



Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATs)

What is PATs?

PATs reduces the cost of accessing specialist medical services that are not available locally by providing a subsidy towards the cost of travel and accommodation.

PATs is available for permanent residents of country Western Australia who are:

- **Required to travel more than 100 kilometres** (one way) to access the nearest eligible specialist medical services, or
- **Required to travel more than 70 kilometres** (one way) to access renal or cancer treatment.

Eligible services can be provided by public or private providers and can be delivered by face-to-face or [telehealth](#)¹.

PATs is also available to:

- assist PATs clients to have an **escort accompany them** during their travel (eligibility criteria applies);
- **return 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; and
- assist with the cost of **returning a country resident to their home town if they die** while on PATs-eligible travel and need to be transported more than 100 kilometres. This includes escorts.

To apply for PATs, ask your specialist or GP to complete and sign Section B of a PATs Application/Claim Form.

For more information, contact your [local PATs office](#)² or scan the QR code to visit the [PATs website](#)³.



1. www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/Telehealth

2. www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/ContactPATs

3. www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/PATs



Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATs)

Eligibility

PATs intends to provide financial assistance (subsidies) to reduce the cost of accessing specialist medical services that are not provided locally.

You are eligible for PATs if you:

- are an **Australian citizen**, permanent resident or humanitarian visa holder,
- are a **resident of a country region**,
- hold or are eligible for a current **Medicare** card or a [Reciprocal Health Care Agreement Medicare card](#)¹,
- required to travel **more than 100 kilometres** one way to receive specialist treatment, or more than 70 kilometres one way to receive renal or cancer treatment, and
- are receiving an eligible **specialist medical service** that is provided by a medical practitioner who is registered with Medicare as a specialist.

What is eligible for PATs?

- Most Medicare-eligible specialist medical services are covered by PATs, but there are some categories that are excluded. A list of eligible services is on page 21 of the PATs Guidelines.
- The closest available eligible specialist medical service or telehealth service that meets the clinical timeframe specified by your referring practitioner. It does not matter if the service is public or private.
- Services within Western Australia. If your closest specialist service is not in Western Australia, assistance may be provided. Contact your local PATs office or refer to the [Interstate Patient Transfer Scheme](#)² for more information.

Not being eligible for PATs does not stop you from arranging or attending the specialist services.

If you do not meet this eligibility criteria, but you think you meet the intent of PATs, you may be eligible for subsidies through an Exceptional Ruling. Contact your local PATs office to discuss your circumstances.

Contact your [local PATs office](#)³ for more information.

1. www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/medicare/reciprocal-health-care-agreements

2. www.health.ywa.wa.gov.au/Articles/F_I/Interstate-patient-transfer-scheme

3. www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/ContactPATs



Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATs)

Escorts

An escort is a support person who travels with you to your appointment to assist you with your travel. An escort needs to be considered necessary by your referring practitioner or treating specialist to be approved for PATs subsidies.

You are eligible for an escort if you are a PATs-eligible patient **and** meet at least one of the following criteria:

- You are receiving **cancer treatment**
- Require a **carer** or someone to **legally make decisions** on your behalf
- Are travelling for **childbirth** or your doctor has required you to be near a hospital before or following birth
- Have a **clinical recommendation**, including for **emotional support** due to attending an appointment that is likely to result in a significant diagnosis, be distressing, or require **psychological support**
- Require **cultural or linguistic support**
- Are experiencing or living with an **intellectual, psychiatric, cognitive, neurological, sensory or physical impairment or disability** or are **frail or frail aged**
- Require **journey navigation** to ensure the safe and successful travel to and from the appointment or accommodation, if services such as [Country Health Connection](#)¹ are not available or appropriate
- Are **under 18-years-old**

Who can be an escort?

An escort must be 18 years of age and be able to fulfil the role of an escort.

If you do not meet the escort eligibility criteria but you think you may be eligible for an Exceptional Ruling, contact your local PATs office to discuss your circumstances.

Contact your local PATs office, GP or specialist if you think your escort eligibility may have changed. If you develop a new need for an escort during your trip, your specialist will need to describe why this is needed on your PATs Application/Claim Form.

For more information, contact your [local PATs office](#)² or visit the [PATs website](#)³.

1. www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/Our-patients/PATsresources

2. www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/ContactPATs

3. www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/PATs



Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATs)

Travel Subsidy

The travel subsidy assists you to get you from your hometown to the town or city where you are going for treatment. It may not cover all costs associated with your travel.

The travel subsidy is not able to pay for travel around the town or city where your appointment is. If you are using public transport while in the Perth area, you can plan your journey with public transport online at the [TransPerth Plan Your Journey website](https://www.transperth.wa.gov.au/Journey-Planner)¹.

Subsidies available for travel more than 100 kilometres one way	
Private vehicle (car)	16 cents per kilometre
Train or bus	Economy fare
Commercial flight	Economy fare Available if you would alternatively need to travel by road for more than 16 hours, more than 350 kilometres one way for cancer treatment, or if your referring practitioner or treating specialist certifies air travel is essential for clinical reasons.
Subsidies available for travel 70 to 100 kilometres one way	
Patients receiving renal or cancer treatment	\$20 per return trip (flat rate) Renal treatment includes appointments with a nephrologist or vascular access consultant, surgery and follow up, home therapies training, pre-dialysis education and dialysis treatment. Cancer treatment includes surgery, radiotherapy and/or palliative intervention. It does not include diagnosis, consultations or treatment planning.

Travelling by car?

1. Contact your local PATS office prior to travelling to see if you are eligible for travel subsidies.
2. If required, talk to your local PATS office to see if you are eligible for accommodation assistance. Let them know if you have any special requirements (if you use a wheelchair).

Travelling by air?

1. Contact your local PATS office in advance to see if you are eligible for air travel.
2. If required, talk to your local PATS office to see if you are eligible for accommodation subsidies. Let them know if you have any special requirements (if you use a wheelchair).
3. Plan how you will get from the airport to your accommodation or appointment. You can plan how to get to and from Perth airport on the [Perth Airport website](https://www.perthairport.com.au/to-and-from-the-airport)².

Live in York or Northam?

You are eligible for travel subsidies.

Live in the Peel Region?

Contact [Peel PATs](https://www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/ContactPATs)³.

Make sure you pack all the required documentation for your trip. This includes your PATS Application/ Claim Form, 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.

For more information, contact your [local PATS office](https://www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/ContactPATs)⁴ or visit the [PATs website](https://www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/PATs)⁵.

1. www.transperth.wa.gov.au/Journey-Planner

2. www.perthairport.com.au/to-and-from-the-airport

3. www.rkpg.health.wa.gov.au/Our-services/Service-Directory/Peel-PATs

4. www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/ContactPATs

5. www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/PATs



Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATs)

Accommodation Subsidy

The accommodation subsidy is available when you need to stay away from home to receive specialist medical services.

You must **live more than 100 kilometres from your specialist** appointment and:

- the medical specialist certifies 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:
 - time required travelling
 - type of travel
 - transport schedules and availability
 - appointment or treatment time, or
 - your medical condition

Accommodation can be commercial or private:

Commercial accommodation includes hotels, motels, inns, hostels (including Aboriginal hostels), caravan parks, and accommodation provided by charities or Not-For-Profit organisations. Your local PATS office can provide you with information on accommodation options that may be located close to your treatment centre or that offer lower cost options for PATS clients. You will need to submit a tax receipt from your accommodation provider with your PATS Claim Form.

Private accommodation includes private dwellings such as a house occupied by a friend or family member.

Subsidies available for accommodation	
Commercial ¹	Up to \$102.75 per night for a PATS applicant, and up to an additional \$15 for an approved escort
Private	\$20 per night each for a PATS applicant and an approved escort

Contact your [local PATS office](#)² if you are eligible for PATS accommodation subsidies or visit the [PATs website](#)³ for more information.

1. 2.75% CPI applied 1 July 2022

2. www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/ContactPATs

3. www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/PATs



Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATs)

Reviews and Exceptional Rulings

Reviews can be requested if you have had your PATs Application/Claim Form declined.

1. Contact your local PATs office

You need to explain why you think the decision was incorrect.

2. Your local PATs office will review your application or claim

Your local PATs office may need to get advice from specialists to make sure they are giving you the right information. Your local PATs office may also call you 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 PATs Application/Claim Form.

If you are found to be ineligible for PATs, you may ask to be considered under an Exceptional Ruling. If you are ineligible for PATs or an Exceptional Ruling, it does not mean you are not able to attend your appointment, it means you are not able to receive PATs subsidies.

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.

1. Request an Exceptional Ruling

You may be considered under an Exceptional Ruling if your PATs application or claim is declined, or your local PATs office escalates your claim where it meets the intent of PATs, but does not meet the eligibility criteria.

It is important that your Exceptional Ruling application has as much information and evidence as possible to support it. You may need a letter from your doctor or specialist explaining the details of your situation.

2. Your local PATs office and WACHS Regional Director will review your application

Your PATs office and WACHS Regional Director may need to get advice from specialists, and may also call you to discuss your circumstances.

3. You receive an outcome

If your Exceptional Ruling application is approved, your local PATs office will be able to help you finalise your application or claim.

If your Exceptional Ruling application is declined, the PATs Regional Coordinator will explain the reason why.

For more information contact your [local PATs office](#)¹ or visit the [PATs website](#)².

1. www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/ContactPATs

2. www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/PATs



Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATs)

Submitting a PATs Application or Claim

If you are eligible for PATs, you can make sure you complete your PATs Application/Claim Form correctly by following these steps:

Steps to completing your PATs Forms

Before your specialist appointment	1. PATs Application/Claim Forms are available from your local PATs office, hospital and many medical practices. Forms can also be downloaded from the PATs website under "PATs forms" ¹ .
	2. You will need to complete and sign Section A of the PATs Application/Claim Form.
	3. Your referring practitioner must complete and sign Section B of the PATs Application/Claim Form.
	4. Send the completed and signed PATs Application/Claim Form to your local PATs office (by mail, email, or in person) as soon as you can. It may take up to ten days to assess your application. If you haven't had much notice of your appointment and need your application processed urgently, please advise your local PATs office when you lodge your application.
	5. You will be advised of the outcome of the assessment.
At your specialist appointment	6. Your specialist or another staff member at the clinic needs to complete Section C of the PATs Application/Claim Form before you leave your appointment and return it to you. Make sure clinical details (e.g. to explain why you need extended accommodation in Perth) are included by your specialist or clinic staff, if needed.
After your specialist appointment	7. You need to complete and sign Section C of the PATs Application/Claim Form and return it to your local PATs office for processing.
	8. Attach any original receipts or tax invoices relating to your travel or accommodation.

Things for you to remember about submitting PATs Forms:

- PATs Application/Claim Forms must be lodged within 12 months of your appointment
- As the patient, it is your responsibility to make sure all required information is included in the application
- Your local PATs office needs to assess Section A and B on your PATs Application/Claim Form before your eligibility is confirmed
- It usually takes about 6 weeks to process claims (travel and accommodation subsidies)
- Each trip that you are claiming needs its own PATs Application/Claim Form, but only Section C needs to be completed for subsequent trips (one trip per Section C)
- If you need to see the same specialist for longer than 12 months, a new PATs Application/Claim Form needs to be completed

Contact your [local PATs office](#) ² for more information.

1. www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/PATsforms
2. www.wacountry.health.wa.gov.au/ContactPATs



Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATs)

PATs Eligible Services

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

Addiction Medicine

- Next step

Anaesthesia

Artificial Eye or Limb

Bone Densitometry

Cleft Lip/Palate

Dental *

Dermatology

Dialysis

Emergency medicine

Obstetrics and gynaecology

- Childbirth
- Gynaecology and urogynaecology
- Gynaecological oncology
- Mammography
- Maternal-fetal medicine
- Neonatology and perinatal medicine
- Obstetrics and gynaecological ultrasound
- Reproductive Endocrinology and Infertility

Occupational and environmental medicine **

Ophthalmology

Paediatrics and child health

- Clinical genetics
- General paediatrics
- Neonatal and perinatal medicine
- Paediatric cardiology
- Paediatric emergency medicine
- Paediatric endocrinology

- Paediatric gastroenterology and hepatology
- 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

Pain medicine

Palliative medicine

Pathology

- Haematology
- Immunology

Physician

- Cardiology
- Clinical genetics
- Endocrinology
- Gastroenterology & Hepatology
- General Medicine
- Geriatric Medicine
- Haematology
- Immunology & Allergy
- Infectious Disease

- Medical oncology
- Nephrology
- Neurology
- Nuclear Medicine
- Respiratory and Sleep Studies
- Rheumatology

Psychiatry

Public Health Medicine

Radiation oncology

Radiology

- Diagnostic Radiology (CT and X-Ray)
- Diagnostic Ultrasound
- Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)
- Nuclear medicine

Rehabilitation medicine

Renal medicine

Sexual health medicine

Sport and exercise medicine

Surgery

- Cardiothoracic Surgery
- General Surgery
- Hand Surgery
- Neurosurgery
- Orthopaedic Surgery
- Otolaryngology (ENT)
- Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery

- Paediatric Surgery
- Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery
- Urology
- Vascular surgery

* only for 1) dental services for children 8 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 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.

** not including a specialist appointment related to Workers Compensation

*** not including wisdom teeth removal, even if performed by an Oral & Maxillofacial specialist