



# **POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

## **Travel Policy**

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<b>Approved by:</b>	National Executive
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<b>Is this a Rule 89 Policy?</b>	Yes

## Policy Statement

HSU employees and National Officers are expected to uphold the integrity of the Union in the highest manner when undertaking their duties and in their undertakings with members, employers, outside organisations and suppliers and the public.

- HSU employees and National Officers must behave honestly and with integrity in the course of their employment or duties.
- HSU employees and National Officers must disclose, and take reasonable steps to avoid, any conflict of interest (real or apparent) in connection with Union employment or duties.
- HSU employees and National Officers must not make improper use of inside information or use the employee's or Officer's duties, status, power or authority in order to gain, or seek to gain, a benefit or advantage for the employee, Officer or for any other person.

## Definitions

**'Financial Controller'** means the person appointed to manage and operate the financial accounts of the Union on a day to day basis and appointed as such by resolution of the National Executive.

**'National Officer'** whether paid or not, has the same meaning as the phrase 'officer of an organisation' in Division 3A of Part 2 of Chapter 5 of the Act, and includes the officers referred to in sub-rule 14 (a), the members of National Executive referred to in rule 20 but excludes, for the purpose of this policy, branch delegates to National Council referred to in sub-rule 15 (a)(ii) unless they otherwise meet the definition of National Officer.

**'National Secretary'** includes a person appointed to act in that position by the National Executive in accordance with rule 27 (a)(ii) of the Registered Rules of the Union.

**'Union'** means the Health Services Union.

## Policy

### 1. Travel Related Expenditure

Any National Officer, employee or other person approved by the National Secretary or National Finance Committee are entitled to have the Union pay, or to be compensated, for the reasonable travel costs (travel, accommodation, meals and incidentals) which are associated with an overnight stay away from their home when on Union related business.

### 2. Air Travel and Accommodation for Individuals

2.1 Air travel and overnight accommodation must be pre-approved by the National Secretary (or delegate) or the National Finance Committee.

- 2.2 In most cases the Union will pay directly for the reasonable cost for air travel and accommodation through a Union account facility with a travel agency or with an airline or accommodation provider. Where this facility is available it should be used in preference to any other payment method.

Where this is not possible or practical, payment or compensation for reasonable air travel and/or accommodation costs associated with an overnight stay can be made in one of the following ways:

- (i) The Union may pay directly by using a Union credit card facility where one is provided or available. This method of payment will usually only be a method of last resort. Such expenditure must be supported by a valid receipt.
  - (ii) Where the approved travel is by a Branch Officer, and the Branch pays for the reasonable air travel and/or accommodation costs, the Branch may make a claim for reimbursement. Such claims must be supported by a valid receipt.
- 2.3 Accommodation while traveling should provide a safe, comfortable and secure environment, be convenient to the place of work and provide value for money. It is recognised that from time to time that the cost of accommodation becomes expensive due to accommodation shortages, a city hosting large events, seasonal variations and fluctuations in room rates etc. Taking account of the above matters, the person charged with undertaking accommodation bookings should source the best rate available for suitable accommodation. Where the accommodation rate is unavoidably more than what would be considerable a reasonable rate, an explanation should be recorded.

### **3. Meal Expense Claims by Individuals**

- 3.1 All claims for meals associated with authorised travel must be made in writing using the Travel Expenses Claim form.
- 3.2 Claims may be made for meals under the following circumstances:

Breakfast	Where the travel begins before 7.00am
Lunch	Where travel begins before 2.00pm
Dinner	Where the travel concludes after 7.00pm

A claim for a meal cannot be made where a suitable meal is otherwise provided such as by the host of a meeting.

- 3.3 The amount claimable for meals are those defined as “Reasonable rates” by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) Taxation Determination (eg TD2012/17) using the relevant table, as varied by the ATO from time to time.

- 3.4 The Financial Controller will ensure that travel expenditure claims contain sufficient information to establish the exact nature and purpose of the claim.
- 3.5 Prior to the payment of a meal expenditure claim, the National Secretary must approve such payments by signing the Travel Expenses Claim form.
- 3.6 Claims for meal expense claims made by the National Secretary must be approved by the National Finance Committee prior to payment being made.
- 3.7 A copy of all Travel Expenses Claim forms will be provided to each monthly meeting of the National Finance Committee.
- 3.8 Where the approved travel is by a Branch Officer, and the Branch pays for the officer's meals, the Branch may make a claim for meal reimbursement as provide for in 3.3 above
- 3.9 Where any National Officer, employee or other approved person is required to undertake work related travel requiring overnight accommodation an incidental allowance may be claimed for each overnight stay. The incidental allowance payable is that defined by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) Taxation Determination (eg TD2012/17) using the relevant table, as varied by the ATO from time to time. All other incidental expenses such as room bar tabs, snacks and in-room movies are the responsibility of the individual and cannot be claimed from the Union.

#### **4. Travel Expenses by National Officers, Employees and other Approved Persons Attending National Union Meetings**

- 4.1 Clauses 2. and 3. above apply to an individual National Officer, employee or other approved person travelling on Union related business.
- 4.2 Where National Officers, employees and other approved persons are attending a national meeting of the Union, including National Executive meetings, National Finance Committee meetings or other like meetings, the Union will pay the travel costs to the extent of an economy class airfare, accommodation, taxis, airport parking, breakfast and group meals.
- 4.3 Where the costs are incurred by the individual, the individual may make a claim for reimbursement. Where a Branch pays for the costs, the Branch may make a claim for reimbursement.
- 4.4 Where the Union organises group meals, an approved officer of the Union will pay for the meal using a Union credit card facility. Unless otherwise approved by National Finance Committee or National Executive, the Union will not pay for alcohol at group meals.

- 4.5 All other travel costs associated will be the responsibility of the individual or the relevant Branch.

## **5. National Council Meetings**

- 5.1 Where the attendee at a National Council meeting is a member of National Executive, the Union will pay travel costs to the extent of an economy class airfare, accommodation, and group meals.
- 5.2 Where the attendee is a Branch Delegate to National Council the Union will pay for group meals and costs directly associated with meeting cost (excluding air travel, accommodation, and meals other than group meals).
- 5.3 The National Finance Committee may approve other costs associated the holding of a National Council meeting as required.

## **6. Reporting of Union Travel**

The National Secretary must present a report to each monthly meeting of the National Finance Committee detailing all air travel and overnight stays paid for out of Union funds undertaken in the previous calendar month detailing the nature of the travel and the reasons why the travel was undertaken.

## **7. Frequent Flyer Program Benefits**

It is recognised that frequent travel often involves travel outside of standard hours and National Officers and employees being away from home for extended periods of time. In recognition of the personal impact of business travel, National Officers and employees may retain frequent flyer points earned as a result of Union travel.

## **8. Taxis**

- 8.1 All taxi travel may only be utilised by travelers on official Union business.
- 8.2 Travelers should use reasonable professional judgment and discretion in determining the need for taxi use.
- 8.3 Except as provided for on 8.4, taxi travel paid for by the Union must not be used for personal travel.
- 8.4 The use of taxi travel from home to work and work to home is prohibited except for:
  - (i) travel from work to home after hours and where personal safety is a consideration.
  - (ii) travel to and from work when unexpected work related events or emergencies occur that require taxi travel outside normal business hours.

- (iii) for special circumstances (e.g. transporting heavy items or mobility issues).
- (iv) travel from or to airport from home when traveling interstate on Union business.

8.5 Union employees are provided with a Cabcharge card and all work related expenditure on taxis should be made using the Cabcharge card provided. In exceptional circumstance, where a Cabcharge card is unable to be used, the employee may use the union provided credit card or a claim for expenses.

## **9. Air Travel**

9.1 Unless in exceptional circumstances, only economy class airfares should be purchased for air travel on Union business.

9.2 Where possible, the most economical airfare available should be utilised. However, if there is a likelihood that bookings may need to be changed or altered, then a flexible fare should be utilised that avoids the cancellation or change of booking fees.

9.3 Bookings should be made as far in advance as possible as fares get more expensive as the date gets nearer.

9.4 Itinerary Changes

When itinerary changes are absolutely necessary en route and the Financial Controller is unavailable, additional charges can be paid on the Union credit card. Where changes to flights are made, the Financial Controller should be informed by email of the changes and any additional costs incurred for the records

## **10. Public Transport – Buses, Trams, Trains etc**

Where it is convenient and economical to do so, train, tram, bus or other forms of public transport may be utilised when travelling on Union Business. Costs incurred will be reimbursed using the Travel Expense Claim Form. Where appropriate, the Union will provide employees with a Myki, Opal or like card to enable use of public transport for Union business.

## **11. Hire Cars**

Rental vehicles may be used where economical and practical. All vehicle rentals must be for economy-class vehicles, unless three or more people are traveling together and/or when travelers have to carry excess baggage and/or equipment for Union purposes. Car rental must be pre-approved by the National Secretary.

## **12. Accompanying Spouse, Partner and Dependent Travel**

- 12.1 Costs associated with spouse, partner or dependent travel will not be paid for by the Union except on the prior approval and by resolution of the National Executive. In approving expenditure associated with spouse, partner or dependent travel, the National Executive will detail in the minutes the reasons for approving the spouse, partner or dependent travel. Spouse, partner or dependent travel will only be approved where it is directly related to the conduct of the National Officer's or employee's duties (e.g. attendance at an official function or ceremony such as where the spouse or partner is invited).
- 12.2 The Union acknowledges that from time to time a spouse, partner or dependent will accompany the traveler when travelling. Where this occurs it must not result in an additional cost to the Union. The Union will not fund any cost incurred for an accompanying spouse, partner, or dependent except as provided for in sub-clause 12.1.

## **13. Compliance and Review of this Policy**

- 13.1 A substantial or repeated breach of this policy by a National Officer or employee covered by the scope of this policy will be deemed to be a disciplinary offence in the case of an employee or misconduct under the rules of the Union in the case of a National Officer.
- 13.2 At least biannually, the National Finance Committee will undertake a review of the operation of this Policy to ensure that the policy is adequately regulating the travel expenditure of the Union and that the policy is being fully complied with and report the findings of the review to the National Executive.
- 13.3 The National Finance Committee and the National Executive will each have a standing 'Governance Issues' agenda item for each meeting to provide a regular forum for the discussion of Union governance issues.
- 13.4 The National Secretary will ensure that all relevant policies and procedures are made available to Officers and employees and that appropriate training (including an induction process) is provided to ensure they understand the Union's financial policies and procedures and their own responsibilities.

**END**