming

Travel allowance and private vehicle allowance

To claim travel allowance and/or private vehicle allowance, parliamentarians lodge a travel allowance claim via PEMS, or alternatively, complete the parliamentarians' travel and/or private vehicle allowance form available on IPEA's website and send it with supporting documentation to: forms@ipea.gov.au.

Other travel expenses

Parliamentarians can claim reimbursement of other travel expenses such as parking and fuel for self-drive hire cars via PEMS or alternatively, by using the parliamentarian's travel expenses reimbursement claim form on IPEA's website and send it with supporting receipts to: forms@ipea.gov.au.

Unscheduled commercial transport, including transport in large electorates

To claim unscheduled commercial transport costs, including taxis and regulated ridesharing expenses, parliamentarians lodge a Charter/Hire claim via PEMS, or complete the unscheduled commercial transport form available on IPEA's website. Claims must be submitted with a copy of the tax invoice unless the travel is arranged through CTM.

If a parliamentarian books unscheduled commercial transport directly with the provider, IPEA's payment terms are 20 days from receipt of a completed claim with the relevant invoice.

Certification and payment

Parliamentarians may only claim travel allowance and reimbursement of expenses after completing their travel. Travel claims must be provided to IPEA within 60 days of completing the travel.

Claims are paid directly to a parliamentarian's nominated financial institution. IPEA aims to process claims within 7 business days of receiving correct and complete claims. Bank transfer processes may add a further 24-48 hours depending on a parliamentarian's financial institution.

Did you know?

As part of IPEA's compliance responsibilities, parliamentarians may be required to provide evidence of commercial accommodation to support their claims. It is important that the parliamentarians and/or their offices keep accurate and easily accessible records.

Travel: parliamentarians

BOOKING

- For all scheduled flights you must book through CTM
- CTM can book charter flights, self-drive hire cars, and accommodation for you—you may also choose to book these yourself
- Ground transport options: private plated vehicle (if reasonable), self-drive hire car, car with driver service (taxi/rideshare/ COMCAR)
- For coach/train/ferry transport, contact CTM or book directly with the supplier
- In all cases you must ensure that your choices represent value for money

Travel: parliamentarians

CLAIMING

All documentation to be submitted for post-travel payment—IPEA aims to process travel claims within 7 business days from when all required information is received

Claim your travel allowance through PEMS (preferred method) or complete a paper form. You are eligible for this allowance when you stay overnight away from your home base

Claim your travel expenses through PEMS (preferred method) or complete a paper form—evidence you must provide for all expenses includes tax invoices and proof of payment (receipts)

Claim any unscheduled commercial transport through PEMS (preferred method) or complete a paper form. Provide dates of travel, travel details, dominant purpose and tax invoice

Travel—family

A parliamentarian's family may travel at Commonwealth expense to accompany or join the parliamentarian when they are travelling within Australia away from their home base to conduct parliamentary business.

Family includes the parliamentarian's spouse or nominee, dependent children and other eligible family member/s nominated by the parliamentarian.

Travel for family reunion purposes can be accessed where:

- the parliamentarian is travelling for the dominant purpose of conducting parliamentary business, and
- the family member/s travels to accompany or join the parliamentarian, and
- travel is for the dominant purpose of facilitating the family life of the parliamentarian.

Certain limits apply to family travel.

1. Family reunion travel

The family reunion travel provisions allow for nominated family members to travel between the family member's or the parliamentarian's home base and Canberra or places in the State or Territory for which the parliamentarian is a senator, or in which their electorate is located. It also provides one trip per financial year for a family member to accompany or join the parliamentarian in another location within Australia.

The annual cost based limit is the value of 9 economy class return airfares to Canberra for the parliamentarian's spouse or nominee plus 3 economy class return airfares to Canberra for each dependent child. Travel is from their respective home base.

Travel by the spouse of the Prime Minister or Leader of the Opposition between their home base and Canberra is not subject to this budgetary limit.

There are separate provisions for family travel by a young child (up to the age of 6 years old) of a parliamentarian and their carer. This travel does not deduct off the family reunion travel budget. For further information please contact IPEA.

2. Travel by spouse or nominee to official events

There are additional provisions available for travel by a parliamentarian's spouse or nominee invited to an official government, parliamentary or vice-regal function.

The annual limit is a total of 3 trips per year. The exception to this is for travel by the spouse of the Prime Minister or Leader of the Opposition, who do not have a trip limit under this provision.

3. Travel by spouse of a senior office holder

The PBR Regulations also provide for travel by the spouse of a senior office holder to attend an engagement that relates to the official duties of the senior office holder and where they have been invited to attend the engagement in their capacity as the spouse of a senior office holder.

The annual limit is a total of 3 trips per year. The exception to this is for travel by the spouse of the Prime Minister or spouse of the Leader of the Opposition, who do not have a trip limit under this provision.

IPEA recommends you seek personal advice before arranging family travel.

What other costs are covered?

Nominated family members may travel to and from the airport using a COMCAR, taxi, regulated rideshare or by their private vehicle. This can be with the parliamentarian or independently.

A spouse or nominee may also use COMCAR independently of the parliamentarian to travel to and from their accommodation in Canberra and Parliament House.

Booking family travel

Family travel (flights) must be booked through CTM. They will need to quote their Travel Profile Number (TPN) or use the parliamentarian's office general TPN.

Contact Corporate Travel Management (CTM):

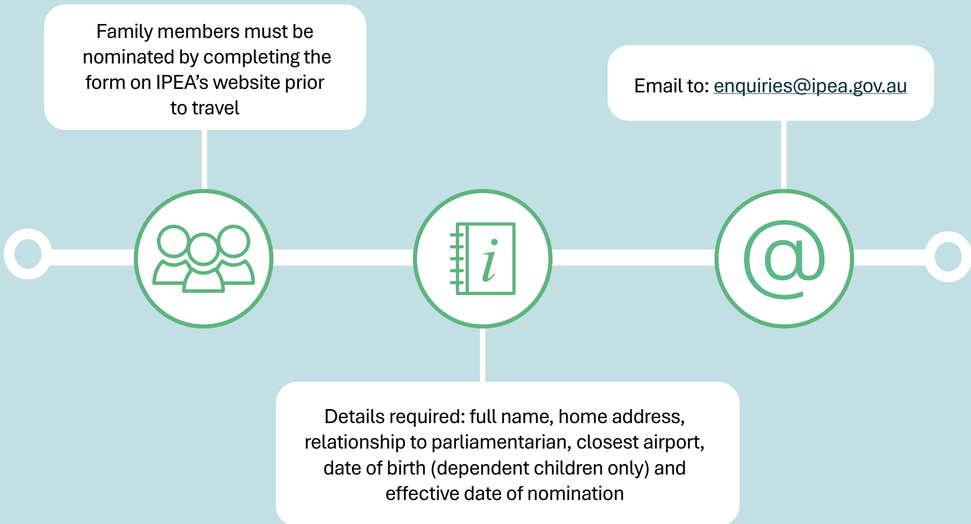
Email: ipea@travelctm.com
Phone: 1800 187 584
CTM operates 24 hours per day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Nominating a family member

Before accessing family travel, a parliamentarian must nominate their family members using the family reunion travel nomination form on the IPEA website.

Travel: family

NOMINATING



Travel: family

BOOKING

For all scheduled flights you must book through CTM. The office's general Travel Profile Number (TPN) may be used for bookings

Nominated family members may use COMCAR, taxis or rideshare to travel to and from the airport with the parliamentarian, or independently

Ground transport between accommodation and Parliament House may only be used when travelling with the parliamentarian, or by the parliamentarian's spouse or nominee* when travelling independently

*Spouse includes de facto. Nominee is a person of choice where a parliamentarian does not have a spouse or de facto partner.

Travel: family

CLAIMING A REIMBURSEMENT FOR TRAVEL RELATED EXPENSES

Out of pocket costs for taxis and/or ridesharing to travel to and from the airport to connect with flights or for airport parking may be claimed from IPEA

Claim your travel expenses by completing the parliamentarian travel expenses reimbursement claim form and submitting to: forms@ipea.gov.au

You must provide supporting evidence for each claim, including tax invoices and receipts

Travel—international

Parliamentarians are able to undertake international travel for official parliamentary business.

The costs that can be met are based on the reason for travel, any other conditions determined by the travel approver, and the PBR framework.

International travel is subject to the PBR Act principles of dominant purpose, value for money, conditions, good faith, and personal responsibility and accountability.

Approval to travel

This is different depending on the type of travel and who is travelling.

Travel by ministers and parliamentarians representing ministers is approved by the Prime Minister, subject to guidelines produced by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Travel by Presiding Officers and parliamentarians representing Presiding Officers is approved by Presiding Officers subject to an annual budget of $250,000 each. Should a Presiding Officer change during a financial year, the incoming Presiding Officer is limited to the balance of the annual budget.

Parliamentary delegations are approved by the Presiding Officers based on an annual program.

Leader and other Opposition parliamentarians' travel is approved by the Leader of the Opposition, subject to an annual budget based on the cost of 4 round-the-world airfares.

Leader and other minority party parliamentarians' travel is approved by the leader of a minority party, subject to an annual budget based on the cost of 1 round-the-world airfare.

Travel by a parliamentarian representing the government or Australia is approved by the Prime Minister.

Costs

Costs that can be met common to all travel:

- travel at no higher than business class
- unscheduled commercial transport within and between overseas countries
- accommodation and meals
- pre-travel medical expenses, such as vaccinations
- emergency medical, dental or hospital expenses
- laundry and dry cleaning.

Additional costs vary depending on the type of travel and who is travelling. Further information is available on the IPEA website at ipea.gov.au/travel/parliamentarian-travel/international-travel.

Contacts

IPEA Enquiries

Phone: (02) 6215 3000
Email: enquiries@ipea.gov.au

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Phone: (02) 6271 5736
Email: mintravel@pmc.gov.au

International and Parliamentary Relations Office (for parliamentary delegations)

Phone: (02) 6277 4340
Email: ipro@aph.gov.au

Travel Provider— Corporate Travel Management (CTM)

Phone: 1800 187 584
Email: ipea@travelctm.com

Travel: international

FOR ALL TRIPS

1. Seek the necessary approval well in advance of your proposed travel
2. Book scheduled flights through CTM
3. Advise IPEA of travel details and all travellers
4. Contact the relevant area (International and Parliamentary Relations Office, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Home Department) for assistance with other logistics
5. Seek medical advice prior to your travel
6. Ensure your passport has 6 months validity
7. Obtain any relevant visas required for your travel
8. Allowances are paid prior to travel once IPEA has all the required information
9. Claims for reimbursement must be accompanied by receipts and can be submitted after your travel is completed

Presiding Officers, Opposition and minority parties must confirm there are sufficient funds in their international travel budgets before approving or undertaking travel

Travel—staff

Framework

Staff employed by parliamentarians are covered by the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* (MOP(S) Act).

A Ministerial Determination sets out the travel arrangements for staff of parliamentarians.

Staff travel provision details are set out in the Commonwealth Members of Parliament Staff Enterprise Agreement.

Further information is available on the IPEA website at ipea.gov.au/travel/employee-travel.

Travel: staff

ADVANCE CLAIM (CERTIFIED ON OR BEFORE COMPLETION OF TRAVEL)

Travel allowance claims are certified by a parliamentarian/ authorised officer before travel is completed

Travel allowance claims are processed and paid by IPEA and a Certificate of Travel is available within PEMS. Where possible, travelling allowance is paid 5 days prior to the commencement of travel

Upon the completion of travel, staff are required to acquit their travel claim. This allows for the traveller to indicate if there has been any changes to their travel or confirm the travel occurred as originally claimed

IPEA processes the travel acquittal and any adjustments as required. If a change in travel arrangements leads to an overpayment, an invoice is raised. Prompt payment is expected

If an advance travel claim is not acquitted within 28 days of the completion of travel, the claim becomes outstanding. As a result, new travel allowance claims are not processed until the outstanding acquittal is completed

Travel: staff

ACQUITTAL CLAIM (CERTIFIED AFTER COMPLETION OF TRAVEL)

Travel allowance claims are certified by an authorised officer/parliamentarian the day after travel has been completed

Travel allowance claims are processed by IPEA and a Certificate of Travel is available within PEMS. No further action is required

For more information on staff travel allowances, and other travel expenses that staff can claim reimbursement for, refer to the staff travel determination and enterprise agreement guidelines.

Office expenses

Parliamentarians are provided with a budget for office expenses and may claim the expenses listed below each financial year.

Stationery, flags and nationhood material and wreaths

A parliamentarian may purchase office stationery and supplies to support the conduct of their parliamentary business.

Flags, flag lapel pins, portraits and other specified nationhood material may also be purchased for presentation to constituents and organisations. It is expected that there will be an element of formality in the act and/or ceremony where the parliamentarian presents these items.

Did you know?

Stationery, supplies, flags, portraits and nationhood material can be purchased directly through the contracted office supplies provider, currently COS. For access to the online shopfront COSnet, complete form 132.

A parliamentarian may purchase wreaths, for example, for ceremonial purposes. Reimbursement can be sought through PEMS.

Minor office equipment

Minor office equipment including accessories, consumables, repairs and maintenance may be purchased.

Please note it is a parliamentarian’s responsibility to ensure work health and safety risks are not introduced to their office. For example, chair mats may only be purchased if recommended following an ergonomic assessment.

Publications

A parliamentarian may purchase or subscribe to print or electronic publications for the conduct of their parliamentary business. Consideration must be given to the nature of the publication and necessary quantities required. A parliamentarian cannot claim publications which are for their or another person's personal benefit or commercial purpose such as purchasing publications or other items to distribute to constituents or community groups, in bulk or individually.

Additional telecommunications and ICT

The Department of Parliamentary Services (DPS) provides and manages the majority of ICT equipment and services provided to parliamentarians. DPS should be contacted in the first instance in relation to the provision and maintenance of ICT equipment. ICT provided by DPS is not subject to the office expenses budget.

Where ICT requirements go beyond the items generally provided by DPS, additional ICT equipment and services may be sourced and provided as an office expense. DPS has a Parl ICT catalogue that provides a range of ICT equipment, such as high specification ICT and laptops, that can be supported by the Australian Parliament House (APH) Network and serviced by DPS. The cost of these additional expenses will be debited against the office budget and may be subject to asset recording and management requirements. Additional ICT equipment and services not procured through DPS are not claimable as an office expense and will not be supported by DPS or the APH Network.

A parliamentarian may also purchase the following as an office expense:

- ICT accessories, such as storage devices, portable power banks and camera lenses for mobile devices
- software, including associated servicing, training and backup services
- cloud-based services, including storage and software.

Livestreaming equipment

Livestreaming equipment may be used to produce, communicate and distribute podcasts and similar streaming services. This includes, but is not limited to, the design, recording and distribution of electronic material. A parliamentarian should be mindful that the use of livestreaming equipment, including any content created, is subject to the overarching PBR obligations.

The material must not include any statements or information that is prohibited. For example, the livestreaming or podcast must not be used for any commercial purpose, such as promoting or advertising a business or commercial enterprise such as a constituent's business. It must also not be used for production or placement of content for broadcasting on television, must not solicit votes or financial or other support and must not provide instruction on how to complete a ballot paper in a referendum or election.

Printing and communication

To allow for communication with constituents, a parliamentarian can access a range of printing, production, distribution and communications expenses such as:

- printing, including postal vote applications and business cards
- distribution of postal vote applications, including reply paid envelopes
- creation of material for inclusion in printed material, electronic material or audio posters, including translation services, design, artwork, photography, video, and sound production and recordings
- placement of content in printed and electronic publications
- content development, edit and proof reading services for the purpose of printed or electronic material
- producing and maintenance of audio posters
- virtual town halls
- email distribution services
- SMS broadcasting
- AUSLAN interpreting and closed caption services.

A parliamentarian can also claim expenses relating to the establishment, maintenance, and monitoring of their own website, creation of social media content and advertisements.

Did you know?

There are a number of conditions relating specifically to printing and communication with a parliamentarian's constituents including:

- printing must be on paper no heavier than 700 grams per square metre, or flat magnetised material
- printing must not solicit votes for another person, subscriptions or support (other than volunteering), membership in a political party, provide instructions on how to complete a ballot paper or pursue a commercial purpose.

More detail on what can and cannot be claimed is available on the IPEA website.

Postage meter charges, delivery and freight costs

Each electorate office is provided with a franking machine used to print postage directly onto mail with credit provided by Australia Post. Parliamentarians will need to maintain a private arrangement with Australia Post for this account. A parliamentarian may claim courier or other freight transfer costs, from the office expense budget, for the purposes of transferring documents and other small items related to their parliamentary business between their offices.

Mobile office signage, facilities and equipment

A parliamentarian may claim signage, facilities and equipment to assist in conducting their parliamentary business at a mobile office within their electorate, for example at a stall at a shopping centre, community fair or market. Mobile office facilities and equipment may include a marquee to provide coverage when conducting parliamentary business outdoors, site fees and other necessary items such as a table and chairs, or the cost of an exhibition booth for indoor events.

Did you know?

Venue hire, such as function rooms, community centres and halls, is not claimable as a mobile office expense.

Contacting and surveying constituents

The following can be claimed as an office expense for the purposes of contacting and surveying constituents:

- email distribution services
- SMS broadcasting and survey services
- placement of content in printed and electronic publications produced and distributed by third parties including local and national newspapers
- postal services from Australia Post
- conducting virtual town hall meetings
- datasets that would assist in contacting constituents
- data validation services for the purpose of communicating with constituents
- online survey tools
- conducting interactive voice response phone survey.

Media monitoring services

Media monitoring services may be purchased to support the conduct of parliamentary business. A parliamentarian is responsible for arranging and maintaining these services directly with the monitoring supplier(s).

Radio, Auslan interpreting and closed caption services

For members of the House of Representatives who represent a provincial or rural electorate, as defined by the Australian Electoral Commission, broadcasting on regional community and open narrowcast radio services are claimable. There are several conditions that must be met including:

- the spending is for regional radio only (commercial, community, or certain narrowcasting services), and not for anything broadcast in the ACT
- the radio station's broadcast area must overlap with the parliamentarian's electorate
- the parliamentarian can only spend up to one-third of their annual office budget on radio content.

Auslan interpreting and closed captioning services may only be purchased as an office expense when existing Government services, such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme or the National Relay Service, cannot reasonably provide the services.

Expenses that cannot be claimed

The following list includes examples of types of expenses that are not claimable:

- communication or engagement strategy development
- social media consultancy and marketing services
- costs not directly associated with creating the content of the electronic material, for example, hair styling and makeup for video production
- professional networking website memberships
- venue hire for physical or face-to-face town hall meetings
- fundraising activities
- data products and data validation services that do not relate directly to communicating with your constituents
- livestreaming equipment and accessories for broadcasting on television
- material that includes barcodes, QR codes and/or links that refer or direct constituents to material that does not satisfy your PBR obligations.

Claiming office expenses

Office expense claims can be submitted to IPEA through PEMS.

Claims should be submitted with:

- A valid tax invoice that clearly sets out the supplier, description of the goods or services provided, quantity, unit cost, total cost (including GST where applicable) and the date of purchase or service period. Where services are provided over a period of time, the relevant service dates or period must be included. All pages of the tax invoice must be submitted and statements/receipts will not be accepted in lieu of an invoice.
- Invoices must contain sufficient detail to demonstrate the nature of the expense and how it relates to parliamentary business. Where invoices are bundled or multiple items, a breakdown should be provided if requested.
- If claiming a reimbursement – proof of payment (e.g. a payment receipt or a bank statement extract showing payment (including any associated transaction fees), where the tax invoice is also provided).
- If the claim relates to a printed item or electronic material – a sample, printer's proof or final print-ready copy, transcription of any audio, and if the item is not in English, an English translation.
- If the claim relates to website development, design or upgrade – the URL of the website.
- If a claimed item was previously assessed under the pre-claim assessment process - the IPEA reference number.
- Date of delivery.

Where a claim is made against the office budget, the budget is debited based on the date the goods or services are received or delivered, not when the expense is ordered, invoiced or claimed.

Budgets

Management and tracking

Travel budgets

Parliamentarians, where applicable, are provided with a number of travel-related budgets each financial year:

- transport in large electorates (TILE)
- electorate support budget
- family reunion (value-based limit)
- official government, parliamentary or vice-regal functions for spouse or nominee (trip based cap)
- official engagements for spouse of senior office holders (trip based cap)
- travel allowance for electorate business outside the electorate, and/or party political duties outside Canberra.

Office budget

Parliamentarians are provided with a budget for defined office expenses each financial year.

More information on each budget is available on the IPEA website.

IPEA provides up to date budget usage reports, available through PEMS, to assist parliamentarians with tracking their budgets to ensure they are not exceeded.

Overspends

Budgets must not be exceeded. If a budget is exceeded, it becomes a debt to the Commonwealth. IPEA will take action to recover the debt, typically by raising an invoice and sending it to the parliamentarian.

Any expenditure over the limit of a budget is a parliamentarian's personal responsibility, and any overpayment is recoverable as a debt to the Commonwealth. Where an overpayment is not repaid within 28 days of the claim, a 25 per cent penalty loading may apply.

Reporting

IPEA produces a range of reports to provide transparency and accountability for work expenses incurred, and to support parliamentarians and their staff in tracking and managing budgets, limits and expenditure.

What is an expenditure report?

The expenditure report is a report on current and former parliamentarians' expenses published on IPEA's website. The reports are currently published quarterly, and contain information related to parliamentarian travel, office facilities, office administration, telecommunications, family travel and employee travel.

Amounts appearing in the expenditure report are exclusive of Goods and Services Tax (GST). Private Vehicle Allowance and Motor Vehicle Allowance amounts are reported exclusive of Pay As You Go (PAYG) tax.

As part of the public reporting process, current and former parliamentarians are asked to certify that the expenses listed in their report were used for the dominant purpose of conducting their parliamentary business. Current and former parliamentarians are not asked to certify the specific amount of listed expenses as they may have limited knowledge or control over various types of expenses, such as office facilities.

A surviving spouse or de facto partner of a former prime minister is not asked to certify their report.

A list of certifications is published on the IPEA website with the reports.

Before publishing, IPEA provides a preliminary version of the report to parliamentarians. To support effective checking, a preliminary report contains a range of transactional data not included in the published report. For example, a preliminary report contains details of domestic and international staff travel while the final published report only contains aggregate totals for domestic and international travel.

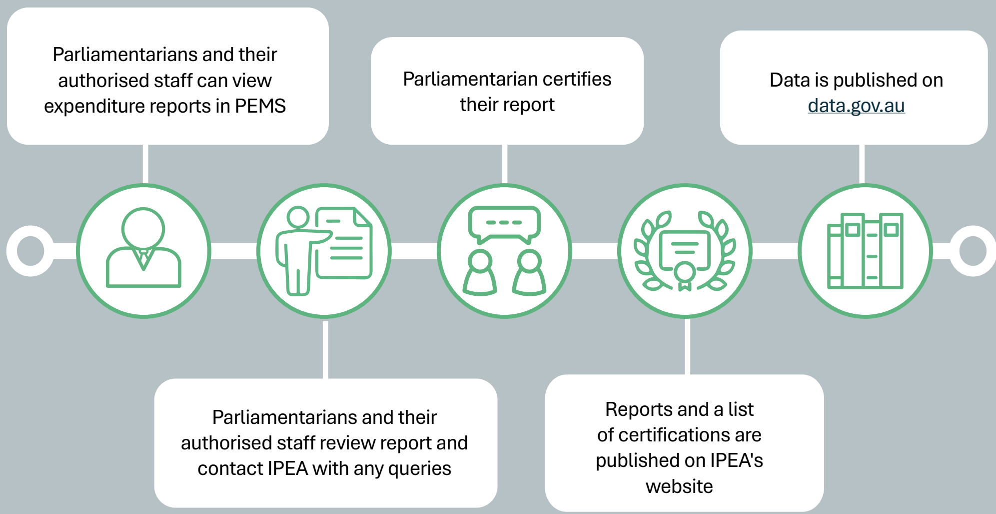
Parliamentarians and their staff are encouraged to regularly check their detailed expenses in PEMS to ensure the correct expenses will flow through to expenditure reports.

For any queries regarding a report, contact IPEA at: reporting@ipea.gov.au.

Can I request a report?

Yes. Parliamentarians and their staff can request custom reports about their expenditure by sending a request to: reporting@ipea.gov.au.

EXPENDITURE REPORT



Assurance

Parliamentarians may access parliamentary work expenses when undertaking parliamentary business. IPEA oversees this expenditure and supports parliamentarians' personal accountability for the use of public resources.

IPEA's oversight provides assurance to the public, parliamentarians and their staff that parliamentary work expenses are being used in accordance with the relevant legislative frameworks. As an independent statutory authority, IPEA performs this role at arm's length from government.

IPEA applies a multi-layered, risk-based approach to assurance. This includes a range of assurance activities, from a rolling program of regular post-payment checks to assurance reviews and audits. IPEA publishes completed audits and assurance reviews on its website.

Post-payment checks

IPEA undertakes a rolling program of regular post-payment checks to monitor particular expenses and related costs. These checks may cover matters such as:

- class of flights for family travel
- use of short-term self-drive hire cars by MOP(S) Act employees
- provision of accommodation receipts to support travel allowance claims
- use of unscheduled commercial ground transport by parliamentarians
- use of Cabcharge
- travel allowance accommodation adjustments for MOP(S) Act employees
- business class travel by MOP(S) Act employees
- office expenses, as required.

Preliminary assessments

A preliminary assessment is conducted to establish whether a parliamentary work expense has been used in relation to a particular event or circumstance. Matters requiring preliminary assessment may be identified through IPEA's own expenses data, direct contact, third-party reporting, or media reporting.

A preliminary assessment is based on information held by, or otherwise accessible to, IPEA.

Assurance reviews

An assurance review may follow a preliminary assessment or be undertaken directly where IPEA data or other information sources indicate that a more detailed review is warranted. It examines whether a parliamentary work expense has been used appropriately, including both parliamentarians' own work expenses and the travel expenses used by their staff. Assurance reviews are generally published on IPEA's website when finalised.

Audits

IPEA is responsible for auditing all work expenses incurred by parliamentarians. It is also responsible for auditing the travel expenses of MOP(S) Act employees.

An audit may commence as the outcome of an assurance review or be undertaken in response to evidence of or an allegation of systemic or substantial potential misuse of a parliamentary work expense.

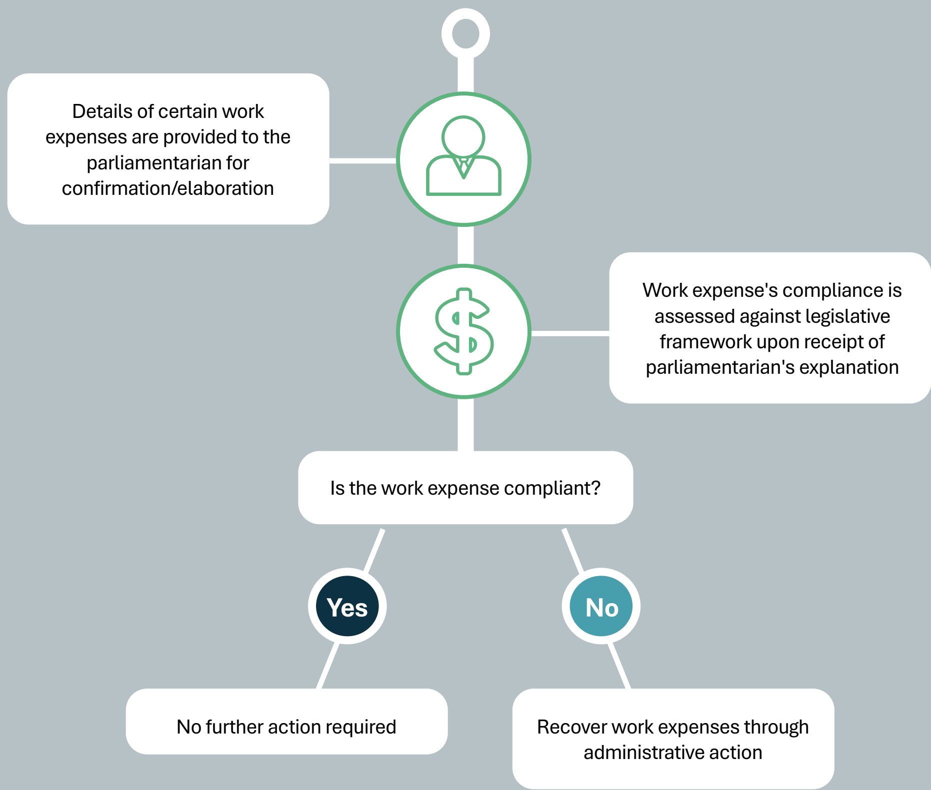
An audit may also focus on the possible systemic misuse of a specific category of parliamentary work expense against the legislative framework. This type of audit may examine the use of that expense by all parliamentarians and/or all MOP(S) Act employees.

Completed audits are published on IPEA's website when finalised.

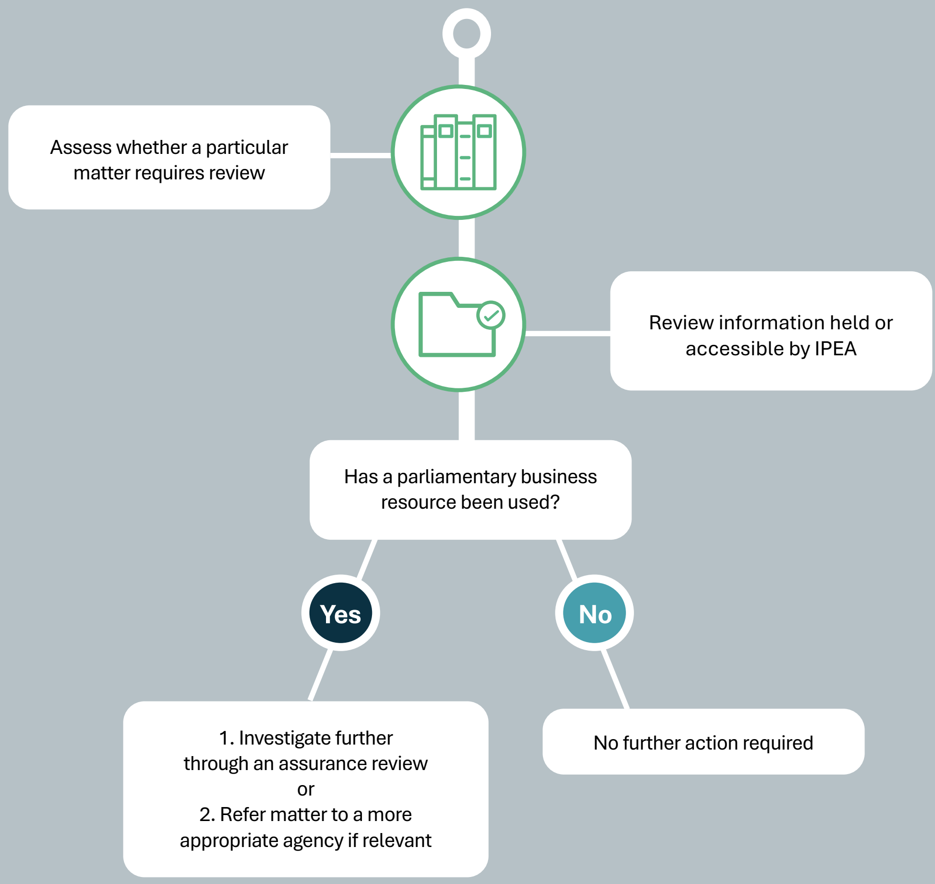
What can I expect?

For all assurance activities, IPEA begins by collecting and examining available information to assess whether the work expenses used by parliamentarians and their staff are consistent with the legislative framework. Where required, IPEA may contact the parliamentarian or staff member to request further evidence in support of the expenses under review. Individuals subject to a post-payment check, assurance review or audit will be notified in writing and given an opportunity to respond to IPEA's queries or concerns.

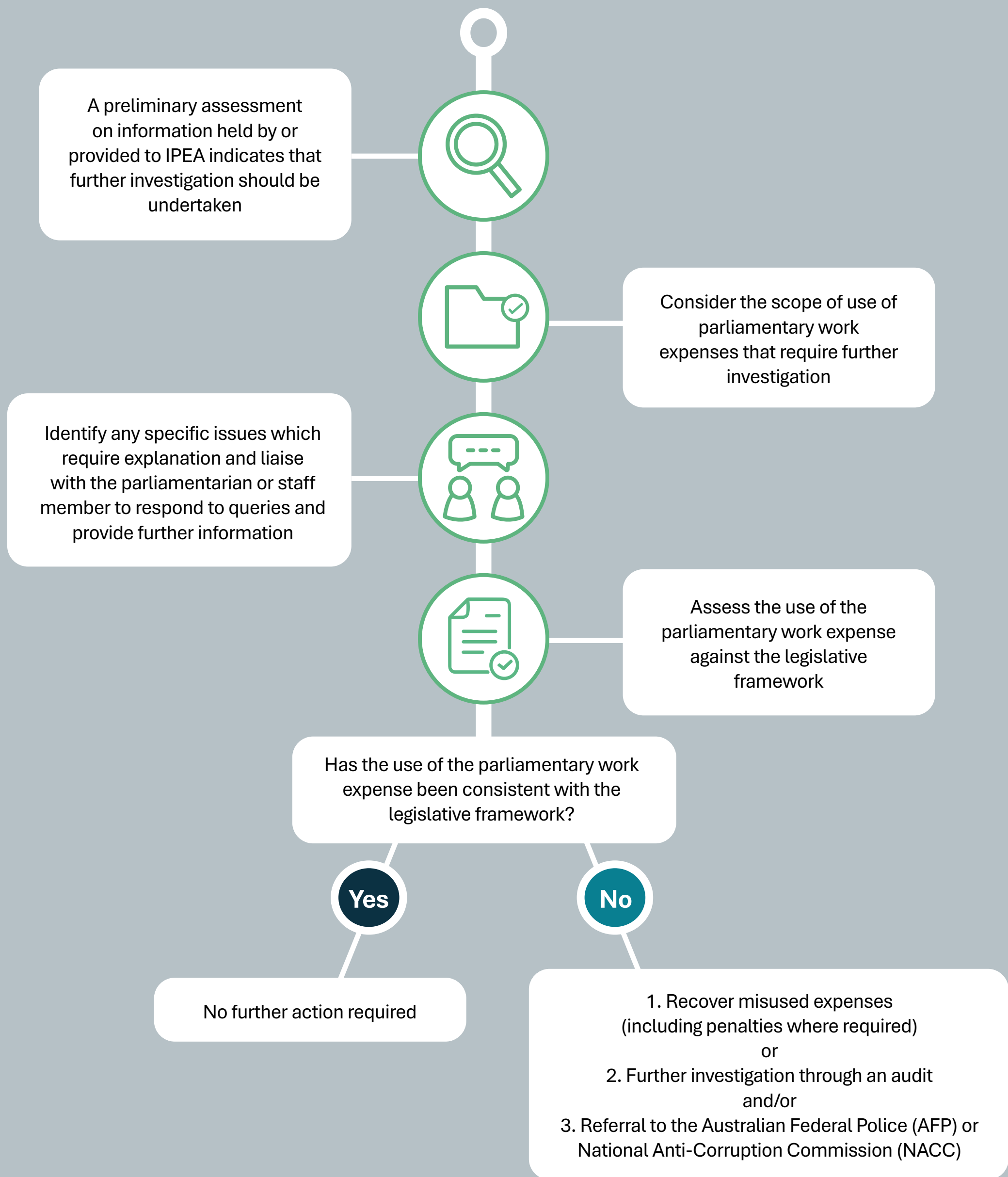
POST PAYMENT CHECK



PRELIMINARY ASSESSMENT



ASSURANCE REVIEW



AUDIT

1. An assurance review requires further investigation
or
2. The use of a specific category of parliamentary business resource by parliamentarians and/or staff requires examination

Consider the scope of use of parliamentary work expenses that require further investigation

Review data holdings. Obtain additional information from parliamentarian and third parties. Invoke s.53 *IPEA Act 2017* if required

Assess the use of the parliamentary work expenses against the legislative framework

Conclude and report
Have the parliamentary work expenses been used in accordance with the legislative framework?

Yes

No further action required

No

1. Recover misused expenses (including penalties where required)
and/or
2. Referral to the AFP or NACC

Planning travel—things to consider before I incur a travel related work expense

- Am I travelling for the dominant purpose of conducting parliamentary business?
- Am I satisfied that my travel meets my operational needs and represents value for money to the Commonwealth?
- I am of the view that the travel is compliant with the PBR framework, but do I think it meets community expectations?
- I am of the view that the travel is compliant with the PBR framework, but do I think a 'reasonable person' would agree?

In line with the PBR framework, parliamentarians can only claim for travel related work expenses (including allowances) that are incurred for the dominant purpose of conducting parliamentary business.

Parliamentarians need to also be satisfied that the travel represents value for money to the Commonwealth and meets any relevant conditions.

Parliamentarians are personally responsible and accountable for their use of public resources and must be prepared to justify publicly their use of those resources.

If you have any doubts about planned travel expenditure, first seek IPEA's advice.

Tips and tricks—what to consider and what to watch out for

- Did you know there are very limited circumstances where you can use a COMCAR in your electorate if you have a private plated vehicle or receive the allowance in lieu of a private plated vehicle?
- Are you tracking and monitoring your budgets limits and caps? A budget is an annual allocation and if you exceed your budget, you are personally responsible.
- Lodge your travel and office expense claims as soon as possible—the sooner you do so, the sooner IPEA will be able to make payments.
- Check your expenditure report and make sure you certify it. This information is publicly available on IPEA's website.
- Forward all your supporting documentation for claims to IPEA—alternatively make sure you keep records as you may be asked to provide these in the future.
- Did you know that a 25% penalty loading may be applied to non-compliant transactions?

My notes

My notes

Contacts

IPEA (all travel, office expenses, reporting and assurance enquiries)

(02) 6215 3000

Enquiries via email:

- Travel and office advice: enquiries@ipea.gov.au
- Submission of forms and related queries: forms@ipea.gov.au
- Reporting: reporting@ipea.gov.au
- Assurance: assurance@ipea.gov.au

Website: ipea.gov.au

Travel bookings

Corporate Travel Management (CTM):
1800 187 584
ipea@travelctm.com
CTM operates 24 hours per day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Ministerial and Parliamentary Services

MaPS Help Desk - office facility and HR enquiries:
(02) 6215 3333
mpshelp@finance.gov.au
Website: Maps.finance.gov.au

COMCAR
(02) 6215 1617 (during business hours)
Comcar@finance.gov.au

Parliamentary Workplace Support Service

1800 747 977
support@pwss.gov.au
SMS 0487 112 755

Department of the House of Representatives

Director, International and Parliamentary Relations Office:
(02) 6277 4340
ipro@aph.gov.au

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