



## **Repatriation Transport Scheme**

### **Transport Modes available under the Repatriation Transport Scheme**

#### **Overview**

This factsheet briefly outlines travel assistance available to eligible veterans and war widows/widowers (entitled persons) when they attend a health provider for medical treatment and travel by:

- private vehicle
- public transport
- community transport
- taxi/hire car
- Booked Car
- air travel.

#### **Who is eligible?**

Holders of the Repatriation Health Card for All Conditions (gold card) eligible under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* (VEA) are entitled to assistance towards travelling expenses for the treatment of all health conditions.

A Repatriation Health Card for Specific Conditions (white card) is issued to Australian entitled persons or mariners under the VEA with:

- an accepted war or service-caused injury or disease
- malignant cancer (neoplasia), whether war-caused or not
- pulmonary tuberculosis, whether war-caused or not
- posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), whether war-caused or not
- anxiety and/or depression, whether war-caused or not
- symptoms of unidentifiable conditions that arise within 15 years of service (other than peacetime service).

A white card is also issued to ex-service personnel who are eligible for treatment under agreements between the Australian Government and New Zealand, Canada, South Africa and the United Kingdom for disabilities accepted as war-caused by their country of origin.

*Note:* Services available to these entitled persons may be different from those available to Australian entitled persons. Please refer to other factsheets for specific information on the services available.

Entitled persons may also be eligible to claim reimbursement of their travelling expenses if the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) requests them to attend a meeting:

- for a discussion with departmental officers in relation to a claim or review
- with a health provider for a medical examination related to a claim or review.

Persons with eligibility under the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* or the *Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* are advised to contact the Department to discuss their entitlements as they may vary from those outlined below.

#### **What does the Department pay for?**

DVA may assist you with transport expenses for use of:

- a private vehicle
- public transport
- community transport
- vehicle ferries
- parking
- road tolls

- taxi or hire car travel (where this is the most suitable and economical mode of transport)
- booked car services
- air travel (where this type of transport is necessary)
- travel with a medically required attendant
- ambulance travel
- accommodation and meals.

**Closest practical health provider** - To receive the maximum allowable assistance with travelling expenses, you will need to attend the closest practical health provider to your permanent or temporary residence at the time of treatment.

If you receive treatment from a health provider who is more than 50 km from your residence and the health provider has not indicated on the '*Claim for Travelling Expenses*' (D800) form that they are the closest practical health provider, DVA will reimburse you to a distance equal to the closest practical provider or 100 km whichever is the greater.

If the distance from your residence to the health provider is less than or equal to 50 km you will be reimbursed the distance that you travelled.

#### **Private and Public Transport**

When calculating the amount payable for:

**private transport** – DVA will only reimburse the distance travelled once, regardless of the number of entitled persons sharing a vehicle to attend treatment. The current private vehicle allowance is 31.6 cents per km.

**public transport** – DVA will reimburse the actual fare of the ticket.

#### **Community transport**

Many community-based organisations are funded through a range of government and charitable sources. The purpose of providing community transport is to meet the needs of specific groups in the community including isolated families, the frail aged, younger people with disabilities and their carers.

Volunteers usually work through community transport groups including Home and Community Care (HACC), local councils, Lions, Rotary or other service clubs and some ex-service organisations. You or your health provider will need to contact the local council, or community health centre to see if community transport is available in your area.

When travelling for treatment, DVA may reimburse community transport contributions, where this amount is considered reasonable.

**Travel to non-treatment locations** - Your local community transport organisation may be able to assist you with transport for social activities such as travel to the supermarket, bowls etc. However, the costs associated with this type of service cannot be met by the Department, as DVA is unable to assist with travel for non-departmental purposes.

#### **Parking expenses**

DVA will reimburse all parking costs incurred when receiving medical treatment.

#### **Road Tolls**

DVA will reimburse road toll costs incurred when travelling to medical treatment by the most direct and practical route.

#### **Taxi/hire car transport**

You may travel by taxi or hire car for treatment purposes only where:

- public, community or private transport are not available
- you are 80 years of age or older

- you have any of the following **medical conditions**:
  - legal blindness
  - dementia
  - psychosis
  - hemiplegia
  - ataxia
  - respiratory insufficiency severely limiting independent activity
  - cardiac failure severely limiting independence
  - recent coronary occlusion severely limiting independence
  - peripheral vascular disease severely limiting independence
  - amputation severely limiting independence
  - arthritis severely limiting independence
  - recent surgery severely affecting your capacity to use public transport
  - conditions that would cause you to be gravely embarrassed or that are unacceptable to other passengers on public transport e.g. incontinence of bladder or bowel, severe deformity or disfigurement
  - significant trauma
  - frailty that severely limits your independence.

To receive the maximum allowable assistance with travelling expenses, you will need to attend the closest practical health provider to your permanent or temporary residence and you must travel by the most economical and suitable means of transport available at the time. For example, if you travel via a more expensive mode of transport such as a hire car, DVA may only reimburse you at the relevant state/territory government regulated taxi rate.

You can arrange taxi/hire car travel yourself by contacting your local transport company. However, reimbursement of your fares will only be made if this type of transport was medically required or other forms of transport were not available. Otherwise, you will only be paid at the current private transport rate of 31.6 cents per km for the distance travelled.

**Booked Car with Driver (BCWD) (DVA arranged taxi/hire car)**

DVA may arrange transport under the Booked Car with Driver Scheme (BCWD) for travel to approved treatment locations. Under this scheme, which focuses on a quality and reliable service, DVA will arrange a suitable vehicle to transport entitled persons to their appointment on time.

You will be required to show your gold/white card or authorisation letter to the driver.

**BCWD locations for entitled persons aged 79 years or younger, not legally blind or not suffering from dementia**

The following treatment locations are approved BCWD locations for entitled persons who satisfy the medical conditions previously listed in the Taxi/Hire Car travel section of this factsheet.

The approved BCWD locations for *all eligible entitled persons* are limited to:

- former Repatriation General Hospitals
- public and approved private hospitals
- providers of prosthetics, surgical footwear and orthotics
- Office of Hearing Services accredited providers
- medical specialist rooms
- radiology, imaging and pathology services.

**BCWD locations for entitled persons aged 80 years and older, or legally blind or suffering from dementia**

The following treatment locations are additional approved BCWD locations to those listed above for entitled persons *aged* 80 years and older, or legally blind or suffering from dementia:

- Local Medical Officers and general practitioners
- dental providers
- allied health services (other than those mentioned above)
- optical dispensers
- VVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Services.

You can arrange BCWD yourself or have your health provider or nominated representative arrange transport on your behalf under the BCWD scheme by contacting DVA directly or accessing the online transport booking system.

This service is currently available to persons eligible under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986* or the *Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests (Treatment) Act 2006*.

Some health providers have also been given authority by DVA to arrange transport directly with approved transport contractors.

*Note:* It is important to note that authorisation for reimbursement of taxi/hire car expenses or provision of a booked car on one occasion does not necessarily mean that DVA will approve any future requests as this will depend on your medical condition at the time of travel.

#### **Air transport**

DVA may authorise air transport in certain circumstances where this is considered the most suitable means of transport. This will depend on your medical condition and the availability and cost of other transport. Your health provider must contact the Veterans' Transport Services Section to make arrangements for this mode of transport.

#### **What expenses are not covered?**

- reimbursement for the discounted portion of a fare. For example, concessional travel on buses, trains or trams where the fare may be discounted or free
- parking expenses incurred by a relative or friend visiting you in hospital.

#### **When are receipts required?**

Receipts *must* be retained by you for a period of four months for:

- public, community, taxi, hire car, vehicle ferry or air transport (when the total fare per item for the return trip is greater than or equal to \$30) for you and, if applicable, your medically required attendant
- parking expenses incurred (greater than or equal to \$30)
- commercial or subsidised accommodation for you and your medically required attendant. Please note that accommodation receipts must be attached to all claims regardless of the amount.

*Note:* Please retain receipts for a period of four months from the date your claim has been finalised as you may be required to present them during this period. The \$30 or more receipt requirement is for the total return trip per item (i.e. public transport, taxi transport, hire car transport, parking etc). This includes both your costs and your medically required attendant's costs.

Receipts are *not* required for:

- travel by private vehicle
- public, community, taxi or hire car transport, vehicular ferry or parking expenses (when the total return trip amount is less than \$30 per item)
- meals
- road tolls
- transport paid directly by DVA, such as booked car services.

### **Allowances and the CPI**

All travelling allowances are increased on 1 July each year in line with Consumer Price Index (CPI) figures. For a full list of travelling allowances refer to HVS02 – *Entitlements under the Repatriation Transport Scheme*.

### **How are payments made?**

In most instances, DVA will pay your travelling expenses directly into the same bank account into which your pension or allowance is already paid.

An automated advice letter is also generated to provide you with payment details, including any amount paid for a medically required attendant. If a claim for payment has been rejected or amended for any reason the letter will explain the decision and how this decision can be reviewed.

### **How to make claims**

Claims must be made on the '*Claim for Travelling Expenses*' (D800) form or through the new online claiming facility (see online claiming below) for travel in relation to:

- a visit to a health provider for medical treatment (including treatment undertaken in a hospital) under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*
- a disability claim under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*
- an income support claim under the *Veterans' Entitlements Act 1986*
- to treatment under the *Australian Participants in British Nuclear Tests (Treatment) Act 2006*.

The exception is for travelling expenses incurred in relation to:

- attendance at the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) or a Veterans' Review Board (VRB) hearing
- obtaining any documentary medical evidence submitted to the VRB or the Specialist Medical Review Council.

In these cases you must complete an '*Application for Travelling Expenses in Connection with a Review*' (D803) form.

- the *Military Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2004* (MRCA)
- the *Safety Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* (SRCA).

In these cases there is no specific form for claiming travel expenses. Claims should be submitted to DVA in writing and include supporting documentation such as receipts for medical treatment and travel. It is recommended that entitled persons discuss their SRCA/MRCA travel requirements with DVA staff before travelling to treatment.

Copies of the '*Claim for Travelling Expenses*' (D800) form are available from any DVA office or Veterans' Access Network (VAN) office. An electronic version of the D800 or D803 form is also available at <http://www.dva.gov.au/dvaforms>

### **Please note that a new simplified D800 claim form was introduced in May 2012.**

To claim for reimbursement of travelling expenses you must:

- fill in a separate form for travel to *each* health provider or hospital admission/discharge;
- complete all the applicable purple '*Claimant*' sections of the form;
- ensure that your health provider completes the green '*Health Provider*' section and signs the form, for travel greater than 100 km return;
- state on the claim form *which type of transport* was used for each trip;
- ensure your medically required attendant's details are entered on the claim form, where appropriate;
- attach accommodation receipts;

- retain transport receipts (when the total fare per item for the return trip is greater than or equal to \$30) for a period of four months from the date your claim is finalised; and
- lodge your 'Claim for Travelling Expenses' (D800) form or 'Application for Travelling Expenses in Connection with a Review' (D803) form with DVA within **twelve months** of completion of travel.

*Note:* Late claims may only be reconsidered where the circumstances that prevented you from lodging your claim meets the exceptional circumstances guidelines as set down by the Repatriation Commission.

#### **Online claiming**

DVA has introduced a new range of online services called MyAccount. These online services include the ability to claim for your travelling expenses online. You are able to claim reimbursement for return trips of less than 100 km. Using the online service also enables up to 10 trips to be claimed at once. Further information about MyAccount online services is available at [www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au).

#### **Free or concessional transport**

DVA will reimburse the actual cost of the fare paid by you. You will not be reimbursed for free transport.

*Note* - this does not apply to use of a private vehicle where a kilometre rate is payable.

#### **Related factsheets**

Other factsheets related to this topic include:

- *Entitlements under the Repatriation Transport Scheme: HSV 02*
- *Before you Travel: HSV 129*
- *Ambulance Travel: HSV 120*
- *Transport Information for Health Providers: HIP 80*
- *Repatriation Health Card - For All Conditions (Gold): HSV 60*
- *Repatriation Health Card - For Specific Conditions (White): HSV 61*
- *Medical Treatment (SRCA and MRCA): MRC 46*

#### **Disclaimer**

The information contained in this factsheet is general in nature and does not take into account individual circumstances. You should not make important decisions, such as those that affect your financial or lifestyle position, e.g. retirement, on the basis of information contained in this factsheet. Where you are required to lodge a written claim for a benefit, you must take full responsibility for your decisions prior to the written claim being determined.

You should seek confirmation in writing of any oral advice you receive from DVA relating to complex or important matters.

#### **More information**

All DVA factsheets are available on request from DVA offices, and on the DVA website at [www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au)

You can phone DVA for the cost of a local call on 133 254 or 1800 555 254 for country callers.

Use a normal landline phone if you can. Mobile phone calls may cost you more.

You can send an email to DVA at: [generalenquiries@dva.gov.au](mailto:generalenquiries@dva.gov.au)

You can get more help from any DVA office.