

# COVID-19: Business Related Travel and Reimbursement of RMO Training Related Expenses

***Updated as at 18/08/2021***

All domestic and international business related travel is now restricted, inline with the move to National Alert Level 4.

Further information on future travel and alert levels is detailed below.

## **Domestic Travel**

All business related domestic travel during National Alert Levels 3 and 4 are restricted.

During National Alert Level 1 or 2, business related domestic travel can occur provided it is completed safely and the travel is approved by the DHB as per the process outlined below.

## **International Travel**

Restrictions are in place for all international business related travel.

### **Trans-Tasman Travel**

Applications for trans-Tasman travel for the period 24 July 2021 – 17 September 2021, will not be approved in line with the government travel restrictions.

Applications for trans-Tasman travel for business related travel, post 17 September 2021 can be submitted for CMO approval as per the standard process. A decision on your travel request will not be confirmed until the government advises an opening of the trans-Tasman bubble.

As a reminder, you are encouraged to use zoom/skype to undertake activities rather than requiring trans-Tasman travel. Applications will only be considered, where travel is unavoidable as there are no New Zealand based alternatives, remote meeting options are unavailable or inappropriate (e.g. formal examinations mandated as part of training programmes).

Trans-Tasman travel will require DHB approval and bookings for courses, conferences and travel should not be made until this approval is granted. The exception to this will be bookings for examinations. Where you are required to book and pay for examinations which will be held in Australia, proceed with the booking. However, you must hold off booking the associated travel and accommodation until CMO approval to travel is granted. In addition, if the exam is cancelled, you will be required to seek a refund of any costs incurred.

## Application Process

Detailed below is the application process to seek DHB approval for business related travel, including travel training, education, conference, examination and seminar or meeting attendance.



Applications for business related travel are to be sent to [rmoreimbursements@nra.health.nz](mailto:rmoreimbursements@nra.health.nz).

In considering applications, the CMOs will be looking to balance individual training requirements and service needs.

Please ensure you include the following information to ensure a timely response;

- Name and details
- Travel location and dates
- Vocational pathway

Where applications are for trans-Tasman travel, the following supporting documentation is required,

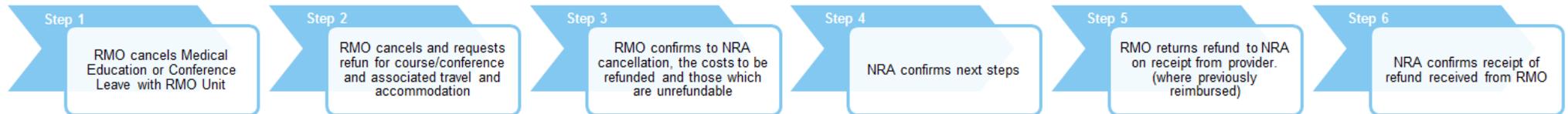
1. Evidence from the course, conference or training provider confirming that,
  - a. There are no New Zealand based alternatives
  - b. Remote meeting options are unavailable or inappropriate
2. A letter of support from your Supervisor of Training or VTC Chair outlining that the purpose for travel is non-deferrable (e.g formal examinations mandated as part of training programmes)
3. A letter of support or confirmation from your Clinical Director supporting your travel including cover arrangements and mitigations if your return to work is delayed due to COVID-19 (e.g. a lockdown or isolation requirements)

Please do not proceed with the booking of travel and accommodation without approval to travel.

To note, the reimbursement of any course/conference is subject to meeting the standard reimbursement criteria. Clarification on these criteria is available at: <http://www.aucklanddoctors.co.nz/rmos/currentemployees/>

## Refund Process

Detailed below is the process for refund and reimbursement of RMO training related expenses and continuing medical education (where applicable) due to restrictions on business related travel.



The expectation is that refunds will be sought for all course/conferences and associated travel and accommodation in the first instance.

## FAQs

To support with the application of the process and clarify next steps for seeking reimbursement or refund of training related expenses the following FAQs have been developed:

### International Travel

#### 1. I haven't booked any travel or accommodation for my course/conference that will be held in Australia yet

- a. Consider whether;
  - i. activities can be undertaken via zoom/skype
  - ii. there are other New Zealand based alternatives
  - iii. the purpose for the travel is deferrable
- b. If there are no alternatives, apply to NRA for CMO approval to travel. Do not book any travel or accommodation until approval to travel has been granted.
- c. If you proceed with the booking of an international course/conference and related travel and accommodation and travel and approval has not been granted by the CMO, you may not receive reimbursement of these costs.

#### 2. I haven't booked any travel or accommodation for my international (other than Australia) course/conference yet

- a. Do not book any travel or accommodation at this stage as international business related travel restrictions remain with the exception of trans-Tasman travel
- b. If you proceed with the booking of an international course/conference and related travel and accommodation and travel, you may not receive reimbursement of these costs if international business related travel restrictions remain

- 3. The date for my examination has been confirmed in Australia and I have to book to secure my place,**
  - a. Proceed with the booking of your examination
  - b. Apply to NRA for CMO approval to travel internationally for your examination
  - c. Do not book any travel or accommodation until approval to travel is granted by the CMOs
  - d. Claim reimbursement of the examination cost from NRA
  - e. If there are travel restrictions and you are unable to travel for your examination, you will need to request a refund from the provider
  - f. You will need to confirm to NRA whether a full, partial or no refund is received and provide evidence. NRA will confirm next steps specific to your situation.
  - g. All full or partial refunds received are to be repaid to NRA for any costs already reimbursed.

## Domestic Travel

- 4. The dates for my domestic examination/course/conference have been confirmed and I need to travel domestically during Alert Levels 1 or 2 to attend,**
  - a. Proceed with the booking of your examination/course/conference
  - b. Apply to NRA for DHB approval to travel domestically for your examination/course/conference
  - c. Do not book any travel or accommodation until approval to travel is granted
  - d. Once approval is granted, proceed with booking travel and accommodation
  - e. Claim reimbursement for the cost of your examination/course/conference and travel and accommodation
- 5. My course/conference and associated travel and accommodation has already been reimbursed by NRA and I won't be attending due to the travel restrictions**
  - a. Cancel leave with RMO Unit
  - b. Cancel course/conference attendance and associated travel and accommodation
  - c. Request refunds where applicable for the course/conference and associated travel and accommodation,
  - d. You will need to confirm to NRA whether a full, partial or no refund is received and provide evidence. NRA will confirm next steps specific to your situation.
  - e. All full or partial refunds received are to be repaid to NRA for any costs already reimbursed.
- 6. My course/conference and associated travel and accommodation has not yet been reimbursed by NRA and I won't be attending due to the domestic travel restrictions**
  - a. Cancel leave with RMO Unit
  - b. Cancel course/conference attendance and associated travel and accommodation
  - c. Request refunds where applicable for the course/conference and associated travel and accommodation.
  - d. You will need to confirm to NRA whether a full, partial or no refund is received. NRA will confirm next steps specific to your situation.
  - e. Where a refund is received for a cost you have not yet claimed with NRA, you will retain the refund.
  - f. Where a cost is not refunded or you are only provided a partial refund, NRA will reimburse the outstanding costs as per normal process.