



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

PENSIONER ANNUAL FREE TRIP SCHEME

General Information

In this Guideline the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts is referred to as the Department.

The Territory of Christmas Island and the Territory of the Cocos (Keeling) Islands are often referred to collectively as the Indian Ocean Territories (IOT).

The purpose of this scheme is to provide eligible pensioners in the IOT with access to Australian mainland services that are not available in remote areas.

This scheme provides eligible pensioners in the IOT with equivalent airfare related assistance to that received by equivalent pensioners in remote areas of WA.

As such, the Department Pensioner Annual Free Trip Scheme is operated in accordance with the same guidelines as the Pensioner Scheme provided by the WA State Government.

The people that will be able to access the scheme are those pensioners that have a Pensioner Concession Card (PCC) issued by Centrelink.

If you receive an eligible Centrelink payment you will automatically receive a PCC.

For further information about eligibility for Centrelink payments and the PCC, please contact Centrelink or your local Centrelink agent.

**When making an application, please ensure you
are referring to the current guidelines**

Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for assistance under the scheme, pensioners must satisfy the following eligibility criteria:

- must be an Australian Citizen or hold a permanent residency visa;
- must be a permanent resident of Christmas Island or the Cocos (Keeling) Islands for a continuous period of 2 years or longer; and
- must be in receipt of a valid Pensioner Concession Card.

Entitlements

Those pensioners who satisfy the above criteria will be entitled to receive **one free return airfare to Perth per calendar year**.

How to apply for the IOT Pensioner Annual Free Trip Scheme

1. Applicants should submit a completed application form at least **one month prior to their intended date of travel**.

Applications must be mailed or e-mailed to the Travel Assistance Officer at the Department's Perth office. Send completed applications to:

Travel Assistance Officer
Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications
and the Arts
PO Box Z5048
PERTH WA 6831
Phone: (02) 6136 8644
Email: IOTAirTravel@infrastructure.gov.au

2. Once your application has been assessed you will receive a letter confirming if your application has been approved or not.
3. The Department will confirm with you, your preferred travel dates and will then make a booking for you with Virgin Australia. You will then be provided with an itinerary and an E-ticket.
4. If you need to arrange your bookings before your application is assessed, you must pay for the airfare and seek reimbursement later. **Please note that reimbursements will not be granted for travel undertaken in previous years, unless an application submitted that year was approved. Claim for reimbursement must be submitted within 12 months from return date. Claim beyond this date will be rejected.**
5. Pensioners seeking reimbursement for their costs of travel will need to provide the following:
 - a copy of the boarding pass; and
 - a copy of the Itinerary / E-ticket.
6. The maximum amount the Department will reimburse is the cost of best fare for the day. Payments are usually made by EFT into a nominated bank account so you will be required to provide these details.

Conditions of Travel

- Applicants must have been **continuously** resident on either Christmas Island or the Cocos (Keeling) Islands for a minimum period of 2 years from the date of application.

Note: To be continuously resident you must not have been away from the Islands for more than 3 months.

- **Open ended travel is not permitted** and will not be approved.

Note: You must advise the dates you wish to leave and return to the islands. Only a return ticket will be booked for you.

- **Your return date must be within 3 months** of the commencement of the journey.

Note: You cannot use this entitlement to be away from the islands for more than three months, unless you have medical reasons for the extended absence.

- Travel assistance is only provided between Christmas Islands and Perth, or between the Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Perth.

Note: Journeys to or via another country or city will not be approved.

- The entitlement only applies to the applicant. It is not transferable and does not include dependents.
- Only one return journey per calendar year will be approved.
- If you do not use your entitlement in the calendar year it was due, it will lapse. You cannot take it in the following year.
- You must have a valid PCC at the start of your travel.
- If your PCC expires or it is cancelled you are no longer eligible for the scheme.
- You must submit a new application each year.
- Once booking is confirmed, any penalties or charges associated with variations to travel date(s) must be paid for by the applicant.
- The Department will not pay for the cost of any additional charges imposed by the airline, such as meals or additional/excess baggage charges.
- If your circumstances change you must advise the Department.