



FACT SHEET

Personal Advice

April 2021

The Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) provides personal advice to parliamentarians and their staff, and former members of parliament on their use of parliamentary travel resources.

What is personal advice?

IPEA's personal advice is its guidance, and recommendations, to parliamentarians and their staff about a specific decision or course of action involving the use or administration of travel resources under the Parliamentary Business Resources and MOP(S) Act legislative frameworks respectively.

Personal advice covers simple and complex queries. If in doubt, please contact IPEA.

IPEA's personal advice is not subject to disclosure under the [Freedom of Information Act 1982](#). This type of contact with IPEA is private and confidential.

How is personal advice provided?

IPEA provides personal advice verbally (over the phone or face-to-face) or in writing.

The accuracy of IPEA's advice relies on the information provided, so please provide all the details of the proposed use of travel resources.

Business hours—IPEA provides personal advice Monday to Friday during standard business hours 9am to 5pm (AEST). If you contact IPEA outside of business hours, IPEA will respond to your phone message the next day and emails within two business days.

Verbal advice

Parliamentarians and their staff may contact IPEA by phone (02 6215 3000) or organise a face-to-face meeting (virtually or in person) to seek personal advice.

Phone

All phone messages and call-backs are responded to the same day if they are left during IPEA's business hours, and those outside business hours are responded to the next business day.

Parliamentarians and staff may request IPEA's verbal advice to be provided in writing if needed. Simply request a written response from IPEA's Advice Team during the call.

Face-to-Face

IPEA conducts face-to-face and virtual office visits, which may involve a comprehensive overview of travel, a staff travel induction or a discussion about a specific travel matter. The topics can be tailored to parliamentarians and staff specific travel education needs. Contact us to schedule a meeting.



Written advice

IPEA provides written advice on simple and complex travel matters. Parliamentarians and their staff may send their travel-related inquiries to IPEA by email enquiries@ipea.gov.au and IPEA will respond within two business days.

Travel Advice Certificate (TAC)

Parliamentarians requiring a higher level of formal advice about the statutory compliance of their travel may request a TAC.

A TAC provides parliamentarians with formal written advice about planned travel. A TAC is provided **before** travel is undertaken so that a parliamentarian may decide on whether to undertake the proposed travel, or change their plans. A TAC is signed by [IPEA's CEO](#) and includes advice, and recommendations, about whether or not a specific travel scenario meets the PBR legislative framework.

How to request a Travel Advice Certificate?

To give IPEA's CEO sufficient time to provide a written response, requests must be submitted at least **2 business days** before travel starts. IPEA's CEO cannot guarantee a timely reply if a request is submitted less than two working days before the first day of travel.

To request a TAC, please email enquiries@ipea.gov.au providing the following information:

- travel details (itinerary including locations and dates)
- details of parliamentary business to be undertaken, and
- other relevant information.

Please provide IPEA's CEO with a complete picture of planned travel as this helps to understand the situation clearly, so that robust and accurate advice can be provided. In some circumstances, IPEA's CEO may need more details about the proposed travel.

Effect and limitations of personal advice

The accuracy of IPEA's personal advice relies on the completeness of the information provided by parliamentarians or staff. Not providing relevant information may lead to IPEA providing incomplete or incorrect advice. Where IPEA gives personal advice based on incorrect, incomplete or misleading information, a parliamentarian may still incur a debt and potentially a penalty of 25%.

Importantly, IPEA's advice is specific to each query and must not be used as a precedent for other travel.

What happens if the personal advice was incorrect?

If the information provided by the parliamentarian or their staff was complete and correct, and they acted on IPEA's advice, debts caused by IPEA's incorrect personal advice would not apply.

If you have questions about travel-related personal advice, please contact IPEA on 02 6215 3000 or at enquiries@ipea.gov.au

