



Government of **Western Australia**  
WA Country Health Service

# Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATs) Handbook

Supporting access to specialist medical services for people  
living in country Western Australia

July 2024

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## Artwork

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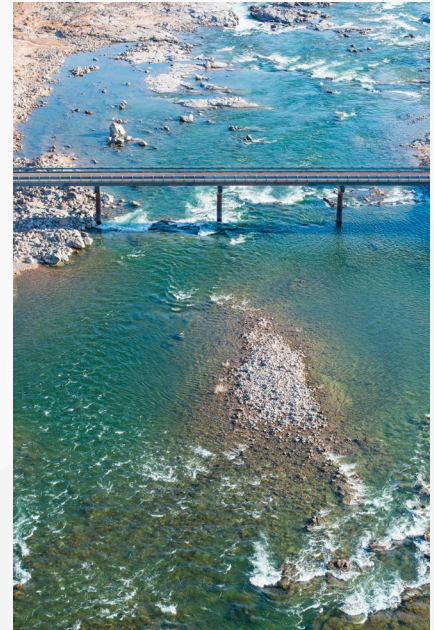
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are respectfully advised that this publication may contain the words, voices, names, images, artwork or descriptions of people who have passed away.

# What is PATS?

The Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS) provides financial subsidies for eligible WA country residents to reduce the cost of accessing the closest specialist medical services that are not available locally.

Subsidies are not intended to cover all travel costs and recipients are required to pay the difference between the subsidy amount and the actual cost of travel and accommodation.

PATS is a subsidy program funded by the Government of Western Australia administered through WA Country Health Service (WACHS).



## **PATS is also available to:**

- return permanent country residents to their home or transferring hospital if they have been discharged from hospital after an emergency transfer or Inter Hospital Patient Transfer (IHPT) and they need to travel more than 100 kilometres (one way),
- assist with the cost of returning a permanent country resident to their hometown if they die while on a PATS eligible trip and need to be transported more than 100 kilometres (one way); and
- assist PATS recipients to have a support person accompany them during their travel (eligibility criteria applies).

If you are ineligible for PATS subsidies, you are still able to arrange or attend these services of your own accord.



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# Eligibility

To receive a PATS subsidy, you must meet each of the criteria below:

## 1. Australian citizen, permanent resident or humanitarian visa holder

You must be an Australian citizen, permanent resident or humanitarian visa holder (subclass 200-204).

You are not eligible for PATS if you are on a bridging visa.

## 2. Medicare card holder

You must have, or be eligible to have, a current Medicare card (any colour) or a [Reciprocal Health Care Agreement Medicare card](#)<sup>1</sup>.

## 3. Receiving treatment from an eligible specialist practitioner

You must be receiving specialist medical treatment from a medical practitioner who is registered with Medicare Australia as a specialist. See list of PATS eligible services or Schedule 1 of the [Health Insurance Regulations 2018](#)<sup>5</sup> (Commonwealth).

## 4. Western Australian country resident

You will need to provide proof of your residence in a country area. Documents that can be used as proof of residency include your driver's license, health care card, current lease agreement, or a utility bill for gas, internet or electricity that states applicant name and supply address.

There is no minimum period of country residency required to be eligible for PATS.

If you are a travelling/itinerant worker (such as a fruit picker or casual laborer), your place of residence is where you were staying when the travel for approved medical specialist services began. In this instance, a letter from your employer or your employment contract confirming employment status and applicant's address, is required.

If you are homeless or have no fixed address, please contact your local homeless services to confirm residence in the region.

## 5. Distance from specialist medical services

You are required to travel more than 100 kilometres (one way) from your home town to your closest eligible medical specialist services, including [telehealth](#)<sup>2</sup> services. It does not matter if the service is public or private.

Limited assistance is available if you are required to travel between 70 and 100 kilometres (one way) for renal or cancer treatment.

Your local PATS office will determine the most direct or common route from the nearest town centre to your residence and the commercial business district (CBD) of the treatment centre you are travelling to. For travel to the Perth metropolitan area, this is the Perth CBD, regardless of which suburb your appointment is in. If you live a long way from your nearest town centre, talk to your local PATS office and they will add extra kilometres (the distance between your home and the town centre) to your PATS application.

## 6. Services in Western Australia

Assistance is for services in Western Australia only. However, assistance for travel outside of the state may be provided if the referral is to the nearest specialist medical service and all other criteria are met. This mainly affects the Kimberley and Goldfields regions where the closest specialist may be in Darwin or Alice Springs. Refer to the [Interstate Patient Transfer Scheme](#)<sup>3</sup> for treatments that are not available in Western Australia.

## What services are eligible for PATS?

PATS subsidies are provided to the nearest available eligible (public or private) specialist medical service or [telehealth](#)<sup>2</sup> service that meets the clinical timeframe specified by the referring or treating practitioner.

Country residents who meet the PATS eligibility criteria and are required to travel more than 100 kilometres (one way) to access the following services are eligible for PATS:

- Most Medicare-eligible specialist medical services.
- Appointments for cochlear implants or infant hearing test if they were not performed initially at birth or an abnormality was detected and follow up is required (this does not include general hearing test or hearing aids).
- Next Step or equivalent medical specialist supported inpatient treatment for addiction (travel subsidy only).
- Rehabilitation medicine.
- Complex wheelchair assessment and review.
- Oral maxillofacial surgery, including the management of facial trauma, such as a jaw fracture, serious dento-facial infections, and oral malignancy (cancer). This does not include wisdom teeth removal, even if performed by an oral and maxillofacial specialist.
- Dental services for children eight years or under if they need hospital-based management of severe dental trauma or severe dento-facial infections, such as cellulitis, or if they have a significant medical co-morbidity or other serious conditions or require general anaesthetic.
- Dental services for adults if they need hospital-based dental services and have a significant medical co-morbidity, or if they have special needs and require general anaesthetic.
- Cleft lip and cleft palate treatment listed in the Medicare Benefits Schedule.
- Radiological services not available locally (if Medicare-approved).
- Repatriation of deceased persons where the person was eligible for PATS subsidies.



## Nearest and most appropriate approved medical specialist

PATS assistance is only available to the nearest appropriate eligible medical specialist. PATS does not differentiate between public or private specialists, nor between face-to-face consultations and telehealth consultations. This means that if the nearest appropriate medical specialist appointment is available by telehealth, you will be assisted to attend that appointment if the appointment is more than 100 kilometres (one way) away.

If you are referred to a specialist that is not the closest, you should make sure your PATS application is assessed by your local PATS office before you travel. You may be required to provide more information to support the assessment of your application.

If there is no suitable or direct transport service available, then travel to the most accessible service may be approved.

## Exceptions to the nearest specialist service criteria

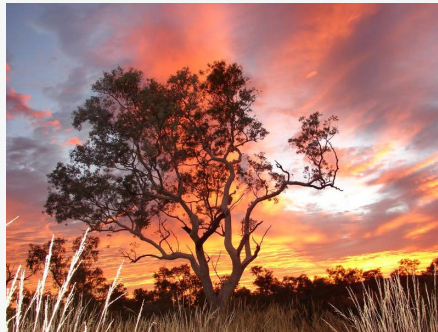
If you urgently need to see a specialist, or the waiting list for a visiting specialist puts you at medical risk, you may be eligible for PATS subsidies to see a specialist who is not the closest.

There may be other medical reasons why the closest specialist is not the most appropriate specialist. You should provide as much advice as possible to your local PATS office about the reason why the nearest service is not the most appropriate (such as complexity, the requirement for a subspecialty, specific information about why the regional service is not suitable etc.)

## Telehealth and follow up appointments

If you have a follow up appointment, it may be delivered by telehealth at your local health service if medically appropriate. Ask your specialist or doctor if your appointments can be delivered by [telehealth](#)<sup>2</sup>.

If there is a closer specialist to where you live or the appointment can be delivered by telehealth, you will not be eligible for PATS to attend your nominated or original specialist, including instances where a specialist you have previously seen is further than 100 kilometres (one way) from where you now live.



## Who is not eligible for PATS?

You are not eligible for PATS if you are:

- Not a resident of a country region, as determined by WACHS. This includes:
  - Fly-in-fly-out (FIFO) workers
  - metropolitan residents travelling in country regions for work or holidays
  - school or university boarders in the Perth metropolitan area
  - a Peel resident. Please contact [Peel PATS](#)<sup>4</sup> (South Metropolitan Health Service).
  - Christmas and Cocos Island residents. If you live on Christmas or Cocos (Keeling) Islands you are not covered by the Western Australian PATS, and the [Indian Ocean Territories Health Service](#)<sup>6</sup> (IOTHS) is responsible for your patient assisted travel arrangements. Christmas Island Hospital can be contacted on 08 9164 8333. Cocos Island clinics can be contacted on 08 9162 7609 (Home Island clinic) 08 9162 6655 (West Island clinic).
- Claiming travel or accommodation assistance from any other organisation or source, such as payments from the Department of Veteran's Affairs or your health fund.
- Claiming damages or other payment for the injury or illness being treated.
- Injured in a motor vehicle accident and covered by insurance.
- Injured at work and you are covered by a work-related insurance scheme, such as workers' compensation.
- In custody (in jail).
- Travelling for treatment outside Western Australia (see [Interstate Patient Transfer Scheme](#)<sup>3</sup>).

## What services are not covered by PATS?

Patients who are travelling for the following services are not eligible for PATS subsidies:

- Treatment that is available locally including services that can be delivered by telehealth.
- Treatment not covered by a Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) item number.
- Second opinions, unless requested by the treating medical specialist.
- Radiological procedures, if available locally.
- Non-specialist medical treatment, including treatment by a general practitioner or nursing services.
- Research, clinical trials, and experimental treatments.
- Consultations required for legal purposes.
- Consultations required for educational support services.
- General dental or orthodontic services, including but not limited to:
  - wisdom teeth extraction, even if general anaesthetic or sedation is required
  - orthodontic treatment (braces)
  - non-surgical temporo-mandibular (jaw) joint treatment
  - implant surgery or crown and bridge treatment
  - endodontics (root canal therapy)
  - periodontal (gum) surgery or treatment
  - routine oral medicine services.
- Allied health and other health services including:
  - physiotherapy
  - clinical psychology
  - occupational therapy
  - podiatry/podiatric surgery
  - speech pathology
  - dietary and nutrition services
  - respiratory therapy
  - cosmetic surgery
  - complementary health treatments, (acupuncture, herbal therapy etc.).
- Residential care services.
- Diagnostic work-up visits, if available locally.
- Services related to surrogacy arrangements.
- Services provided by a general practitioner at a skin clinic.
- Workplace medical assessments.
- Treatment in an emergency department unless you have been referred to see a specialist in the emergency department.

## Voluntary Assisted Dying

If you are travelling for Voluntary Assisted Dying, you may be eligible to receive support from the [Voluntary Assisted Dying Statewide Care Navigator Service](#)<sup>7</sup>, including for assistance to access regional support packages. For more information, you can contact the team during standard work hours on 08 9431 2755.

# Travel subsidy

Travel subsidies are available to get you from your hometown to the city or town where you are going for treatment. Travel subsidies can be either fuel payments, bus payments, train payments or air travel payments.

The travel subsidy is not able to pay for travel within the town or city where your appointment is. The payments are made to eligible recipients to make it easier to access specialist health services, and sometimes the payments may not cover all costs associated with travel.

## Who is eligible for a travel subsidy?

Country residents who are required to travel over 100 kilometres (one way) to access specialist medical services may be eligible for a travel subsidy. If you live a long way from your nearest town centre you may be eligible to add additional kilometres to your claim; speak to your local PATS office for more information.

## Travel between 70 and 100 kilometres (one way) for cancer or renal dialysis treatment

If you travel between 70 and 100 kilometres (one way) to receive cancer or renal treatment, you are eligible for a flat rate travel subsidy for each return trip. This is regardless of whether the trip is by private vehicle or other paid transport, and regardless of whether you are accompanied by a support person. The subsidy can be used towards travel or accommodation.

Renal treatment includes pre-dialysis education, dialysis treatment, surgery and follow up, appointments with a nephrologist or vascular access consultant and home therapy training. Cancer treatment includes chemotherapy, radiotherapy and/or palliative intervention, surgery and follow-up. It does not include diagnosis, consultations or treatment planning.

## Who is eligible for air travel?

If you have to travel 1,200 kilometres (one way) for an eligible appointment, or 350 kilometres (one way) for cancer treatment you will be eligible to have PATS fund the cost of your commercial flight. PATS is unable to reimburse people who have booked flights using frequent flyer points or other schemes, such as the Pensioner Annual Free Trip Scheme or employment benefit schemes.

<b>Travel subsidies between 70 and 100 kilometres</b>	
Patients receiving renal or cancer treatment	\$20 per return trip (flat rate)
<b>Travel subsidies over 100 kilometers</b>	
Private vehicle (car)	26 cents per kilometre
Train or bus	Economy fare
<b>Travel subsidies over 350 kilometres</b>	
Patients receiving cancer treatment only	Air travel, economy fare
<b>Travel subsidies over 1,200 kilometres</b>	
Air travel	Economy fare

You will need to submit copies of tax invoices for your travel via bus, train or air to have your costs reimbursed. PATS can only reimburse people for out-of-pocket expenses, with receipts to confirm payment.

Make sure you pack all the required documentation for your trip. This includes your PATS claim forms, Medicare card, photo identification (such as a driver's license), and a fitness to fly form (if you are travelling by air) signed by your discharging hospital.



## Travelling by air?

### *Fitness to fly*

If you have been hospitalised and undergone a surgical procedure under general anaesthetic, the airline may need a fitness to fly or travel clearance form. The flying exclusion from the date of the surgery may vary depending on the airline and the surgical procedure performed. Your treating hospital will ensure the fitness to fly form is completed by the treating practitioner and sent to the airline.

You should always carry a copy of your fitness to fly form with you. Please note that PATS staff cannot make decisions on whether you need a fitness to fly form. You may also need extra accommodation days to comply with the medical requirements of the airline. Your treating specialist will need to note this on your PATS claim form.

### **Can I get assistance in advance for travel?**

If you are eligible for PATS, you may receive your subsidies in advance for travel and accommodation on request. This is called assistance in advance.

For travel, this includes payments by electronic funds transfer for fuel assistance prior to your travel; providing fuel cards; providing local purchase orders for you to use at the service station; or assistance to book bus, train or flights (if eligible).

Contact your local PATS office to see if they can help you before you travel. You need to allow enough time for PATS staff to be able to assist you generally, at least 48 hours' notice is required. You will need to show proof that you have an appointment with a specialist to be able to access assistance in advance.

If assistance is paid in advance, you need to make sure you can pay the gap between the subsidy and the full cost of travel. You will need to provide your local PATS office with proof you attended your appointment. If you do not do this, your ability to access assistance in advance of any future trips may be affected.



## Special requirements for travel

If you have special requirements for your travel, such as oxygen, mobility aids or other accessibility needs, contact your local PATS office or treating specialist as soon as possible to make sure your needs can be met while travelling.

## Travelling country residents

If you are a resident of a country region and you are temporarily away from home in another country region, and you need to access specialist medical services, you may be eligible for the travel subsidy. This applies only if the need for treatment was not known or not foreseeable when you left your usual place of residence. The travel subsidy is limited to returning you either home or to where you were when you needed medical assistance, whichever is less.

If you are travelling to the metropolitan area for unrelated reasons (such as to visit family or for holidays) and you become sick or need to attend a medical specialist's appointment, you are not eligible for PATS to return home.

## Travel home during extended periods of treatment

If you are required to remain in the treatment town centre for an extended period of time as a result of receiving ongoing treatment, PATS will not usually provide a travel subsidy to return home during this time.

## Appointments in close proximity

If you have two eligible appointments in close proximity, you will be eligible for the most cost-effective option of either a return travel subsidy between appointments or accommodation subsidy to remain in the treatment centre.

## Who is eligible for taxi travel assistance?

Taxi vouchers are only supplied if you have a medical or physical condition that requires them. Decisions are made by your local PATS office on a case-by-case basis. You may be eligible for taxi vouchers if you:

- are permanently unable to walk, or use complex walking aids
- are blind or have a severe visual impairment
- have a disability or condition that make it impractical for you to use other transport, such as an intellectual impairment
- are very ill and unable to use other transport, such as after a major surgical procedure.

## Relocated Dialysis patients and transport assistance

If you were required to temporarily relocate to access dialysis treatment, and a satellite dialysis unit then becomes available closer to home, a travel subsidy will be provided for the return journey.

## Repatriating of deceased

PATS covers the base cost of repatriating the deceased to their former place of residence for a person who:

- was a patient who died within Western Australia while on Inter Hospital Patient Transfer or during PATS approved or PATS-eligible travel, or
- was an approved PATS support person supporting a patient travelling.

If a child dies after birth, the parent/s are provided with financial assistance for the transportation of the child's body. Metropolitan hospital staff (usually a Social Worker or Aboriginal Liaison Officer) will arrange for the deceased person to be transported to the local health service or funeral director in consultation with families. Country Health Connection can assist Aboriginal families with these arrangements.

## **What travel is not subsidised?**

### ***Travel to the airport, bus or train station***

Before you leave, you need to get yourself to the airport, bus or train station. When you arrive, you will need to make your own arrangements to get from the airport, bus or train station to your accommodation. You will also need to make your own arrangements to get from your accommodation to your appointment/s.

### ***Other expenses such as parking and hire car costs.***

Travel subsidies do not cover parking in hospital car parks or other expenses associated with your travel. If you hire a car, you are eligible to claim the subsidy for fuel only, not any hire charges.

If you are experiencing financial hardship, social work teams at treating hospitals may be able to help with accessing assistance from other sources for expenses not covered by PATS.

## **Transport once you are in Perth**

### ***Public transport***

There are several bus and train services that operate in Perth, including to and from the Perth domestic airport. The bus number you will need to take will depend on your destination (where your appointment or accommodation is). Public transport options, including bus numbers, can be found at the [TransPerth Plan Your Journey website](#)<sup>8</sup>.

### ***Transport to and from the Perth airport***

Information on car hire, taxis, rideshare and public transport can be found on the [Perth Airport website](#)<sup>9</sup>.

### ***Country Health Connection (CHC)***

CHC provides culturally appropriate transport services for Aboriginal patients and carers travelling from rural and remote regions of Western Australia to the Perth metropolitan area to access specialist and medical services. CHC in liaison with PATS, Health Service Providers, accommodation facilities and Aboriginal patients and carers, will coordinate transport requirements to ensure effective patient journey planning.

Please speak to your local PATS office if you wish to be referred to Country Health Connection. If you are in Perth, please contact CHC for patient transport enquired and general service information on (08) 9318 6880.

## **Interhospital patient transfer or urgent medical transport**

If you are transferred from one hospital to another, or you are transferred to hospital by Royal Flying Doctor Service or ambulance, you may be eligible for a PATS travel subsidy to return home after you have been discharged. This includes for Hospital in the Home. The discharging hospital needs to contact your local PATS office to arrange return travel prior to discharge.

If you are required to return home by Royal Flying Doctor Service or ambulance, your discharging hospital will contact your local PATS office to arrange your trip.

## Accommodation subsidy

This subsidy can assist you with accommodation expenses if you are eligible and required to stay away from home to attend your medical appointment.

You will not receive a reimbursement greater than your out-of-pocket expenses, within the eligible subsidy amount. It may not cover all costs associated with your accommodation, and PATS recipients are responsible for any gap between the subsidy and actual cost.

### Who is eligible for an accommodation subsidy?

You are eligible for an accommodation subsidy if you live more than 100 kilometres (one way) from the treatment centre, the medical specialist certifies on your PATS claim form that you need to stay overnight for follow-up, or the forward and return journeys cannot reasonably be completed in one day because of factors such as:

- **Type of travel and transport schedule availability.** You are travelling via bus, train or flight and need to wait for the next available option.
- **Appointment or treatment time.** You are eligible for accommodation around an approved appointment as per the closest and most appropriate transport schedule. If you are required to leave home before 7.00am or would be arriving home after 7.00pm you may be eligible for an additional night of accommodation.
- **Your medical condition.** Accommodation is required to allow you to travel safely following treatment or due to your current medical condition.
- **Road travel greater than 500km.** You can claim one night of accommodation for every 500km (most direct and practical route) travelled in a private vehicle.

### Accommodation subsidies for a support person

An approved support person is eligible for the standard accommodation subsidy rates.

Subsidies available for accommodation	
Commercial	Up to \$110.00 per night for a PATS recipient. Up to \$15.00 per night for an approved support person.
Private	Up to \$20.00 per night for a PATS recipient Up to \$20.00 per night for an approved support person.



## What is commercial accommodation?

Commercial accommodation is defined as accommodation which is operated on a commercial basis, where the provider has an ABN and:

- accommodation is offered to the public who are deemed guests, and the main purpose is to provide accommodation.
- there is central management to accept reservations, which can be booked in advance.
- room availability and rates are available to the public.

Commercial accommodation includes: hotels, motels, inns, caravan parks, camping grounds, AirBNB, short term rentals, hostels (including Aboriginal hostels), boarding houses and accommodation provided by charities or not-for-profit organisations. A tax receipt/invoice showing ABN, number of nights of accommodation, business name and address and nightly rate is required for all commercial accommodation reimbursements. Receipts from the official booking platform are required for AirBNB and other short-term accommodation.

You will need to submit copies of tax invoices for your accommodation to have your costs reimbursed. PATS can only reimburse people for out-of-pocket expenses, with receipts to confirm payment. PATS is unable to reimburse people who have booked accommodation using frequent flyer points or other schemes such as employment benefit schemes.

## What is private accommodation?

Dwellings such as a friend or family member's house.

## Can I get assistance in advance for accommodation?

If you are eligible for PATS, you may receive your subsidies in advance for travel and accommodation on request. This is called assistance in advance.

Once you have secured an accommodation booking, PATS can remit payment in advance by providing a local purchase order to the accommodation provider. WACHS does not have any preferred providers. In some instances, you may not be able to claim accommodation assistance in advance if the accommodation provider does not accept local purchase orders from PATS.

Contact your local PATS office to see if they can help you before you travel. You need to allow enough time for PATS staff to be able to assist you; generally at least 48 hours' notice is required. You will need to show proof that you have an appointment with a specialist to be able to access assistance in advance.

If assistance is paid in advance, you need to make sure you can pay the gap between the subsidy and the full cost of accommodation. You will need to provide your local PATS office with proof you attended your appointment. If you do not do this, your ability to access assistance in advance of any future trips may be affected.

## Booking of accommodation

Please be aware that your local PATS office does not book accommodation except for some hostels such as [Cancer Council](#) accommodation<sup>10</sup>, [Ronald McDonald House](#)<sup>11</sup> or [Aboriginal Hostels](#)<sup>12</sup>.

## Accommodation subsidies if you have been discharged but are not yet able to return home

You will be eligible for accommodation subsidies after you have been discharged from hospital if:

- You are required to stay at the treatment centre for outpatient specialist medical care, or for a short period for a follow-up appointment.
- You cannot fly because of airline requirements (that is, you are not yet fit to fly).
- You cannot get immediate transport home after discharge because there is no transport available, for example there are no buses or flights on that day.
- You are required to wait overnight while you are in transit, for example you are waiting for transport back to a remote community.

## Accommodation for other associated health-related appointments, including allied health

If you are required to attend an associated health-related appointment after your specialist appointment, you may be able to extend your stay by one or two days. This includes for allied health or dental appointments.

## Accommodation if your appointment runs behind schedule

If your appointment runs behind schedule and you cannot return home when you planned to, please ask your treating specialist to write this on your PATS claim form. Let your local PATS office know as soon as you can and you may be eligible for a subsidy for your extra accommodation or travel expenses.

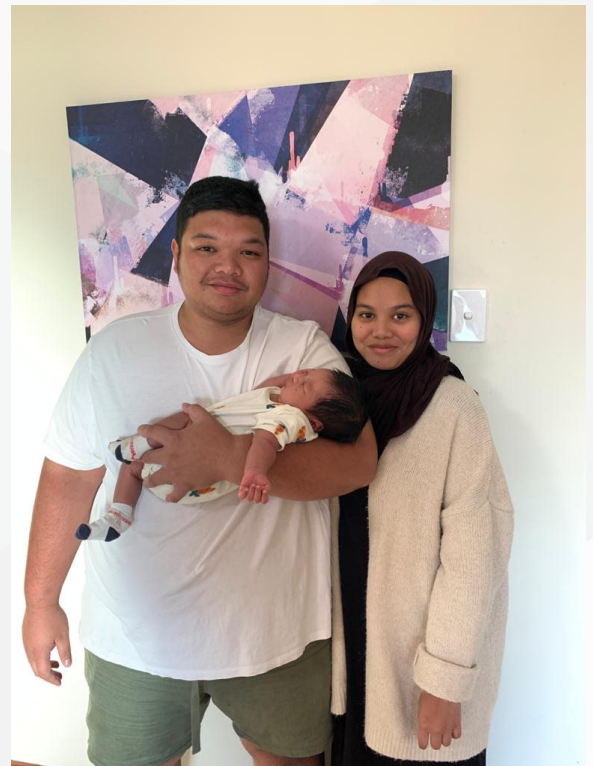
## What is not covered by accommodation subsidies?

Accommodation subsidies may not cover all accommodation costs. PATS accommodation subsidies are not available while you are hospitalised.

## Accommodation subsidies beyond six months

Accommodation subsidies are for a maximum period of six months continuous. Contact your local PATS office for information on extensions in advance of your accommodation subsidy's end date. If you have been staying in the treatment centre for more than six months, you will need to have your claim for PATS assistance re-assessed. If there are special circumstances, a further extension of accommodation assistance may be granted.

PATS accommodation subsidies will not be paid indefinitely and if you require ongoing treatment for periods exceeding six months, you may need to consider relocating to be near the treatment centre. You may be eligible for assistance under the Department of Social Services' [National Rental Affordability Scheme](#)<sup>13</sup>, or able to receive Centrelink's [Rent Assistance](#)<sup>14</sup>.



## Support person

A support person is a person who travels with you to your appointment to assist you. A support person must be 18 years of age and be able to fulfil the role of a support person. They need to be capable of providing the necessary assistance so you can attend your appointment in a safe and timely manner. If you are eligible to have a support person, your support person will also receive PATS travel and/or accommodation subsidies.

When submitting your request for a support person, please provide the reason as to why you require support. You may be contacted for more information to help assess your application and you may be asked for your specialist to confirm on the PATS form your need for a support person.

Contact your local PATS office if you think your support person eligibility may have changed, if you develop a new need for a support person during your trip your specialist will need to provide information to support this request.

If your support person is not approved, you are still able to have someone accompany you on your trip, however their travel and accommodation costs will not be subsidised by PATS.

### Who is eligible for a support person?

You are eligible for a support person if you are a PATS-eligible recipient and meet at least one of the support person eligibility criteria:

Category	PATS support person eligibility criteria
<b>Cancer treatment</b>	You are travelling to receive cancer treatment under a medical specialist. This includes chemotherapy, radiation, surgery and palliative care directly related to cancer treatment.
<b>Carer or provision of necessary assistance, including decision making</b>	You require a carer to be responsible for your medical or mental health treatment, such as dialysis, catheterising or administering treatment, or needs to tend to your personal care requirements or undertake your activities of daily living. You legally require support in decision making.
<b>Clinical recommendation for support</b>	You have received a clinical recommendation that you require support for your trip or appointment. This includes for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ emotional support, where you are attending an appointment that is likely to result in a significant diagnosis or to be distressing, including for specialist palliative care or complex pregnancy care requiring specialist obstetric assessment, or</li> <li>▪ psychological support, where you require psychological support while travelling and attending appointments due to a mental health condition, historical trauma or you are experiencing family and domestic violence.</li> </ul>
<b>Disability, impairment or frailty</b>	You are living with an intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairment or disability such as acquired brain injury, dementia, visual impairment, or mobility impairment. You are frail or frail aged, including older adults.
<b>Cultural or linguistic support</b>	You require support to assist you with cultural barriers or for cultural reasons that would inhibit you from attending an appointment.  You require support with linguistic barriers, where you have a communication disability or where English is not your first language, including for Aboriginal languages and AUSLAN.  Please note that a support person approved for cultural or linguistic support should not be to replace services provided by hospital Aboriginal Liaison Officers or formal interpreting services, if appropriate and available.

<b>Childbirth</b>	You are travelling to give birth, or your doctor has required you to be near a hospital before or following birth, including for perinatal loss or late termination and threatened preterm labour.
<b>Journey navigation</b>	You require journey navigation to ensure the safe and successful travel to and from the appointment or accommodation, if services such as Country Health Connection are not available or appropriate. This may include people from remote communities who are unfamiliar with the public transport at their destination.
<b>Under 18</b>	You are under 18 years old.

### **Support person to a patient who is in hospital**

A support person will generally not be approved if you are in hospital unless you have a life-threatening condition. This is because you are in the care of medical and nursing staff while you are in hospital. A support person may be approved for accommodation assistance while you are in hospital if your treating specialist confirms that your condition requires a support person for medical decision making, or to support you after discharge before you return home.

If a support person does not stay with you when you are receiving treatment but is required to transport you to and from home, they may be able to claim two return journeys. If a support person requires accommodation while you are in hospital, they are eligible for the PATS accommodation subsidy.

### **Support person to a patient following interhospital patient transfer or urgent medical transport**

If you have been discharged from hospital following an inter hospital patient transfer, a support person may be approved to provide assistance. Similar scenarios include after an accident or incident needing urgent medical transport by Royal Flying Doctor Service or ambulance to a hospital more than 100 kilometres (one way) from where you live.

### **Support person to a newborn infant**

If a mother and newborn are hospitalised together, the mother is the newborn's support person. If the mother has a medical condition and is unable to care for her newborn, the mother and the newborn may have separate support people. The specialist must confirm that the mother is unable to provide the necessary care for her newborn.

### **Support person to children in boarding schools**

If a child is a boarder in the Perth metropolitan area but is hospitalised, a parent living in the country will be approved as a support person, even though the child is not eligible for PATS subsidies as they are already in the treatment centre.

### **Replacement support person**

If your support person needs to return home unexpectedly, or they become ill, a replacement support person may be approved. You will be asked to provide evidence about why your support person needs to return home.



# Family travel and patients travelling together

## Family travel

For PATS purposes, family travel is when one or more recipients under the age of 18 travel with a parent or guardian as a support person. All recipients are required to submit a separate PATS claim. Family travel scenarios include:

- one PATS recipient under the age of 18 accompanied by a support person
- two or more PATS recipients under the age of 18 accompanied by one support person
- two recipients under the age of 18 each accompanied by their own support person.



## Patients travelling together

Two or more adult recipients, all with eligible specialist appointments, may travel together for convenience. All recipients are required to submit a separate PATS claim for their trips. These will be assessed in alignment with the principles of family travel. Where it is known that travel or accommodation expenses have been shared, PATS cannot pay a reimbursement higher than the out-of-pocket expenses.

## Support person and family travel

When a family travels together, the support person might also have their own specialist appointment during the same journey, arranged for convenience and to minimise travel. For PATS purposes you are only allowed to perform one PATS role at a time; you cannot claim a subsidy for being a recipient and a support person at the same time. If you are a support person to two children each with an appointment, you will only receive one support person subsidy.

## Additional children travelling with family

PATS does not provide travel or accommodation subsidies for additional children to travel with the family unless they have an eligible appointment.

Recipients travelling together as a family are unable to claim a reimbursement greater than their expenses.

## **Travel subsidies**

### **Fuel subsidies**

When one vehicle is used, eligible PATS recipients are eligible for one return fuel subsidy. This includes when:

- one recipient under 18 travels with one approved support person
- two recipients under 18 travel with one approved support person
- two recipients under 18 each travel with their own support person in one vehicle
- when two or more patients, each with their own appointments have travelled together in the same vehicle.

When two recipients under 18 each travel with their own support person in separate vehicles, each recipient and their support person are eligible for one return fuel subsidy.

### **Bus, train and air travel**

PATS recipients and their support person is eligible for an economy fare ticket.

## **Accommodation subsidies**

### **Accommodation subsidies for family travel**

If you travel together as a family and it is established that you stayed in the same room (the same invoice was submitted for multiple applications) PATS will reimburse up to the cost incurred by your family (not exceeding the subsidy amount). You will not receive a reimbursement greater than your expenses.

Flexibility in dates of travel is allowed. However, if your family elects to extend their trip beyond the last night of your PATS eligible accommodation, you are considered to be travelling country residents and not eligible for further PATS accommodation assistance.

### **Accommodation subsidies for family travel align with the following principles:**

- A support person can only fill one role at a time.
- If a parent or guardian is supporting two recipients under the age of 18, they are only eligible for one support person accommodation subsidy.
- Where multiple recipients under the age of 18 have non-overlapping appointments, PATS will support accommodation between appointments when this is the most economical option. In the period between appointments, PATS will provide one recipient and one support person accommodation subsidy, regardless of how many recipients have travelled.
- A recipient under the age of 18 requires a support person to be with them during travel. Where a recipient under the age of 18 and their support person have travelled together and the support person has an appointment in close proximity to the recipient, PATS will provide an accommodation subsidy for the recipient under 18 until all appointments are complete, as they cannot travel home alone.
- Recipients under the age of 18 are eligible for a support person. If two recipients under the age of 18 have eligible appointments, each is eligible for their own support person. If the family chooses to travel together for convenience, accommodation subsidies are only provided based on the dates of each patient's appointment or clinical need.

### **Accommodation subsidies for recipients travelling together**

If it is established that two or more recipients stayed in the same room (the same invoice was submitted for multiple applications) PATS will reimburse up to the cost incurred by the two recipients (not exceeding the subsidy amount). The recipients will not receive a reimbursement greater than their expenses.

# Forms

## Form A

### Registration and Patient Details

Form A is used to:

- Register for PATS for the first time.
- Update your details if you're a current PATS recipient.

It can be submitted by itself or with Forms B or C when applying for PATS subsidies.

## Form B

### Reimbursement

Form B is used to:

- Lodge reimbursement claims for your PATS subsidy after attending your specialist appointment.

## Form C1 and C2

### Assistance in Advance (AiA)

PATS is a subsidy reimbursement scheme, however if needed, you may be eligible for your subsidy to be paid prior to your appointment.

Forms C1 and C2 are used to:

#### **AiA Application - Form C1**

- Apply for assistance in advance prior to your trip.

#### **AiA Verification of Attendance - Form C2**

- To verify attendance at your specialist appointment if you received any assistance in advance.

Individual claims must be submitted for each trip.

Forms should be submitted as early as possible to allow for sufficient processing time. It may take up to six weeks to process your claim, and processing times may vary dependent on the region and on all information being received. You may be asked to provide more evidence to support your claim.

PATS Reimbursements (Form B) must be lodged within 12 months of your appointment.

As the recipient, it is your responsibility to make sure all required information is included in the application. Once your local PATS office has received your claim, it will be assessed against current PATS policy and eligibility criteria. You will be notified as soon as possible if you are not eligible for PATS or if additional information is required.



## Claim processes

### I am new to PATS and want to apply for the first time

Use Registration and Recipient Details Form A

1. Complete Registration and Recipient Details Form A
2. Go to 'I will attend my specialist appointment and then claim my subsidy' for your next steps.

### I will attend my specialist appointment and then claim my eligible subsidy

Use Reimbursement Form B

1. If you are new or existing PATS recipient who needs to update your details, complete the Registration and Recipient Details Form A.
2. At your appointment have the specialist or clinic employee complete their section and sign the Reimbursement Form B to confirm your attendance at the appointment.  
*Make sure clinical details (an explanation about why you need extended accommodation in Perth for example) are included by your specialist or clinic staff, if needed.*
3. Complete your section of the Reimbursement Form B.
4. Submit form (s) with accommodation receipts and any other information required to your Local PATS Office.

### I want to enquire about assistance in advance to help me get to my specialist appointment

Use Assistance in Advance Application Form C1 and Assistance in Advance Verification of Attendance Form C2

1. If you are new or existing PATS recipient who needs to update your details, complete the Registration and Recipient Details Form A.
2. Complete Assistance in Advance Application Form C1 and submit it to your local PATS office with your proof of appointment letter or email.  
*You will then be advised of the outcome of your application with all additional information about how to access your assistance in advance. If approved your Local PATS Office may be able to assist with travel arrangements and bookings.*
3. At your appointment have the specialist or clinic employee complete their section and sign the Assistance in Advance Verification of Attendance Form C2 to verify your attendance at the appointment.  
*Make sure clinical details (an explanation about why you need extended accommodation in Perth for example) are included by your specialist or clinic staff, if needed.*
4. Complete your section of the Assistance in Advance Verification of Attendance Form C2.
5. Submit form(s) with any other information required to your Local PATS Office.

### I am an existing PATS recipient and I need to update my personal details

Use Registration and Recipient Details Form A

1. Complete Registration and Recipient Details Form A.
2. Submit form to your Local PATS Office.

# Feedback, reviews and exceptional management

## Feedback

WA Country Health Service values and welcomes all feedback, as it helps us know what we are doing well and where we need to improve. WA Country Health Service must record and respond to all feedback that is received. Feedback can be lodged via your local PATS office or online via [Care Opinion](#)<sup>15</sup>.

## Reviews

Reviews can be requested if you have had your PATS application or claim declined, and you believe the decision was incorrect.

They are submitted to your local PATS office, and you will need to explain why you think the decision was incorrect and potentially provide additional information to help reassess your application.

## Exceptional management

Exceptional management includes the exceptional ruling and exceptional endorsement processes.

All decisions under the exceptional management process will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and will not form precedents.

Additional information may be requested to allow the Regional Executive Director and Regional Medical Director to make decisions.

Your local PATS office is responsible for preparing these with your assistance and consultation.

## How do I provide feedback?

Contact your local PATS office. You are encouraged to lodge any feedback through this process as a first step. If you do not wish to contact your local PATS office, you can lodge your feedback online at [Care Opinion](#)<sup>15</sup>.

Health Services must ensure information and processes are followed and conform to the [WA Health Complaint Management Policy](#)<sup>18</sup>.

## How do I get assistance when lodging feedback?

### Supporting agencies

There are agencies available that can help you:

- The [Health and Disability Services Complaints Office](#)<sup>19</sup> can help you resolve any complaints you may have. You can get in touch online or free call 1800 081 583.
- [The Health Consumers' Council \(WA\)](#)<sup>20</sup> is an independent community-based organisation that represents health consumers. If you would like support with the complaint process, you can contact the Health Consumers' Council (WA) online or on 1800 620 780.

## Translation services

If you need help in a language other than English, please call the national [Translating and Interpreting Service](#)<sup>16</sup> on 13 14 50. People who speak Aboriginal languages can contact [Aboriginal Interpreting WA](#)<sup>17</sup> on 0439 943 612.

## Claim reviews

You are able to request a review of your declined application or claim if you believe the decision was incorrect.

1. Contact your local PATS office to explain why you think the decision was incorrect
2. Your local PATS office will review your application or claim

*You may be asked for additional supporting information and/or be called to discuss your review.*

*The time it will take to review your application or claim depends on how complicated it is, but you should have a written outcome within four weeks. Let your local PATS office know if your request is urgent.*

3. You receive an outcome

*If you are found to be eligible for PATS after a review, your local PATS office will be able to help you finalise your application or claim.*

*If you are found to be ineligible for PATS, you may ask to be considered under an exceptional ruling or exceptional endorsement.*

*If you are ineligible for PATS, it does not mean you are not able to attend your appointment, it means you are not able to receive PATS subsidies.*

## Exceptional management

Exceptional rulings consider your individual circumstances and allow PATS subsidies to be approved if the intent of PATS is met, even if some of the strict eligibility criteria are not. Exceptional endorsements consider your individual circumstances when you meet the PATS core eligibility criteria but request a subsidy that is over and above a staff members delegation as per the PATS delegation schedule.

1. Preparation of exceptional ruling or exceptional endorsement

*You may request your circumstances be considered under an exceptional ruling or exceptional endorsement if your PATS application or claim is declined, or your local PATS office may escalate your claim on your behalf.*

2. Provide additional supporting information including:

- Diagnosis
- Relevant medical history
- Justification for why your circumstances should be considered.

3. Your local PATS office, WACHS Regional Medical Director and/or WACHS Regional Executive Director will review your application.

*Your treating medical practitioners may be contacted, or you may be called to discuss your circumstances.*

4. You receive an outcome

*If approved, your local PATS office will be able to help you finalise your application or claim.*

*If declined, the PATS Regional Coordinator will explain the reason why and you will be advised of your next steps.*

### **What do I do if I am not happy with the result of my complaint?**

If you are still not happy with the result of your complaint following response from the health service or PATS office, the Ombudsman's office may be able to assist you. Information on how to get help from the Ombudsman can be found on the [Ombudsman WA<sup>21</sup>](#) website.

### **Privacy and Confidentiality**

All health staff in public hospitals and health services are required to follow the [Patient Confidentiality policy<sup>22</sup>](#), including all WACHS staff. Private providers have to observe the [Privacy Act 1988<sup>23</sup>](#) (Cth). You have a right to access your personal information through the [Freedom of Information Act 1992 \(WA\)<sup>24</sup>](#).



### **What happens to the information collected about complaints and reviews?**

The information collected is de-identified and used in annual reporting to help improve the future delivery of PATS services.

### **Auditing**

The Office of the Auditor General audits PATS claims. This means that PATS staff must make sure they make decisions that are in line with policy. They also need to provide clear and detailed reasons for any decisions made under the exceptional management process. Health services need to do this so they can demonstrate that public money is spent fairly and according to policy.

PATS staff must also make sure they have tax invoices, receipts and other documentation when reimbursing you for commercial travel or accommodation.

# Eligible services

Most Medicare-eligible specialist services are covered by PATS. These include the specialties listed below.

<p><b>Addiction medicine</b> - Next step</p> <p><b>Anaesthesia</b></p> <p><b>Artificial eye or limb</b></p> <p><b>Bone densitometry</b></p> <p><b>Cleft lip/palate</b></p> <p><b>Dental *</b></p> <p><b>Dermatology</b></p> <p><b>Dialysis</b></p> <p><b>Emergency medicine</b></p> <p><b>Obstetrics and gynaecology</b> - Childbirth - Gynaecology &amp; urogynaecology - Gynaecological oncology - Mammography - Maternal-fetal medicine - Neonatology &amp; perinatal medicine - Obstetrics &amp; gynaecological ultrasound - Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility</p> <p><b>Occupational and environmental medicine **</b></p> <p><b>Ophthalmology</b></p> <p><b>Paediatrics and child health</b> - Clinical genetics - General paediatrics - Neonatal and perinatal medicine - Paediatric cardiology - Paediatric emergency medicine - Paediatric endocrinology - Paediatric gastroenterology &amp; hepatology</p>	<p>- Paediatric haematology - Paediatric immunology and allergy - Paediatric infectious diseases Paediatric intensive care medicine - Paediatric medical oncology - Paediatric nephrology - Paediatric neurology - Paediatric nuclear medicine - Paediatric palliative medicine - Paediatric rehabilitation medicine - Paediatric respiratory and sleep medicine - Paediatric rheumatology</p> <p><b>Pain medicine</b></p> <p><b>Palliative medicine</b></p> <p><b>Pathology***</b> - Haematology - Immunology</p> <p><b>Physician</b> - Cardiology - Clinical genetics - Endocrinology - Gastroenterology &amp; Hepatology - General Medicine - Geriatric Medicine - Haematology - Immunology &amp; Allergy - Infectious Disease - Medical oncology</p>	<p>- Nephrology - Neurology - Nuclear Medicine - Respiratory and Sleep Studies - Rheumatology</p> <p><b>Psychiatry</b></p> <p><b>Public health medicine</b></p> <p><b>Radiation oncology</b></p> <p><b>Radiology</b> - Diagnostic Radiology (CT and X-Ray) - Diagnostic Ultrasound - Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) - Nuclear medicine</p> <p><b>Rehabilitation medicine</b></p> <p><b>Renal medicine</b></p> <p><b>Sexual health medicine</b></p> <p><b>Sport and exercise medicine</b></p> <p><b>Surgery</b> - Cardiothoracic Surgery - General Surgery - Hand Surgery - Neurosurgery - Orthopedic Surgery - Otolaryngology (ENT) - Oral &amp; Maxillofacial Surgery **** - Paediatric Surgery - Plastic &amp; Reconstructive Surgery - Urology - Vascular surgery</p>
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\*Only for 1) dental services for children (eight years or under) if they need hospital-based management of severe dental trauma or severe dento-facial infections, such as cellulitis, or if they have a significant medical co-morbidity or other serious conditions or require general anaesthetic, or 2) dental services for people over eight years of age if they need hospital-based dental services and have a significant medical co-morbidity, or if they have special needs and require general anaesthetic. \*\* Not including a specialist appointment related to workers compensation. \*\*\*When referred by a treating Haematologist or Immunologist. All other pathology services are not eligible specialist. \*\*\*\* Not including wisdom teeth removal, even if performed by an oral & maxillofacial specialist.



# Approved treatments: Guidelines

There are some guidelines for approved treatments eligible for PATS. These are below.

## Dialysis

If you undergo dialysis, you are eligible for PATS subsidies even if you do not see the nephrologist. The nursing staff are able to sign the verification part of your form.

You are also eligible for PATS subsidies if you are attending a home therapies unit for review, assessment or treatment, or training to perform dialysis.

## Medical imaging

If you are referred to a radiologist for a procedure that is approved under Medicare, you are eligible for PATS subsidies if you are attending the closest service.

Medical imaging services that are PATS eligible include x-ray, interventional radiological procedures, ultrasound, computerised tomography (CT scans), nuclear medicine (NM) and magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).

If you do not see a radiologist at your appointment, a radiologist needs to be involved in reading and reporting on the images for you to be eligible for PATS subsidies. The medical imaging technologists are able to sign the verification part of your form.

## Mammography

You are eligible for PATS subsidies if:

- You have been referred by a medical practitioner and a screening service is not available within an acceptable timeframe,
- The assessment is covered by the Medicare Benefits Schedule, or
- You are referred for diagnostic imaging evaluation of a palpable breast lump or other breast abnormality.

## Assisted reproductive treatment (IVF)

You are eligible for PATS subsidies if you are referred to specialist treatment covered by the Medicare Benefits Schedule. Your partner is also eligible for PATS subsidies if you are referred to a specialist for an initial consultation and one visit per cycle of treatment as a patient.

Education, pathology (including semen analysis), and counselling are not PATS eligible services. Talk to your treating practitioner about receiving things like counselling over [telehealth](#)<sup>2</sup>.

Parties involved in surrogacy including egg donations are not eligible for PATS subsidies.

## Refractive surgical procedures

You are eligible for PATS subsidies if you are referred by an ophthalmologist for excimer laser keratotomy (PRK) or LASIK eye surgery.

## Wheelchair applicants

You are eligible for PATS subsidies if you are referred for a complex wheelchair assessment or review. Your referral can be from a medical practitioner, physiotherapist or occupational therapist.

### **Next Step: Inpatient treatment for addition**

You are eligible for PATS subsidies if you are referred to a medical specialist-led drug and Alcohol treatment services. You will not receive accommodation assistance during your treatment. This includes Next Step specialist medical services or an equivalent approved specialist service provider for an initial consultation for admission into a treatment or therapy program.

Rehabilitation services that are not led by a specialist are not eligible for PATS subsidies.

### **Child birth**

If you need to travel to your nearest birthing centre to deliver your baby, you are eligible for the PATS subsidies (including for accommodation before the birth based on a risk assessment from your GP obstetrician or specialist obstetrician). Generally, this will be at about 37 weeks gestation.

Similarly, eligibility for PATS subsidies following birth will be available based on a risk assessment from your GP obstetrician or specialist obstetrician. Generally, this will be available for up to five days following an uncomplicated birth. Extra nights may be approved if you are prevented from flying after the birth.

### **Oral conditions**

PATS subsidies are only available for serious oral conditions.

#### ***Oral Maxillofacial Surgery***

You are eligible for PATS subsidies if you are receiving treatment listed in the Oral and Maxillofacial Medicare Benefits Schedule. This includes the management of facial trauma, such as a jaw fracture, serious dento-facial infections and oral malignancy (cancer).

You are not eligible for PATS subsidies if you are attending an oral maxillofacial specialist for the purpose of removing wisdom teeth.

### **Dental services**

#### ***Dental services for children***

Children (eight years or younger) are eligible for PATS subsidies if they need hospital-based management of severe dental trauma or severe dento-facial infections, such as cellulitis. Children (eight years or younger) are also eligible for hospital-based dental services if they have a significant medical co-morbidity or other serious conditions.

They are also eligible for PATS subsidies if they are having dental treatment that requires general anaesthetic. This includes removal of a tongue tie for a newborn baby by a specialist paediatric dentist in cases where the child is not thriving.

#### ***Dental services for people over the age of eight***

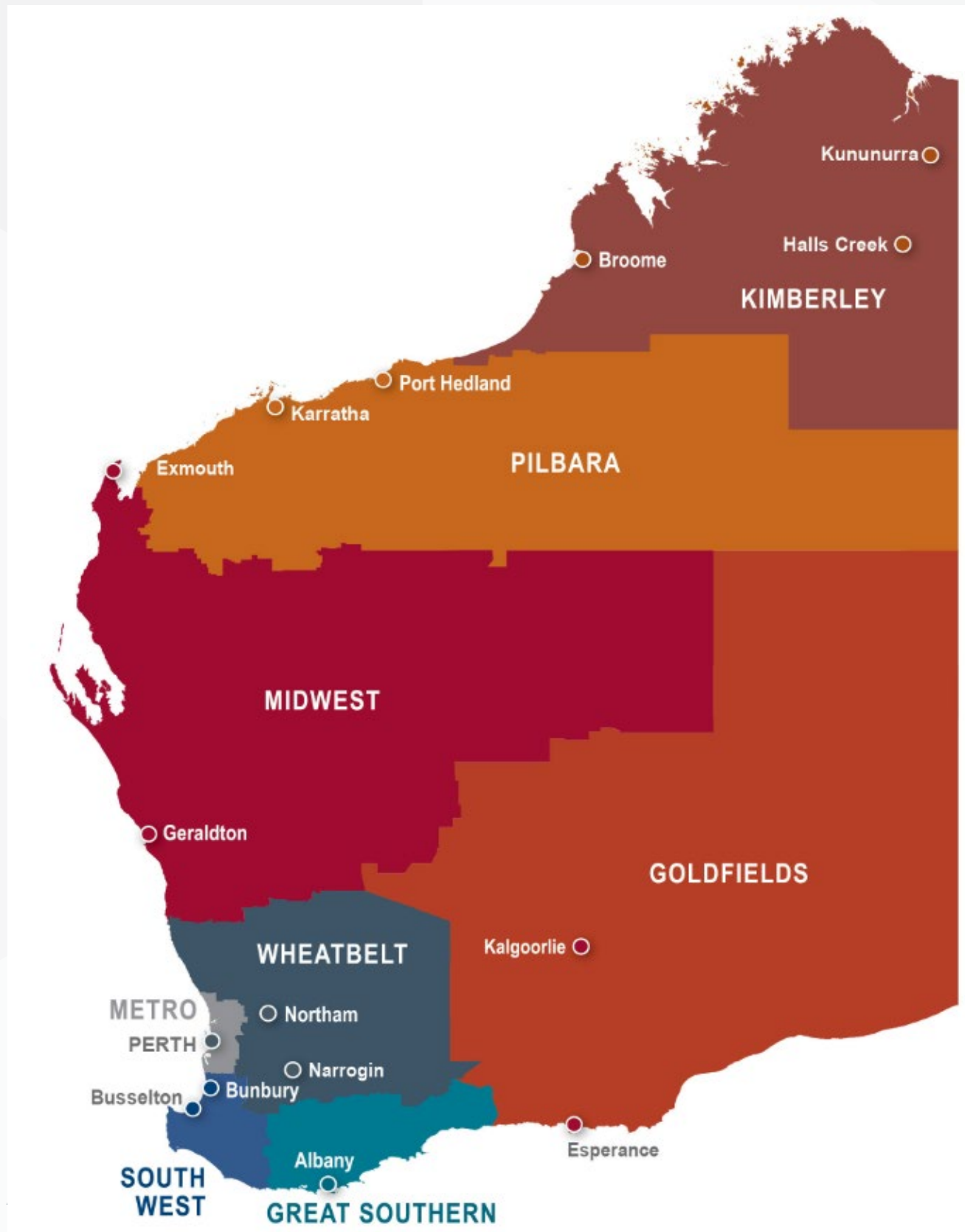
People over the age of eight are eligible for PATS subsidies if they need hospital-based dental services and have a significant medical co-morbidity. People over the age of eight are also eligible for PATS subsidies for dental services if they have special needs and require general anaesthetic is required.

For all dental claims, please ensure you provide sufficient medical information for the PATS staff to make an assessment.

#### ***Dental treatment for cleft lip and palate***


Children (eight years or younger) will be eligible for PATS subsidies if they need cleft lip and cleft palate treatment listed in the Medical Benefits Schedule.

# Map of WACHS regions




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# Form A – Registration and Recipient Details

 <p><b>WA Country Health Service</b> Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development</p> <p><small>GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA</small></p>	<p>Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS) <b>Registration and Recipient Details</b> <b>Form A</b></p>
<input type="checkbox"/> I am applying for PATS for the first time, or <input type="checkbox"/> a current PATS recipient updating my details	
<b>REQUIRED if completing Form A</b>	
<b>Title</b>	<b>Surname</b>
<b>Given name (s)</b>	<b>Preferred name</b>
<b>Date of birth</b>	<b>Sex</b>
<b>Email address and/or Phone number</b>	
<b>Permanent residential address</b>	
<p><small>If registering for first time or updating residential address, please attach proof of address via one of the following: drivers license, health care card, current lease agreement or utility bill for gas, internet or electricity that states applicant name and supply address.</small></p>	
<b>Postal address</b> if different from above	
<b>Person under 18 parent or guardian</b>	<b>Name</b> _____ <b>Phone</b> _____
<p><b>Recipient Declaration (or Parent/Guardian)</b> I confirm that PATS is not responsible for payment losses or fee/charges that may be incurred if incorrect banking details are provided and I declare that the information provided is true and correct.</p>	
<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>REQUIRED if completing Form A and registering for first time or if details have changed since last application</b>	
<b>Medicare Card Number</b>	_____
<b>Individual reference number</b>	_____ <b>Expiry Date</b> _____
<b>Veteran Affairs Card</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Gold      DVA card holders should contact DVA in the first instance
<b>Number</b>	_____ <b>Expiry Date</b> _____
<b>Pensioner or concession card</b>	<b>Type</b> _____
<b>Number</b>	_____ <b>Expiry Date</b> _____
<b>Preferred reimbursement method</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Direct deposit complete below details <input type="checkbox"/> Cheque Payment
<b>Account Name</b>	_____
<b>6 Digit BSB No</b>	_____
<b>Account No</b>	_____
<b>Do you identify as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/> Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/> Neither
<p><small>Privacy: WA Country Health Service (WACHS) will review and confirm the details you provide to assess your PATS requests. Your information is stored within a secure system. WACHS staff may obtain or distribute information from/to any third party necessary for this application or to deliver relevant health care. Further information is provided in the <a href="#">Department of Health Privacy Statement</a>.</small></p>	
<b>OFFICE USE ONLY</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Sighted proof of residency    PATS Clerk signature / he # _____
THIS FORM IS AVAILABLE IN AN ALTERNATIVE FORMAT ON REQUEST	


# Form B – Reimbursement

 <b>WA Country Health Service</b> Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development <small>GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA</small>		<b>Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS)</b> <b>Reimbursement</b> <b>Form B</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> I am seeking reimbursement for below. Eligibility criteria applies. Forms must be lodged within 12 months of appointment.			
Title		Surname	
Given name (s)		Preferred name	
Address			
Phone number and/or		Date of birth	
Email address			
Preferred reimbursement method?		<input type="checkbox"/> Cheque <input type="checkbox"/> Direct deposit, complete below details	
6 Digit BSB No		Account No	
<b>APPOINTMENT DETAILS</b> Eligibility criteria applies. Including but not limited to the nearest specialist including telehealth or visiting specialist.			
Appointment Date		Hospital/Clinic Location	
Speciality		Specialist Name	
for Cancer treatment <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, or renal dialysis <input type="checkbox"/> Yes for radiology <input type="checkbox"/> MRI <input type="checkbox"/> Mammogram <input type="checkbox"/> CT Scan <input type="checkbox"/> Ultrasound <input type="checkbox"/> Nuc Med <input type="checkbox"/> PET <input type="checkbox"/> X Ray			
If this travel related to Motor Vehicle Insurance or Workers Compensation eligibility criteria applies, please contact your local PATS Office.			
<b>TRAVEL &amp; ACCOMMODATION DETAILS</b> Eligibility criteria applies.			
Transport details		<input type="checkbox"/> Private vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> Bus <input type="checkbox"/> Train <input type="checkbox"/> Air travel <sup>1</sup>	
Departure Date		Return Date	
Accommodation <small>Please attach tax invoice/receipt required for commercial accommodation</small>			
Recipient		to <input type="checkbox"/> Private <sup>2</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <sup>3</sup>	
Recipient		to <input type="checkbox"/> In Hospital	
Support Person		to <input type="checkbox"/> Private <sup>2</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <sup>3</sup>	
Support Person for		<input type="checkbox"/> Cancer treatment <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural/linguistic support <input type="checkbox"/> Childbirth <input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Patient Carer <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify	
Support Person Name		Phone Number	
<small><sup>1</sup>Air travel eligibility: Trips over 1200km one way are automatically eligible for air travel or over 350km one way if travelling for cancer treatment. Trips under 1200km one way will require supporting Clinical information for flights to be approved. <sup>2</sup>Private Accommodation is to stay with family/friends. <sup>3</sup>Commercial accommodation is to stay at hotel, motel, caravan. If required please attach any relevant medical documentation to support your claim.</small>			
<b>Recipient (or guardian) declaration and consent.</b> I declare that the information provided is true and correct, the expenditure claimed was incurred by me for the reasons outlined here and I am not entitled to claim or recover costs from any other source including compensation, insurance cover or damages. I give consent for WACHS staff to obtain or distribute information from/to any third party necessary for this application or to deliver relevant health care. <b>Signature</b> _____ <b>Date</b> _____			
<b>TO BE COMPLETED BY SPECIALIST OR CLINIC EMPLOYEE</b> For every appointment claim to verify claim. To facilitate reimbursement of expenses and/or confirm travel details complete all sections.			
Has the recipient's condition changed so they require air travel?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
Has the recipient's condition changed so they require a support person?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
Has the recipient's condition changed so they need to extend their stay?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A	
Was the recipient hospitalised?		<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, from _____ to _____	
If 'Yes' to any of the above, please provide clinical reason:			
Can the follow up appointments be done via telehealth?		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Stamp (required)		Signature _____	
		Name _____ Date _____	
OFFICE USE ONLY	PATS Clerk	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Declined
	Delegated Financial Authority	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved	<input type="checkbox"/> Declined
	Reference #	_____	
	Signature/ he #	_____	
THIS FORM IS AVAILABLE IN AN ALTERNATIVE FORMAT ON REQUEST			

# Form C1 – Assistance in Advance Application

 <p><b>WA Country Health Service</b> Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development <small>GOVERNMENT OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA</small></p>	<p><b>Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS)</b> <b>Assistance in Advance Application</b> <b>Form C1</b></p>
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Requesting financial assistance prior to my trip, for my appointment on</b> (app date) For <input type="checkbox"/> accommodation <input type="checkbox"/> travel, fuel card <input type="checkbox"/> travel, bus/train/flight <b>Proof of your specialist appointment(s) required for assistance in advance (e.g. appointment letter, email, text message).</b>	
<b>Title</b> _____ <b>Surname</b> _____	
<b>Given name (s)</b> _____ <b>Preferred name</b> _____	
<b>Address</b> _____	
<b>Phone number and/or Email address</b> _____ <b>Date of birth</b> _____	
<b>APPOINTMENT DETAILS</b> <i>Eligibility criteria applies. Including but not limited to the nearest specialist including telehealth or visiting specialist.</i>	
<b>Appointment Date</b> _____ <b>Hospital/Clinic Location</b> _____	
<b>Specialty</b> _____ <b>Specialist Name</b> _____	
within 30 days <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, if within 10 days please also call your local PATS Office for cancer treatment <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, or renal dialysis <input type="checkbox"/> Yes for radiology <input type="checkbox"/> MRI <input type="checkbox"/> Mammogram <input type="checkbox"/> CT Scan <input type="checkbox"/> Ultrasound <input type="checkbox"/> Nuc Med <input type="checkbox"/> PET <input type="checkbox"/> X Ray If this travel related to Motor Vehicle Insurance or Workers Compensation eligibility criteria applies, please contact your local PATS Office.	
<b>TRAVEL &amp; ACCOMMODATION DETAILS</b> <i>Eligibility criteria applies.</i>	
<b>Transport</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Private vehicle <input type="checkbox"/> Train <input type="checkbox"/> Bus <input type="checkbox"/> Air travel <sup>1</sup> <b>Departure Date</b> _____ <b>Return Date</b> _____	
<b>Accommodation</b> Preferred location (if available): _____	
Recipient _____ to _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Private <sup>2</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <sup>3</sup> Recipient _____ to _____ <input type="checkbox"/> In Hospital	
Support Person _____ to _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Private <sup>2</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <sup>3</sup>	
<b>Support Person for</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Cancer treatment <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural/linguistic support <input type="checkbox"/> Childbirth <input type="checkbox"/> Under 18 <input type="checkbox"/> Disability <input type="checkbox"/> Patient Carer <input type="checkbox"/> Other, please specify below	
Support Person Name _____ Phone Number _____	
<sup>1</sup> Air travel eligibility; Trips over 1200km one way are automatically eligible for air travel or over 350km one way if travelling for cancer treatment. Trips under 1200km one way will require supporting clinical information for flights to be approved provided below. <sup>2</sup> Private Accommodation is to stay with family/friends. <sup>3</sup> Commercial accommodation is to stay at hotel, motel, caravan park or to pay.	
If required please use this space to provide additional information and/or attach any relevant medical documentation to support your claim:	
(If known) Referring Practitioner Name _____	
<b>Practice Name</b> _____ <b>Phone</b> _____	
<b>Declaration (Recipient or Parent/Guardian)</b> I declare that the information provided is true and correct, the requested expenditure will be incurred by me for the reasons outlined here and I am not entitled to claim or recover costs from any other source including compensation, insurance cover or damages. I accept liability for any obligation to pay fees associated with damages to property or stolen goods claimed by accommodation providers and understand that the WACHS may pursue debts associated with these fees. If I miss pre-booked travel or accommodation without a valid reason WACHS may pursue debts associated with these fees. I give consent for WACHS staff to obtain or distribute information from/to any third party necessary for this application or to deliver relevant health care.	
<b>Signature</b> _____ <b>Date</b> _____	
<b>OFFICE</b> PATS Clerk <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Declined <b>Reference #</b> _____ <b>USE</b> Delegated Financial Authority <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Declined <b>Signature/ he #</b> _____ <b>ONLY</b> Appointment proof via text message sighted <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Signature/ he #</b> _____	
THIS FORM IS AVAILABLE IN AN ALTERNATIVE FORMAT ON REQUEST	

# Form C2 – Assistance in Advance Proof of Attendance

 <p><b>WA Country Health Service</b> Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development</p>	<p>Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS) <b>Assistance in Advance Proof of Attendance</b> Form C2</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> I am certifying attendance only, I received assistance in advance prior to my trip. If you require reimbursement for any accommodation/travel outside of the assistance in advance you have already received please complete the details in the box below "Is there any change" and provide any relevant receipts. Please return form within 15 days of last appointment.	
<b>Title</b>	<b>Surname</b>
<b>Given name (s)</b>	
<b>Date of birth</b>	
<b>APPOINTMENT DETAILS</b> Eligibility criteria applies. Including but not limited to the nearest specialist including telehealth or visiting specialist.	
<b>Appointment Date</b> _____	<b>Hospital/Clinic Location</b> _____
<b>Speciality</b>	<b>Specialist Name</b>
<b>Is there any change from your approved assistance in advance accommodation/travel method please provide details?</b>  _____  _____	
<b>Recipient (or guardian) declaration and consent.</b> I declare that the information provided is true and correct, the expenditure claimed was incurred by me for the reasons outlined in my assistance in advance application and I am not entitled to claim or recover costs from any other source including compensation, insurance cover or damages. I accept liability for any obligation to pay fees associated with damages to property or stolen goods claimed by accommodation providers and understand that the WACHS may pursue debts associated with these fees. I give consent for WACHS staff to obtain or distribute information from/to any third party necessary for this application or to deliver relevant health care.	
<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>TO BE COMPLETED BY SPECIALIST OR CLINIC EMPLOYEE – For every appointment claim to verify claim.</b> To facilitate reimbursement of expenses and/or confirm travel details complete all sections.	
Has the recipient's condition changed so they require air travel?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Has the recipient's condition changed so they require a support person?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Has the recipient's condition changed so they need to extend their stay?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Was the recipient hospitalised?	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, from _____ to _____
If 'Yes' to any of the above, please provide clinical reason:  _____  _____	
Can the follow up appointments be done via telehealth? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Stamp (required)	Signature _____
	Name _____
	Date _____
<b>OFFICE USE ONLY</b>	PATS Clerk <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Declined    Reference # _____ Delegated Financial Authority <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Declined    Signature/ he # _____
THIS FORM IS AVAILABLE IN AN ALTERNATIVE FORMAT ON REQUEST	

## Regional PATS teams' contact details

Office	Phone	Email address
<b>Kimberley</b>		
Broome	9194 2373	PATS.Broome@health.wa.gov.au
Derby & Fitzroy Crossing	9193 3348	PATS.Derby@health.wa.gov.au
Kununurra	9166 4237	PATS.Kununurra@health.wa.gov.au
<b>Pilbara</b>		
Pilbara	1800 138 653	PATS.Pilbara@health.wa.gov.au
<b>Midwest</b>		
Carnarvon	9941 0313	PATS.Carnarvon@health.wa.gov.au
Cue	9963 0100	PATS.Meekathara@health.wa.gov.au
Dongara	9927 0200	PATS.Dongara@health.wa.gov.au
Exmouth	9949 3666	PATS.Exmouth@health.wa.gov.au
Geraldton	9956 2216	PATS.Geraldton@health.wa.gov.au
Kalbarri	9937 0100	PATS.Kalbarrie@health.wa.gov.au
Meekatharra	9981 0600	PATS.Meekathara@health.wa.gov.au
Morawa	9971 0200	PATS.Morawa@health.wa.gov.au
Mt Magnet	9963 3100	PATS.Meekathara@health.wa.gov.au
Mullewa	9961 6200	PATS.Mullewa@health.wa.gov.au
Northampton	9934 0200	PATS.Northampton@health.wa.gov.au
Sandstone	9963 5808	PATS.Meekathara@health.wa.gov.au
Three Springs	9956 3200	PATS.ThreeSprings@health.wa.gov.au
Yalgoo	9962 8600	PATS.Meekathara@health.wa.gov.au
<b>Goldfields</b>		
Esperance	9079 8101	PATS.Esperance@health.wa.gov.au
Kalgoorlie	9080 5681	PATS.Kalgoorlie@health.wa.gov.au
<b>Wheatbelt</b>		
Wheatbelt	1800 728 792	PATS.Wheatbelt@health.wa.gov.au
<b>South West</b>		
South West	1800 823 131	PATS.Southwest@health.wa.gov.au
<b>Great Southern</b>		
Albany	9892 2226	PATS.Albany@health.wa.gov.au
Denmark	9848 0600	PATS.Denmark@health.wa.gov.au
Gnowangerup	9827 2222	PATS.Gnowangerup@health.wa.gov.au
Hopetoun	9838 3144	PATS.Hopetoun@health.wa.gov.au
Katanning	9821 6270	PATS.Katanning@health.wa.gov.au
Kojonup	9831 2222	PATS.Kojonup@health.wa.gov.au
Mount Barker, Plantagenet & Cranbrook	9892 1222	PATS.Plantagenet@health.wa.gov.au
Ravensthorpe	9832 2211	PATS.Ravensthorpe@health.wa.gov.au



# The Live Organ Donor Scheme

The [Live Organ Donor Scheme](#)<sup>25</sup> is separate to PATS. The scheme applies where your primary purpose of travel is for live organ donation assessment and/or retrieval in Western Australia and you are a permanent resident of a WACHS region and are eligible for treatment under Medicare.

You may be requested to provide evidence of your usual residence. The hospital that will be undertaking the transplant is responsible for applying for the scheme on your behalf to the Regional Director in the region where you live.

The referral is to be written (this can include email) and must include:

1. the donor's full name
2. your date of birth
3. your residential address
4. the dates and type of treatment required outside of your usual residential location.

Where practicable, WACHS is to book all travel and accommodation to achieve the most economical rates. Following the completion of surgery, you need to submit a claim to the local health service for any outstanding travel and accommodation costs, attaching tax receipts and other documentation necessary for reimbursement.

# Glossary and definitions

## Cancer treatment

Cancer treatment includes cancer-related surgery, radiotherapy and/or palliative intervention. For PATS purposes, it does not include diagnosis, consultations or treatment planning.

## Carer

A carer is a person who provides ongoing care or assistance to a person with a disability as defined in the [Disability Services Act 1993](#)<sup>26</sup> section 3; or for a person who has a chronic illness, including a mental illness as defined in the Mental Health Act 2014 section 4; or a person who is frail and requires assistance with carrying out everyday tasks. [The Carers Recognition Act 2004 \(WA\)](#)<sup>27</sup> provides more detail.

If you need medical specialist treatment and you are a carer for another person, you can talk to your health service about having the person you care for accompany you to the treatment centre if you cannot make other care arrangements. For example, you are caring for someone with a disability and need to travel for specialist treatment, and there is no one available to take care of that person. This will be considered under the Exceptional Rulings process.

## Closest Specialist

The closest medical specialist includes those services provided by [telehealth](#)<sup>2</sup>, private specialists or visiting specialists.

## Dependent child

A dependent child is a child under the age of 18 who normally resides with a parent and who is not in full time employment. This can include a child who is in a boarding institution during school term time.

## Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS)

### **Trip**

For the purpose of PATS, a trip is considered a two-way journey. A one-way journey following Inter Hospital Patient Transfer is also a trip.

### **Inter Hospital Patient Transfer (IHPT)**

Inter Hospital Patient Transfer occurs when an admitted patient is required to be transferred from one health service or hospital to another for a higher level of treatment or care. If this occurs the costs are paid by the local health service (hospital) where you are being transferred from (not by PATS).

### **Renal Treatment**

Renal treatment means an appointment with a nephrologist or vascular access consultant, surgery and follow up, home therapies training, pre-dialysis education and dialysis treatment.

### **Telehealth**

[Telehealth](#)<sup>2</sup> provides regional patients with improved access to timely specialist and emergency care, which can lead to improved health access to timely specialist and emergency care, which can lead to improved health outcomes for patients.

### **Treatment Centre**

The city or town in which the patient visits an eligible medical specialist or accesses an eligible specialist service.

### **Urgent Medical Transport**

Urgent medical transport is when a person has a medical emergency, such as a car accident or heart attack, and needs to be evacuated by ambulance, emergency vehicle or Royal Flying Doctor Service to hospital. This can also be called a Primary Evacuation.

### **Support Person**

A support person refers to a person who is assisting a PATS recipient to attend their specialist medical appointment. A support person may be a carer as well, but an escort might only be helping a person with travel and other needs in the short term. An approved support person is responsible for a PATS recipient transport and accommodation needs during treatment and must be deemed necessary for medical reasons by a doctor. A support person must be over 18 years of age and be able to fulfil the role required.

### **Clinical Escort**

A clinical escort is a clinically trained person who is required to accompany a patient for medical reasons as certified by the referring practitioner. The person must be a registered nurse, enrolled nurse, or have appropriate clinical skills. The Regional Director approves the clinical escort, and the cost is paid by the local health service (not by PATS).

### **Exceptional Ruling**

If a person's context does not fit within the strict criteria of PATS, but meets the intent of PATS, they may be eligible to be considered for approval via the exceptional ruling process. PATS offices can assist patients with these applications. Exceptional ruling applications are approved by Regional Executive Directors.

### **Exceptional Endorsement**

If a recipient's context is within the strict criteria of PATS, but they are requesting consideration for a particular subsidy outside of their core eligibility, they may be eligible to be considered for approval via the exceptional endorsement process. PATS offices can assist patients with these applications. Exceptional endorsement applications are approved by Regional Medical Directors.

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Appendix 6.

## Reference List

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