



Funds welcomed for isolated patients

DETAILS for a \$28 million boost to the Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme (IPTAAS) were announced by the Minister for Health and Minister for Medical Research, Jillian Skinner yesterday.

Patients who need to travel long distances for treatment will receive a massive 30 per cent boost in their accommodation subsidies and a 25 per cent boost in petrol subsidies.

This is the first time the accommodation subsidy has gone up in 11 years.

The funding will be delivered a boost of \$28 million over four years, including \$7 million this year.

“This increase represents a significant investment by the NSW Government and delivers on our promise to provide greater assistance for people living in

rural and remote areas needing to travel for medical treatment,” she said.

“Greater funding for IPTAAS will allow more patients to travel for medical treatment and reimburse their expenses at a fairer rate.”

Changes to the scheme include:

- For the first time since 2006, there will be an increase in the rates for travel and accommodation assistance for people needing to travel at least 100 kilometres one way for specialist medical treatment.

- Accommodation subsidies increase by 30 per cent, to \$43 per single person and \$60 per double up from \$33 per single and \$46 per double.

- Reimbursement for car travel will now be 19 cents per kilometre, up from 15 cents.

- It will also be easier for

patients to stay with family and friends when receiving specialist medical treatment, with a subsidy of \$140 per week, up from \$30 per week.

Mrs Skinner said the new arrangements, which come into effect on 1 January next year, will also allow any patient travelling at least 200 kilometres in one week to claim IPTAAS subsidies.

There will also be a change to the current \$40 administration fee charged for processing claims made by patients who are not pensioners or health care card holders.

From January 1, once a patient's IPTAAS subsidies reach \$1000 within a year, the \$40 administration fee will be waived.

This change will particularly benefit patients particularly who need to travel regularly for specialist medical treatment.