



**Australian Government**  
**Independent Parliamentary  
Expenses Authority**

Assurance Review 2023/023

Senator Wendy Askew, Senator for NSW – staff use of car  
transport in Canberra

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## Executive summary

1. The Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) conducted an Assurance Review of staff use of car transport in Canberra for the office of Senator Wendy Askew. The Assurance Review forms part of IPEA's 3 Year Assurance Plan.

### Assurance Review Findings

2. The Assurance Review found that five transactions for travel in Canberra were authorised by Senator Askew and were not inconsistent with the legislative framework. There were four transactions which were found to be inconsistent with the legislative framework. An invoice was raised to recover the full amount of these expenses and the invoice has been paid in full.

### Scope and Purpose

3. The scope of this Assurance Review is staff use of car transport in Canberra to travel to and from Parliament House. The purpose of this Assurance Review was to determine whether the use of parliamentary business resources was consistent with the legislative framework.

### Engagement with Senator Askew

4. On 20 November 2023, IPEA wrote to Senator Askew in relation to staff use of car transport in Canberra. Senator Askew was asked to examine each trip identified by IPEA and confirm how it complies with items 2 and 16 of the Determination, including that the travel was directed by the Senator or an authorised person in her office.
5. In response, Senator Askew noted that two transactions were when the new staff member was not aware of the expectations around the use of the Cabcharge card. Senator Askew confirmed three transactions where the travel was directed by her from Parliament House to accommodation. This was accepted by IPEA as being not inconsistent with the legislative framework. Senator Askew identified four transactions for the staff member to repay.
6. On 22 November 2023, IPEA wrote to Senator Askew advising the conclusion of the Assurance Review and that an invoice had been raised to recover the full amount of the expenses identified as being inconsistent with the legislative framework. An invoice for \$93.87 was sent to the staff member and has been paid in full.

## Audit and Assurance function

### IPEA's statutory audit function

8. IPEA audits parliamentarians' work expenses and the travel expenses of their staff under section 12 of the *Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority Act 2017* (IPEA Act). IPEA conducts Assurance Reviews to assess the use of parliamentary business resources against the legislative framework to determine if there has been misuse.
9. Potential outcomes of an Assurance Review include:
  - a. no further action in circumstances where the review has concluded the use of parliamentary business resources was not inconsistent with the legislative framework, or
  - b. administrative remedial action, including penalty where the review has concluded there is evidence the use of parliamentary business resources was not consistent with the legislative framework, or
  - c. an IPEA initiated Ruling or Audit, where there is evidence of systemic or substantial misuse of parliamentary business resources, or
  - d. referral to the Australian Federal Police where compelling prima facie evidence of fraud or other criminal conduct is identified.

## Legislative framework

10. The legislation relevant to this Assurance Review is:
  - a. *Parliamentary Business Resources Act 2017* (PBR Act)
  - b. *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* (MOP(S) Act)
  - c. Determination 2023/010 – Staff Travel and Relief Staff Arrangements (the Determination)
  - d. Ministerial and Parliamentary Services Guideline – Domestic Travel
11. The PBR Act defines public resources as any expense or allowance, or any goods, services, premises, equipment or any other facility provided or paid for under Part 3 of the PBR Act. Parliamentarians are personally responsible and accountable for their use of public resources for conducting their parliamentary business. This responsibility extends to the use of public resources by staff employed by parliamentarians.
12. In relation to Domestic Travel, item 2 of the Determination provides:

Subject to item 16, it is an employee's responsibility (and hence the employee's cost) to transport him or herself to and from work for his or her normal hours of duty. This responsibility includes travel between accommodation and the office when travelling on parliamentary or electorate business away from the employee's work base. This also includes travel to attend work when the employee's work base is distant from the employee's home.

13. Item 17 of the Determination provides:

Employees, when travelling as directed on official business, or under one of the exceptions at item 16, may use:

- (a) taxis;
- (b) regulated ridesharing services;
- (c) hire cars; and
- (d) short-term self-drive cars hired through the travel services provider, or with any car hire company...

14. Employees may not use car transport at Commonwealth expense for private use, other than as set out in item 16 of the Determination which provides:

As set out in item 2 of this Schedule, it is an employee's responsibility (and hence the employee's cost) to transport him or herself to and from work for his or her normal hours of duty. Exceptions to this rule apply to the use of car transport in the following circumstances:

- (a) the trip is approved for personal safety reasons (for example, where the risk to personal safety is significantly increased due to the requirement to work late); or
- (b) the employee is travelling on official business and scheduled public transport services are not readily available; or
- (c) the employee is travelling on official business and is carrying luggage to and/or from the office for the purpose of the trip.

## Assurance Review methodology

### Background

- 15. IPEA conducts ongoing systematic checking of expenses through regular sampling of transactions or identifying anomalies in the processing of transactions, including the use of Cabcharge, taxis and regulated ridesharing services.
- 16. On 20 September 2023, IPEA identified travel undertaken by a staff member in Senator Askew's office which appeared to require further review. IPEA's Audit and Assurance team conducted a Preliminary Assessment which found that public resources were used by the staff member which appeared to be inconsistent with the legislative framework.
- 17. On 4 October 2023, IPEA decided to conduct an Assurance Review on all use of car transport in Canberra by the staff member.

### Scope of Assurance Review

- 18. The scope of this Assurance Review is all use of car transport in Canberra by a staff member in Senator Askew's office.

# Assessment of work expenses

## Summary of findings

### Analysis

19. IPEA considered the legislative framework and applied the following questions to the use of car transport in Canberra for travel to and from Parliament House:
  - a. Was the staff member travelling as directed on official business?
  - b. Did the staff member's use of car transport in Canberra meet the rules in items 2 and 16 of the Determination?
20. IPEA conducted the Assurance Review by examining and assessing:
  - a. information held by IPEA in the Parliamentary Expenses Management System
  - b. information provided by Mr Ramsey
  - c. the relevant legislation and supporting policies and guidelines
21. In September 2023, IPEA identified that a staff member in Senator Askew's office used car transport for the purpose of travel to and from Parliament House.
22. An employee's eligibility to use car transport is set out in the Determination which provides that staff members may only use car transport (Cabcharge, taxis, regulated ridesharing services, or short-term self-drive hire cars) when directed to do so by the parliamentarian or an authorised person for official business. It remains an employee's responsibility to transport him or herself to and from work for his or her normal hours of duty.
23. On 20 November 2023, IPEA wrote to Senator Askew in relation to staff use of car transport in Canberra (**Attachment A**). Senator Askew was asked to examine each transaction identified by IPEA and confirm how the trip complies with items 2 and 16 of the Determination, including that the travel was directed by Senator Askew or an authorised person in her office.
24. In response, Senator Askew advised:

Thank you for your email and attached correspondence in relation to the use of car transport in Canberra by [a staff member].

I have reviewed the travel undertaken...and spoken...about it. The trip to Canberra in September was [their] first trip as a full-time staff member with me and [they] did not have a full understanding of the expectations around the use of [their] Cabcharge card.

I have now confirmed that [they]...understand that it is [their] responsibility to get [themselves] to and from work when in Canberra, with the proviso that I do have an understanding in my office that if they have worked for more than 12 hours they are able to utilise a taxi to get home, particularly during the winter/darker months.

As a result of the discussion...I have attached the spreadsheet provided by you, with four trips highlighted that I have asked [them] to repay...

Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority  
*Senator Wendy Askew*  
*Staff use of car transport in Canberra*

25. On 21 November 2023, IPEA raised an invoice for \$93.87 to recover expenses which were identified as being inconsistent with the legislative framework (**Attachment C**). This amount has been paid in full.
26. On 27 November 2023, IPEA wrote to Senator Askew advising that, having regard to the available information, IPEA accepted five transactions were for travel as directed by her and which were not inconsistent with the legislative framework. In relation to the four transactions identified by Senator Askew for repayment, IPEA concluded this use of car transport by the staff member to travel to Parliament House does not meet the requirements in items 2 and 16 of Schedule A of the Determination. Senator Askew was advised that an invoice had been raised to recover the expenses which were not consistent with the legislative framework (**Attachment D**).

**Conclusion**

27. Having considered the available information, including the response provided by Senator Askew, IPEA concluded that on five occasions the staff member was directed by Senator Askew to use car transport in Canberra. IPEA accepted Senator Askew's explanation in relation to five transactions. For the remaining four transactions, IPEA found the use of car transport did not meet the requirements in items 2 and 16 of the Determination and raised an invoice to recover the full amount of these expenses. This invoice has been paid in full.

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Assurance  
**Sent:** Monday, 20 November 2023 1:38 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Assurance Review of staff travel and travel related expenses [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Attachments:** 3000 - IPEA letter to Senator Askew - November 2023.pdf; Attachment A Determination 2023-10 Staff Travel and Relief Staff Arrangements.pdf

**OFFICIAL**

**Senator Wendy Askew**  
Senator for Tasmania

Good afternoon Senator

Please find attached correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority in relation to the Assurance Review into staff use of car transport in Canberra.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please contact [REDACTED]

Sincerely

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[REDACTED]  
A/g Assistant Secretary  
Transparency, Assurance and Legal Branch  
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority  
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603  
**T:** +61 2 6215 3000  
[Assurance@ipea.gov.au](mailto:Assurance@ipea.gov.au)  
**W:** [www.ipea.gov.au](http://www.ipea.gov.au)



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**Australian Government**  
**Independent Parliamentary**  
**Expenses Authority**

REF: IPEA 23/1/16 IDOC/241218

20 November 2023

**Senator Wendy Askew**  
Senator for Tasmania  
PO Box 97  
LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Senator

**Assurance Review of staff travel and travel-related expenses**

The Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) has responsibility under the *Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority Act 2017* to review work resources accessed by parliamentarians and travel resources accessed by staff employed under the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* (MOP(S) Act).

IPEA is conducting an Assurance Review of your MOP(S) Act staff member, [REDACTED] use of car transport (taxis, regulated ride-sharing services and Cabcharge) for travel in Canberra to and from Parliament House.

The circumstances in which car transport may be used by MOP(S) Act staff are set out in Determination 2023/10 – Staff Travel and Relief Staff Arrangements. Items 2 and 16 of Schedule A of the Determination provide:

2. Subject to item 16, it is an employee's responsibility (and hence the employee's cost) to transport him or herself to and from work for his or her normal hours of duty. This responsibility includes travel between accommodation and the office when travelling on parliamentary or electorate business away from the employee's work base. This also includes travel to attend work when the employee's work base is distant from the employee's home.
16. As set out in item 2 of this Schedule, it is an employee's responsibility (and hence the employee's cost) to transport him or herself to and from work for his or her normal hours of duty. Exceptions to this rule apply to the use of car transport in the following circumstances:
  - (a) the trip is approved for personal safety reasons (for example, where the risk to personal safety is significantly increased due to the requirement to work late); or
  - (b) the employee is travelling on official business and scheduled public transport services are not readily available; or
  - (c) the employee is travelling on official business and is carrying luggage to and/or from the office for the purpose of the trip.

OFFICIAL

**OFFICIAL: Sensitive**

Parliamentarians are personally responsible and accountable for their use of public resources for conducting parliamentary business. This responsibility extends to the use of public resources by staff employed by parliamentarians.

Employees may only use car transport when directed to do so by their employing parliamentarian or an authorised person for the purposes of the official business of the parliamentarian. Employees must not use car transport for private use. Private use includes travel to and from the place of work for normal hours of duty, including a temporary place of work such as Parliament House for electorate-based employees. Parliamentarians and authorised persons may direct an employee to use car transport to travel to or from work only in the limited circumstances set out in paragraphs 16(a), (b) and (c) of the Determination. A copy of the Determination is at **Attachment A** for your reference.

An employee's normal hours are broadly defined as hours agreed to by the employee and parliamentarian worked between the ordinary hours of 8:00 am and 6:00 pm Monday to Friday. Hours worked by employees may be partially or wholly worked outside of these hours. In accordance with clauses 33.1 and 32.4 of the MOPS Enterprise Agreement, allowances are payable to employees in recognition of, and compensation for, additional hours worked and in lieu of overtime. On this basis, a staff member arriving at Parliament House early morning is considered normal, in particular during parliamentary sitting periods.

Paragraph 16(c) of Schedule A of the Determination relates specifically to the personal effects of the staff member associated with their travel to and from their work base at the commencement and completion of their travel. This is not intended to include laptops, devices, folders and/or any other documents or items related to work which would most likely be carried by the employee to and from their standard work base and residence as part of their usual practice and day to day employment.

The Commonwealth funded car transport used by [REDACTED] which is relevant to this Assurance Review is detailed at **Attachment B**. To assist with this Assurance Review, please examine each trip and confirm how it complies with items 2 and 16 of the Determination, including that the travel was directed by you or an authorised person in your office.

Please provide your response via email to [assurance@ipea.gov.au](mailto:assurance@ipea.gov.au) by close of business on **Tuesday 5 December 2023**. If you require additional time to provide a response or if you would like to discuss this matter, please contact [REDACTED].

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]  
Acting Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance and Legal  
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority  
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603  
T: 02 6215 3000

## Car transport transactions – [REDACTED]

Departure Day	Date	Departure Location	Arrival Time	Arrival Location	Amount	Comments
Tuesday	22/11/2022	Capital Hill	07:12 PM	Canberra	\$15.44	
Thursday	24/11/2022	London Circuit	06:59 AM	Canberra	\$11.09	
Monday	11/09/2023	Hughes	07:01 AM	Capital Hill	\$23.68	
Tuesday	12/09/2023	Hughes	07:08 AM	Capital Hill	\$22.25	
Tuesday	12/09/2023	Capital Hill	07:53 PM	Narrabundah	\$23.15	
Wednesday	13/09/2023	Hughes	07:18 AM	Capital Hill	\$23.26	
Wednesday	13/09/2023	Capital Hill	08:23 PM	Hughes	\$23.57	
Thursday	14/09/2023	Hughes	06:49 AM	Capital Hill	\$23.57	
Thursday	14/09/2023	Capital Hill	06:42 PM	Hughes	\$23.05	

*Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984*

**STAFF TRAVEL AND RELIEF STAFF ARRANGEMENTS**

I, DON FARRELL, Special Minister of State, for and on behalf of the Prime Minister, determine under subsection 13(2) and subsection 20(2) of the *Members of Parliament (Staff) Act 1984* (the MOP(S) Act) that, with effect on and from 1 July 2023:

- Determination 2020/15 made on 29 June 2020 is revoked with effect from 30 June 2023;
- the travel arrangements set out in Schedule A of this determination apply to the staff of Senators and Members employed under Part III and Part IV of the Act;
- the relief staff arrangements set out in Schedule B of this determination apply; and
- the Electorate Support Budget is calculated as set out in Schedule C of this determination.

Dated this 24 <sup>June</sup> day of ~~May~~ 2023

  
**DON FARRELL**  
Special Minister of State

## SCHEDULE A

### Domestic Travel

1. Employees may only travel by the most efficient direct route available.
2. Subject to item 16, it is an employee's responsibility (and hence the employee's cost) to transport him or herself to and from work for his or her normal hours of duty. This responsibility includes travel between accommodation and the office when travelling on parliamentary or electorate business away from the employee's work base. This also includes travel to attend work when the employee's work base is distant from the employee's home.
3. All personal employees may travel as directed anywhere within Australia on official business.
4. Subject to available funds in the Electorate Support Budget (where applicable), electorate employees may travel as directed anywhere within Australia on official business. All travel costs under this determination and associated travelling allowance and motor vehicle allowance under the *Commonwealth Members of Parliament Staff Enterprise Agreement 2020-2023* or successor agreements (Enterprise Agreement) are debited against the Electorate Support Budget (where applicable).
5. One nominated electorate employee working for a parliamentarian may travel as directed anywhere within Australia on official business without debit against the Electorate Support Budget.
  - (a) The nomination of an electorate employee is to be determined, where practical, at the commencement of the financial year with effect from 1 July .
  - (b) The expectation is that the nomination would not change more than three times within a financial year period. These three changes accommodate for any unforeseen circumstances or staffing arrangement changes that arise throughout the financial year.
  - (c) The name of the nominated employee must be notified to the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) in writing<sup>1</sup> where possible, at the commencement of the financial year. All travel under this Schedule by the nominated employee that was undertaken prior to the date that the nomination took effect will be debited against the Electorate Support Budget.
  - (d) The general travel conditions set out in this Schedule continue to apply, where appropriate, to the nominated employee.
  - (e) All travel undertaken by electorate employees of the Senator or Member, other than the nominated employee, will be debited against the Electorate Support Budget, subject to item 6.
6. A Presiding Officer, including a Deputy Presiding Officer, Parliamentary Secretary<sup>2</sup>, Whip or a Shadow Minister, other than an Opposition Office Holder, may nominate a personal employee whose travel will be debited against the Electorate Support Budget, in place of a nominated electorate employee, whose travel will not be debited against the Electorate Support Budget.

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<sup>1</sup> Using the *Electorate Employee Travel Nomination* form on the IPEA website.

<sup>2</sup>.

- (a) The nomination for a swap of the travel entitlements of a personal employee with an electorate employee is to be determined, where practical, at the commencement of the financial year with effect from 1 July
  - (b) The nomination of a personal and electorate employee would not change more than three times within a financial year period. These three changes accommodate for any unforeseen circumstances or staffing arrangement changes that arise throughout the financial year.
  - (c) The names of the nominated personal and electorate employees must be notified to IPEA in writing<sup>3</sup>. All travel by the nominated electorate employee that was undertaken prior to the date that the nomination took effect will be debited against the Electorate Support Budget.
7. Official travel is restricted to Australia (excluding the external territories) unless the employing Senator or Member has a specific work expense for travel to an Australian external territory.
  8. Travel may not be undertaken at Commonwealth expense for the personal benefit of an employee.
  9. With the approval of the employing Senator or Member, an employee is permitted to make a stopover for personal reasons in the course of travel on official business by the most efficient direct route available, provided:
    - (a) the stopover is for a maximum of two nights only;
    - (b) no annual leave is taken by an employee as part of the stopover; and
    - (c) any additional costs for fares or costs related to the stopover are paid by the employee at the time of booking the travel.
  10. Travel allowance is not payable during a personal stopover. A personal stopover is defined as personal time spent at a destination where an employee has been directed to travel on official business<sup>4</sup> or a break in travel at a usual point en route to the final travel destination<sup>5</sup>.
  11. An employee may only use charter services when accompanying their employing Senator or Member under the Senator's or Member's charter work expense or where scheduled transport services (including air, rail, sea and bus) are not available.
    - (a) If the charter service also carries other passengers, the Commonwealth will only pay the pro rata cost of the travel of the employee.
    - (b) Charter services may not be used for the sole reason that scheduled services are fully booked, or are not available at the most convenient time.
    - (c) Some regions of Australia have infrequent scheduled services and/or no scheduled air services. Employees travelling to these locations should plan their travel with regard to these constraints.

<sup>3</sup> Using the *Electorate Employee Travel Nomination* form on the IPEA website.

<sup>4</sup> For example, a Canberra-based employee travels to Brisbane on official business on Friday. The employee stays in Brisbane on Saturday and Sunday nights and returns on Monday. In this case, the Saturday and Sunday are counted as a personal stopover and return airfare will be covered by the Electorate Support Budget. However, if the employee returns on Tuesday or later, it is at their own expense.

<sup>5</sup> For example, travel from Hobart to Canberra may have a usual stop in Melbourne en route.

12. Employees are required to take all reasonable steps to ensure, where applicable, that departure and destination travel arrangements are compatible with scheduled transport services.

### **Class of Travel**

13. Senior staff (employees above the level of Adviser) who are required by the employing Senator or Member to travel on official business by air, rail, road or sea are limited to a fare which shall not exceed the cost of a business class airfare for the most reasonable and usual route between the departure and destination points. Where a business class airfare is not published for the destination point, the cost to the Commonwealth of travel by air, rail, road or sea must not exceed the economy class airfare for the most reasonable and usual route, between the departure and destination points.
14. Employees, other than senior staff, who are required by the employing Senator or Member to travel on official business by air, rail, road or sea shall travel at economy class for the most reasonable and usual route between the departure and destination points, unless otherwise determined by the Special Minister of State.
15. A Minister, Parliamentary Secretary, Opposition Office Holder or Presiding Officer (but not a Deputy Presiding Officer) may direct a member of his or her staff who is on the same aircraft to travel at the same class as him or her, where there is a working need to do so. It is expected that no more than one employee will do so on any particular trip.

### **Car Transport**

16. As set out in item 2 of this Schedule, it is an employee's responsibility (and hence the employee's cost) to transport him or herself to and from work for his or her normal hours of duty. Exceptions to this rule apply to the use of car transport in the following circumstances:
  - (a) the trip is approved for personal safety reasons (for example, where the risk to personal safety is significantly increased due to the requirement to work late); or
  - (b) the employee is travelling on official business and scheduled public transport services are not readily available; or
  - (c) the employee is travelling on official business and is carrying luggage to and/or from the office for the purpose of the trip.
17. Employees, when travelling as directed on official business, or under the exceptions at item 16, subject to the restrictions at items 1 to 9, may use<sup>6</sup>:
  - (a) taxis;
  - (b) regulated ridesharing services;
  - (c) hire cars; and
  - (d) short-term self-drive cars hired through the travel services provider, or with any car hire company, provided that:

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<sup>6</sup> Motor vehicle allowance (MVA) may also be payable under Enterprise Agreement where an employee travels under the provisions of this determination in their privately owned vehicle or self-drive hire vehicle, at their own expense.

- (i) the hire is of no more than 10 days duration;
  - (ii) the vehicle is not used for journeys within Canberra (other than to collect and/or return the vehicle);
  - (iii) the vehicle is not used for journeys within a city/town where the employer's electorate or other office is located (other than to collect and/or return the vehicle), except by employees of the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, or the leader of a minority party;
  - (iv) for the purposes of short-term self-drive car hire under this determination, a capital city, other than Canberra, is defined by the boundaries of the electorates identified as urban on the Federal Electoral Boundaries map published from time to time by the Australian Electoral Commission. Canberra includes locations within a 30km radius of Parliament House; and
  - (v) the cost of insurance will be met by the Commonwealth where it is purchased as part of the vehicle hire. It is the responsibility of employees to ensure that they arrange the appropriate level of insurance for the circumstances of the hire. To reduce liability to the Commonwealth in case of loss or damage to the vehicle, this will usually be the highest level of insurance cover available.
18. Self drive- hire cars should be used on weekdays only unless exceptional circumstances apply and the Senator or Member has approved the use. Employees may not use taxis, regulated ridesharing services, hire cars or shortterm self- drive-hire cars at Commonwealth expense for private use, other than as set out at item 16.

### **Tolls and Parking Costs**

- 19. Employees authorised by the employing Senator or Member to travel on official business may be reimbursed their toll and parking costs. Such costs must be reasonable to be eligible for full reimbursement<sup>7</sup>.
- 20. Toll and parking costs will not be reimbursed where incurred during a personal stopover or a period of leave. Administrative charges or penalties for late payment or non-payment of tolls and parking costs will not be reimbursed.
- 21. Employees will not be reimbursed for valet parking costs, with the exception of valet parking costs incurred at the accommodation occupied by the employee for travel on official business involving an overnight stay away from their work base.

### **Travel for Training**

- 22. Senators and Members whose electorate offices are outside the greater metropolitan area of capital cities (including satellite cities), as defined by the Australian Electoral Commission, or within the Northern Territory or Tasmania, have access to four trips per financial year (five trips per financial year where the Member has a second official electorate office or six trips per financial year where the Member has a third official electorate office) for their electorate employees to travel to the nearest capital city to attend training under the Professional Development Program or approved ad hoc training and professional development opportunities, IT training or

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<sup>7</sup> For example, it is generally expected that long-stay parking will be used at an airport.



training for Work Health and Safety roles (including travel for Health and Safety Representatives (HSR) to attend accredited HSR training).

- (a) For electorate offices located in the Northern Territory, employees may also use the trips to travel to Adelaide or Brisbane.
- (b) For electorate offices located in Tasmania, employees may also use the trips to travel to Melbourne.

23. The Senators and Members whose employees are eligible for the trips in item 22 will be listed on the Ministerial and Parliamentary Services (M&PS) website.

#### **Travel for ECG Representatives and WHS Committee Members**

24. Associated travel costs<sup>8</sup> of employees who are Employee Consultative Group<sup>9</sup> (ECG) representatives and Work Health and Safety (WHS) Committee<sup>10</sup> members, and whose travel is subject to the Electorate Support Budget, will not be debited against the Electorate Support Budget when the employee travels for the purpose of attending an ECG meeting or WHS Committee meeting, provided that the travel to the meeting location is not also for other official business.
25. Where the travel is also for other official business, only the *additional* travel costs associated with the ECG meeting or WHS Committee meeting will not be debited against the Electorate Support Budget.

#### **COMCAR Services for Employees of the Prime Minister**

26. All employees of the Prime Minister may use a COMCAR to travel to or from Defence Establishment Fairbairn when embarking or returning from travel with or on behalf of the Prime Minister.
27. With prior notification to the COMCAR Client Liaison Manager, the Prime Minister's employees may also travel in a COMCAR, when the car would otherwise be travelling without passengers, in the following circumstances:
- (a) if a COMCAR is travelling out of zone to meet the Prime Minister<sup>11</sup>, and employees need to travel along the same route to meet the Prime Minister; or
  - (b) if a COMCAR is travelling as part of the Prime Minister's advance party and employees need to travel along the same route.
28. In using COMCAR for these purposes, the COMCAR booking will be based solely on the Prime Minister's requirements. Employees must make their own way to and from any pick up/drop off point that COMCAR advise, which will be on the direct intended route. The COMCAR schedule cannot be altered to incur waiting time on behalf of an employee.

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<sup>8</sup> 'Associated travel costs' are costs under this determination (or its successor determinations), including domestic flights and car travel, and as provided under the Enterprise Agreement, including travelling allowance and motor vehicle allowance.

<sup>9</sup> As described at clause 5 of the Enterprise Agreement.

<sup>10</sup> A Health and Safety Committee for MOP(S) Act employees for the purposes of Division 4 of the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

<sup>11</sup> For example, from Canberra to Merimbula.

## SCHEDULE B

### Relief Staff Arrangements

29. Each Senator and Member may engage relief staff as electorate employees with a work base of the electorate office, Parliament House office, or office holder's office as described at item 30, in accordance with the Enterprise Agreement, up to the limit of his or her Electorate Support Budget. The Special Minister of State may approve an alternative work base for a person employed against the Electorate Support Budget in special circumstances.
30. For the purpose of item 29, an office holder's office is an office, other than the electorate office/s and Parliament House office, provided at Commonwealth expense to the employing Senator or Member within the state or territory of their electorate and who is:
- (a) a Minister;
  - (b) an Opposition Office Holder;
  - (c) a Leader of a Minority Party; or
  - (d) a Presiding Officer.
31. The employment of electorate staff against an established position will not be debited against the Electorate Support Budget under the following circumstances:
- (a) filling of positions that are vacant due to resignation, retirement or termination;
  - (b) filling of positions that are temporarily vacant due to an employee being temporarily progressed to a personal employee position;
  - (c) absences of one week<sup>12</sup> or more on personal leave<sup>13</sup>;
  - (d) all absences on the following types of leave:
    - (i) unpaid carer's leave;
    - (ii) compassionate leave;
    - (iii) community service leave;
    - (iv) miscellaneous or other leave paid in accordance with the Enterprise Agreement (including Defence Force service, participation in major international sporting events, war service sick leave, political exchange leave, and other special purposes, but not including study leave);
    - (v) long service leave;
    - (vi) maternity leave<sup>14</sup>;
    - (vii) adoption leave;

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<sup>12</sup> The term 'one week' means an absence of 38 hours regardless of whether the employee is full-time or part-time.

<sup>13</sup> Where an employee who is absent due to personal illness or injury or carers duties has exhausted their paid personal leave and therefore uses annual or long service leave, they may be replaced without debit against the Electorate Support Budget.

<sup>14</sup> Where other forms of paid leave are used within the 52 week maternity leave period, the Electorate Support Budget provisions that apply to maternity leave take precedence over the Electorate Support Budget provisions that apply to the type of leave used.

- (viii) supporting partner leave;
  - (ix) unpaid parental leave; and
  - (x) leave without pay.
32. Where an electorate employee is partially incapacitated (i.e. working fewer than their usual weekly hours on the basis of medical advice), working up to but not exceeding 20 hours per week, that employee will be treated as totally incapacitated and full-time relief arrangements will apply (to the maximum of the usual weekly hours of the employee) for a maximum period of six months without debit against the Electorate Support Budget. After six months, or when the affected employee's work hours exceed 20 hours per week (but are less than their usual weekly hours), relief staff may be engaged part-time in order to fully staff the position without debit against the Electorate Support Budget.
33. Senators and Members who hold a 'relevant office', as defined under section 3 of the Act, engage relief staff as electorate employees against the Electorate Support Budget under Part III of the Act. Senators and Members who do not hold a 'relevant office' engage relief staff as electorate employees against the Electorate Support Budget under Part IV of the Act.

## SCHEDULE C

### Calculation of the Electorate Support Budget

34. Subject to items 35 to 38, the Electorate Support Budget is calculated at the commencement of each financial year as the sum of:
  - (a) the electorate staff travel component; and
  - (b) the relief staff component.
35. The Electorate Support Budget is calculated pro rata, on the basis of the number of calendar days remaining, for the financial year in which a Senator or Member commences his or her term.
36. The relief staff component will be adjusted in line with changes to the base salary point of the Electorate Officer B classification.
37. The relief staff component will be adjusted pro rata where a Member is allocated, or ceases to be allocated, an additional position for a second and/or third official electorate office.
38. The Special Minister of State may approve changes to the Electorate Support Budget for any Senator or Member.
39. If the Electorate Support Budget for a year is exhausted, a Senator or Member may not draw from the Electorate Support Budget for the following year. All costs beyond the Electorate Support Budget are a debt owed to the Commonwealth and must be repaid by the Senator or Member. Unused funds may not be carried over to the following year.

### Electorate staff travel component

40. Except as provided at items 41, 42 and 43, the electorate staff travel component is calculated on the basis of:
  - (a) 20 return economy airfares (fully flexible) between the primary electorate office and Canberra;
  - (b) 110 nights of travelling allowance at the rate applicable to Canberra;
  - (c) taxi fares and/or motor vehicle allowance to and from the relevant airports for the 20 flights above; and
  - (d) an amount for other travel as follows:

Senator/Member	Electorate Size	\$
Member	0-199 km <sup>2</sup>	\$300
Member	200-999 km <sup>2</sup>	\$500
Member	1,000-9,999 km <sup>2</sup>	\$700
Member	10,000-99,999 km <sup>2</sup>	\$1,000
Member	100,000-199,999 km <sup>2</sup>	\$8,132
Member	200,000-499,999 km <sup>2</sup>	\$10,132
Member	500,000 km <sup>2</sup> or greater	\$12,132
Senators for the NT	–	\$9,000
All other Senators	–	\$500

41. Where a Senator or Member's primary electorate office is located within 150km of Canberra by road, the electorate staff travel component is calculated at the commencement of each financial year on the basis of:
- (a) the value of motor vehicle allowance payable for 20 return motor vehicle trips between the primary electorate office and Canberra;
  - (b) 110 nights of travelling allowance at the rate applicable to Canberra; and
  - (c) an amount for other travel as set out at item 40(d).
42. The electorate staff travel component for each financial year for the Member for Bean and Senators for the ACT is calculated on the basis of:
- (a) three return economy airfares (fully flexible) between Canberra and Norfolk Island;
  - (b) eight nights of travelling allowance at the commercial rate applicable to Norfolk Island; and
  - (c) an amount of \$2,000 for other travel.
43. The electorate staff travel component for each financial year for the following Senators and Members is calculated as follows:

Senator/Member	\$
Member for Canberra	\$2,000
Member for Fenner	\$2,000
Member for Eden-Monaro	\$5,000
Senator whose electorate office is in Queanbeyan	\$5,000

#### **Relief staff component**

44. The relief staff component is calculated on the basis of:
- (a) 150 days' salary at the base salary point of the Electorate Officer B classification; and
  - (b) an additional 50 days' salary at the base salary point of the Electorate Officer B classification where a Member is allocated an additional position for a second official electorate office; and
  - (c) an additional 50 days' salary at the base salary point of the Electorate Officer B classification where a Member is allocated an additional position for a third official electorate office.

#### **Terms and Definitions**

45. In this determination, terms have the meaning set out in the Enterprise Agreement. In addition, the terms below have the following meanings:

***Opposition Office Holder*** means:

- (a) the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the House of Representatives; or
- (b) the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Senate.

***Leader or Deputy Leader of a Minority Party*** means the Leader or Deputy Leader of a recognised non-Government party of at least five members, but does not include an Opposition Office Holder.

***Professional Development Program*** means a scheduled program of training courses for MOP(S) Act employees, administered by the Department of Finance.

***Regulated ridesharing services*** means a ridesharing service operating under regulation in the State or Territory in which the travel occurs.

**From:** Askew, Wendy (Senator) [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, 20 November 2023 3:29 PM  
**To:** Assurance  
**Subject:** RE: Assurance Review of staff travel and travel related expenses [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Attachments:** SEO18197P0423112015250.pdf

**Categories:** [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email and attached correspondence in relation to the use of car transport in Canberra by [REDACTED]

I have reviewed the travel undertaken by [REDACTED] and spoken with [REDACTED] about it. The trip to Canberra in September was [REDACTED] first trip as a full-time staff member with me and [REDACTED] did not have a full understanding of the expectations around the use of [REDACTED] Cabcharge card.

I have now confirmed that [REDACTED] does understand that it is [REDACTED] responsibility to get [REDACTED] to and from work when in Canberra, with the proviso that I do have an understanding in my office that if they have worked for more than 12 hours they are able to utilise a taxi to get home, particularly during the winter/darker months.

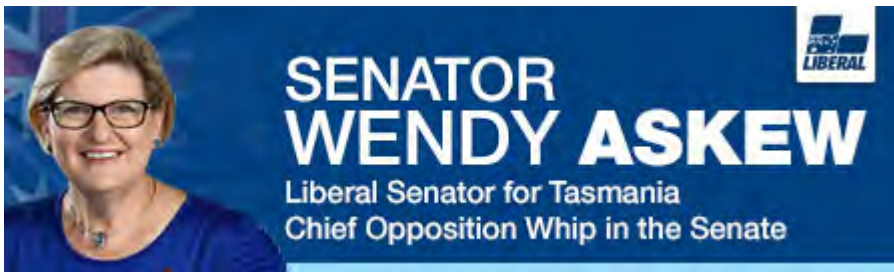
As a result of the discussion with [REDACTED] I have attached the spreadsheet provided by you, with four trips highlighted that I have asked [REDACTED] to repay. [REDACTED] is happy to do so and is expecting an invoice to be issued to [REDACTED] for payment.

Please let me know if you have any further questions.

Regards  
Wendy

**Senator Wendy Askew**  
Liberal Senator for Tasmania  
Chief Opposition Whip in the Senate

**Electorate Office:** 46 Cameron Street (PO Box 97) | LAUNCESTON TAS 7250 | 03 6331 8501  
**Parliament House:** SG.98 | Parliament House | CANBERRA ACT 2600 | 02 6277 3404



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**From:** Assurance <Assurance@ipea.gov.au>  
**Sent:** Monday, November 20, 2023 1:38 PM  
**To:** Askew, Wendy (Senator) [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Assurance Review of staff travel and travel related expenses [SEC=OFFICIAL]

**OFFICIAL**

**Senator Wendy Askew**  
Senator for Tasmania

Good afternoon Senator

Please find attached correspondence from the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority in relation to the Assurance Review into staff use of car transport in Canberra.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please contact [REDACTED]

Sincerely

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
Transparency, Assurance and Legal Branch  
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority  
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603

T: +61 2 6215 3000

[Assurance@ipea.gov.au](mailto:Assurance@ipea.gov.au)

W: [www.ipea.gov.au](http://www.ipea.gov.au)



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Attachment B

Car transport transactions – [REDACTED]

Departure Day	Date	Departure Location	Arrival Time	Arrival Location	Amount	Comments
Tuesday	22/11/2022	Capital Hill	07:12 PM	Canberra	\$15.44	Authorised by Senator
Thursday	24/11/2022	London Circuit	06:59 AM	Canberra	\$11.09	Authorised by Senator
Monday	11/09/2023	Hughes	07:01 AM	Capital Hill	\$23.68	
Tuesday	12/09/2023	Hughes	07:08 AM	Capital Hill	\$22.25	
Tuesday	12/09/2023	Capital Hill	07:53 PM	Narrabundah	\$23.15	Authorised by Senator
Wednesday	13/09/2023	Hughes	07:18 AM	Capital Hill	\$23.26	
Wednesday	13/09/2023	Capital Hill	08:23 PM	Hughes	\$23.57	Authorised by Senator
Thursday	14/09/2023	Hughes	06:49 AM	Capital Hill	\$23.57	
Thursday	14/09/2023	Capital Hill	06:42 PM	Hughes	\$23.05	Authorised by Senator

OFFICIAL

[REDACTED]

---

**From:** Assurance  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 21 November 2023 3:28 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** REF: [REDACTED] - Assurance Review - staff use of car transport in Canberra [SEC=OFFICIAL]  
**Attachments:** PEMS\_claim\_xx0020137403 - [REDACTED].pdf; 12\_display\_and\_manage\_debt.pdf

**OFFICIAL**

Good afternoon [REDACTED]

The Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority conducted an Assurance Review into your use of car transport in Canberra to travel to and from Parliament House during the period 22 November 2022 to 14 September 2023.

As part of the review, IPEA sought advice from Senator Askew in relation to your travel. Senator Askew has advised that you were directed you to use car transport in Canberra on five occasions. However, for four transactions Senator Askew has asked IPEA to raise an invoice as the travel was not consistent with the requirements in items 2 and 16 of Determination 2023/10 – Staff Travel and Relief Staff Arrangements which provides that it is your responsibility and therefore your cost to transport yourself to and from work, including when on parliamentary or electorate business away from your work base. In circumstances where the use of parliamentary business resources is inconsistent with the legislative framework, IPEA is obliged to recover the expenses.

Please find attached an invoice to recover these expenses which creates a debt to the Commonwealth. Please note the due date on the invoice is incorrect and should read **21 December 2023**. Further details on this debt can be found in the PEMS debt tile, where you can also manage your debt repayment options. Please refer to the attached PEMS guidance on displaying and managing debts. In relation to repayment options, you may opt to:

- deduct the debt from your future travel claims
- pay your invoice directly using the details on the bottom of the invoice
- have the debt deducted from your salary

Alternatively, please email [enquiries@ipea.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@ipea.gov.au) with your preferred method of debt recovery and IPEA will update in PEMS. Should a recovery method not be selected within 30 days of this email, IPEA will automatically select to deduct from your future travel claims.

Should you wish to discuss this matter, please contact [REDACTED].

Sincerely

---

[REDACTED]  
A/g Assistant Secretary  
Transparency, Assurance and Legal Branch  
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority  
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603  
T: +61 2 6215 3000  
[Assurance@ipea.gov.au](mailto:Assurance@ipea.gov.au)  
W: [www.ipea.gov.au](http://www.ipea.gov.au)



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## TAX INVOICE

### Invoice To:

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Invoice Date: 21.11.2023  
Phone number: (02) 6215 3000  
Invoice Reference: 20137403  
Payment Reference: 3100002649  
Customer No: [REDACTED]  
Payment Due Date: 21.11.2023  
Email: finance@ipea.gov.au

On any correspondence,  
please quote the Invoice Reference.

Please pay within 30 days of the invoice date

Item Description	Net Amount	GST Amount	Total Amount
001 *Recovery of Taxi 14 Sep 23	\$21.43	\$2.14	\$23.57
002 *Recovery of Taxi 11 Sep 23	\$21.52	\$2.15	\$23.67
003 *Recovery of Taxi 13 Sep 23	\$21.15	\$2.12	\$23.27
004 *Recovery of Taxi 12 Sep 23	\$21.24	\$2.12	\$23.36

**Total:** \$85.34 \$8.53 \$93.87

Page: 1 of 1

### 1. Payment by Direct Debit

IPEA Administered Receipts A/C

BSB: [REDACTED] Account No: [REDACTED] Payment Ref: 3100002649

### 2. Mailing your payment

All cheques and money orders should be made payable to the IPEA.

Mail payment together with this stub to:

IPEA  
1 Canberra Avenue FORREST, ACT, 2603

### 3. Payment by Credit Card

Complete the following and return by email to finance@ipea.gov.au or contact the IPEA Help Desk on (02) 6215 3000 with your credit card details.

Card Type:  Mastercard  Visa

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_ CCV \_\_\_\_\_

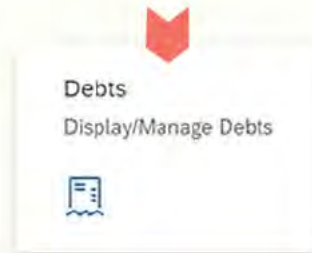
Name of Card Holder: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Amount: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Payment Ref: 3100002649

# Display and Manage Debts

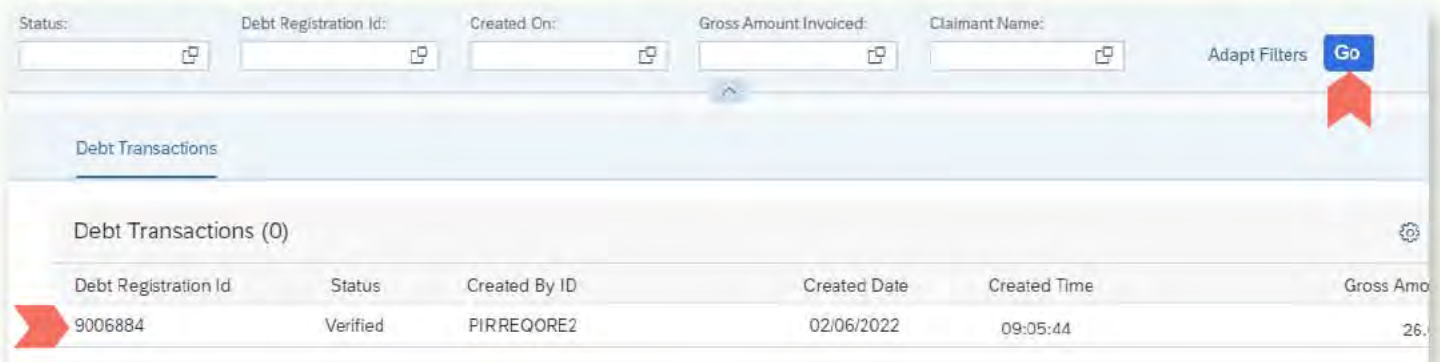
## 1 Open the Debt Transactions Dashboard

- Select the Debts tile
- Transaction Dashboard opens



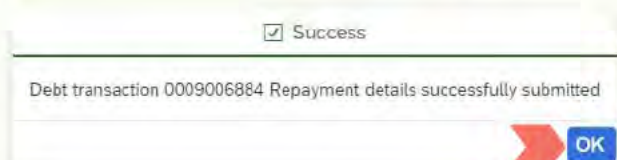
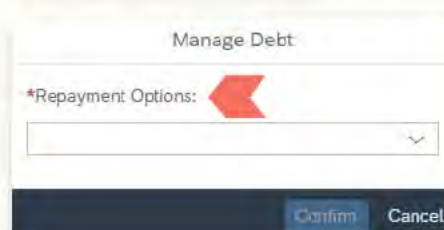
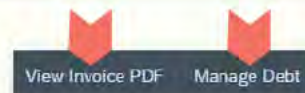
## 2 Find the Debt invoice

- Use filters, or
- Select the debt transaction



## 3 View or Manage the debt

- Select View Invoice PDF button, or
- Select the Manage Debt button
- Choose repayment option
- Select Proceed



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**Australian Government**  
**Independent Parliamentary**  
**Expenses Authority**

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REF: IPEA23/1/16 IDOC/241380

27 November 2023

**Senator Wendy Askew**  
Senator for Tasmania  
PO Box 97  
LAUNCESTON TAS 7250

Email: [REDACTED]

Dear Senator

**Assurance Review of staff travel and travel-related expenses**

Thank you for your email of 20 November 2023 in response to the Assurance Review being conducted by the Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority (IPEA) in relation to [REDACTED] use of car transport in Canberra for travel to and from Parliament House. IPEA appreciates your prompt response in relation to this matter.

Having regard to the legislative framework and the information provided by you, IPEA has accepted your explanation in relation to travel by [REDACTED] in November 2022 and the three transactions where you have indicated the travel was authorised by you as being not inconsistent with the legislative framework.

In circumstances where the use of car transport was not in accordance with the legislative framework, IPEA is obliged to recover the full amount of these expenses. An invoice has been raised to recover the expenses for those transactions identified by you as not being in accordance with the legislative framework. The invoice has been sent to [REDACTED] along with information relating to repayment options.

This concludes the Assurance Review into [REDACTED] use of car transport in Canberra. Please note that IPEA publishes completed Assurance Reviews on the website at [www.ipea.gov.au](http://www.ipea.gov.au). A copy of the redacted Assurance Review and attachments will be provided to you prior to publication.

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**OFFICIAL**

If you would like to discuss this matter, please contact [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

---

[REDACTED]  
Branch Manager, Transparency, Assurance and Legal  
Independent Parliamentary Expenses Authority  
One Canberra Avenue, FORREST ACT 2603  
T: 02 6215 3000

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