

Patient transport

Information for people affected by cancer

Victorian Patient Transport Assistance Scheme (VPTAS) is a transport and accommodation subsidy scheme that helps people cover some of the costs of visits to specialist medical treatment not available in their local area. VPTAS is provided by the Department of Health as part of their obligation to provide health care services for everyone in Victoria; it is not means tested.

Are you eligible for VPTAS?

You are eligible if you:

- are an Australian citizen or a permanent resident of Victoria
- live in a Department of Health designated rural region
- referred by a recognised, accredited medical practitioner for specialist treatment
- need to travel more than 100km (one way) from home to treatment or on average 500km per week
- are a carer who has been certified as being medically necessary by the medical practitioner or specialist.

You are not eligible if you:

- live within 100km of appropriate treatment
- have had your costs covered by another agency (e.g. DVA, employer schemes, workers compensation, other insurance claim)
- travel by ambulance, air ambulance, other emergency transport or inter-facility transfer – you can still make a claim for other costs incurred
- are on holidays or visiting friends or family in Victoria or interstate
- are travelling to or from outside Australia
- are accessing allied health (e.g. physiotherapy, osteopathy, podiatry) or general practitioner services
- are participating in a clinical trial.

Do I have to pay anything?

VPTAS will not fully cover your costs. Patients must contribute \$100 per treatment year to the cost of accommodation and travel to treatment. A treatment year is defined as 12 months from the date of the patient's first listed medical specialist service. Pension and health care card holders don't have to pay this charge.

Direct payment to travel and accommodation providers

If an organisation provides transport services or accommodation, patients may have all or some of their VPTAS entitlements paid directly to that organisation.

What does VPTAS cover?

Types of travel/ accommodation	Reimbursement
public transport	cost of an economy ticket
private motor vehicle use	20c/km
taxi	from home to nearest public transport, or from public transport to specialist
air travel	only if journey exceeds 350km one way
accommodation (per night/per room)	\$41 per night plus GST for the patient and one approved escort
community transport	none

Interstate treatment

If you are a Victorian resident and you need to travel interstate to access specialist medical treatment, you are still eligible for VPTAS assistance if you meet the general eligibility criteria.

VPTAS Application Form

Completing a claim form

Up to six trips can be recorded on the VPTAS claim form. The application form is divided into five sections.

Section	Completed by	When
A: Travel diary	you	as you travel
B: Patient details	you	before you travel
C: Approved specialist	treating specialist/ registrar	at your appointment
D: Consent	you	before lodgement
E: Payment details	you	before lodgement

Making a claim

Completed forms must be submitted within 12 months from the date of the first listed approved medical specialist service. You must attach supporting documentation, including original transport and accommodation receipts. Petrol receipts are not required.

Remember to take your VPTAS form with you whenever you have an appointment and ask your health professional to fill it in.

Assessment process

Completed forms must be sent to the VPTAS office. It takes approximately 8–10 weeks to process a claim.

Where to get help and information

- VPTAS
1300 737 073
www.health.vic.gov.au/ruralhealth/vptas/patients
- Contact the social workers at your local or destination treatment centre

Note to reader

This fact sheet provides general information, which may be relevant to Victoria only, and is not a substitute for legal advice. You should talk to a lawyer about your specific situation.

Cancer Council Victoria

615 St Kilda Road, Melbourne VIC 3004
Cancer Council 13 11 20 for Information and Support

Telephone (03) 9514 6100

Facsimile (02) 9514 6800

Email enquires@cancervic.org.au

Website cancervic.org.au



For information and support
call a cancer nurse on 13 11 20
In your own language call 13 14 50
Email askanurse@cancervic.org.au
Visit www.cancervic.org.au