



The Hon Jillian Skinner MP

Minister for Health Minister for Medical Research

MEDIA RELEASE

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\$28 MILLION FOR COUNTRY PATIENTS

The Minister for Health and Minister for Medical Research, Jillian Skinner, today announced the detail behind her \$28 million boost to the Isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Assistance Scheme (IPTAAS).

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

The NSW Government is delivering a boost of \$28 million over four years, including \$7 million this year.

“I said before the election that an elected NSW Liberals & Nationals Government would significantly boost the IPTAAS and I’m pleased to deliver the detail on that today,” Mrs Skinner said.

“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.

“I’ve come across patients in the past that declined serious treatment because of the long distances involved.

“This boost supports the NSW Government’s commitment to ensuring that the people of NSW have access to timely and quality health care regardless of where they live.”

Changes to the scheme:

- 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.

MEDIA: Alice Hardy 0467 735 143

- 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.

“Previously, only patients travelling to access renal dialysis services were eligible to claim under this rule,” she said.

“This is a major benefit to people with chronic disease who have to travel regularly for specialist medical treatment.

“I also encourage local health boards to find ways to make it easier for regional people to access this service.”

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 1 January, once a patient’s IPTAAS subsidies reach \$1,000 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.