

## **Australasian Neuroscience Society Student Body Committee**

### **Student Travel Awards Policy**

April 2018

This policy sets out the guiding principles for the ongoing distribution of student travel awards to the ANS annual meeting. It also provides specific detail about how the student travel awards have been distributed in previous years, which should be used as a model for distribution in future years.

#### **Guiding principles:**

1. Students are eligible to receive one (1) ANS Student Travel Award per ANS conference/annual meeting if they:
  - a. Are a current ANS student member at both the time of conference registration and conference attendance;
  - b. Are a current full-time or part-time PhD or MPhil student;
  - c. Have not previously received three (3) or more ANS Student Travel Awards;
  - d. Submit a first-author abstract to the ANS conference by the relevant closing date for submissions or, in the case of conference abstract submission remaining open until the conference starts, submit a first-author abstract no less than thirty (30) days prior to the conference starting to be eligible for the Travel Award;
  - e. Need either to travel inter-state (in the case of travel within Australia), between islands (in the case of travel within New Zealand), or internationally to physically attend the ANS conference for which they submitted a first-author abstract, and;
  - f. Physically attend the ANS conference for which they submitted the first author abstract and report to the conference registration desk upon arrival.
2. All students who are eligible to receive an ANS Student Travel Award (as per conditions in 1) should receive some level of financial assistance in the form of a Travel Award.
3. Students whose estimated airfare costs are higher than other students should receive a proportionally larger Travel Award than students whose estimated costs are less. Airfare estimates are made by the SBC based on average online prices two months prior to the conference.
4. Awards may not provide a full reimbursement as all eligible applicants will receive a Travel Award, thus the number of successful applicants each year will dictate the size of

the awards. Amounts awarded to each student will be determined by the SBC and approved by the ANS Council, according to a model based on that described.

5. Application for a Travel Award is made as part of the Abstract Submission process. The student must register for the conference before making an abstract submission.
6. Overseas student members are eligible to apply for a Travel Award, but their reimbursement will be no greater than that received by any Australian or New Zealand student.
7. In the case of the student's university or institute covering the financial cost of travel to the conference, the travel award will be paid to the university or institute and not to the student.
8. If a student has paid for their own travel, receipt of travel expenses is required to be presented to the company organising the conference and/or the ANS Secretariat before payment will be made to a student bank account.
9. Payment of awards is the responsibility of the company organising the conference and may be assisted in this by the ANS Secretariat. Payment of the award will be made once the conference budget has been finalised.

**Example funds distribution model:**

In the example below (Table 1), a funds distribution model is shown from the 2016 Hobart ANS annual meeting. All cost and reimbursement amounts are quoted in Australian dollars.

**Table 1. Example funds distribution model (2016 Hobart annual meeting).**

State or region	AC T	NSW	QLD	WA	SA	VIC	TAS	NZ	O/S	
Number of students	0	55	22	8	16	29	19	5	6	
Estimated return airfare cost	0	260	430	640	470	210	-	640	640	
Percentage of reimbursement										Total funds distributed
10%	0	1,430	946	512	752	609	-	320	384	4,953
20%	0	2,860	1,892	1,024	1,504	1,218	-	640	768	9,906
30%	0	4,290	2,838	1,536	2,256	1,827	-	960	1,152	14,859
40%	0	5,720	3,784	2,048	3,008	2,436	-	1,280	1,536	19,812
50%	0	7,150	4,730	2,560	3,760	3,045	-	1,600	1,920	24,765
60%	0	8,580	5,676	3,072	4,512	3,654	-	1,920	2,304	29,718
70%	0	10,010	6,622	3,584	5,264	4,263	-	2,240	2,688	34,671
80%	0	11,440	7,568	4,096	6,016	4,872	-	2,560	3,072	39,624
90%	0	12,870	8,514	4,608	6,768	5,481	-	2,880	3,456	44,577
95%	0	13,585	8,987	4,864	7,144	5,786	-	3,040	3,648	47,054
100%	0	14,300	9,460	5,120	7,520	6,090	-	3,200	3,840	49,530

Under this model, the number of eligible students travelling from a particular region (e.g. NSW) and the estimated airfare cost (from the major city in that region, e.g. Sydney) is required before reimbursement amounts can be calculated for different proportions of the total estimated airfare costs for students from that region. We then use a sliding scale of percentage reimbursements from ANS, ranging from 10% to 100%, with the totals provided for each level of reimbursement also calculated. In this example, for instance, AUD \$14,859 would be required to reimburse 30% of all eligible students' airfares. So, to determine the amount of reimbursement ANS can offer, we must first know the total number of eligible students travelling from each region and the estimated airfare cost from those regions' major cities. Then, the total budget for student travel awards, as allocated by the ANS Council, can be compared with the different levels of reimbursement and we may select an appropriate level of contribution to match the given budget. This has the effects of guaranteeing all students receive some level of support while also ensuring that those whose costs are higher are supported at a higher level.

For the 2017 Sydney ANS annual meeting, a similar method was employed as in the 2016 example, with one small difference which was requested by students from New Zealand: we have split the region into North and South Islands. This is because it is generally more expensive to travel from the South Island than from the North Island. In the case of the North Island, we have averaged the estimated flight cost of flying from Auckland or Wellington and in the case of the South Island we have averaged the cost of flying from Christchurch or Dunedin.

Under this system we cannot know a priori how much each student travel award is worth, since it requires us to know first the number of eligible students from each region. So, once those numbers are known, either the SBC or a member of Council can enter those numbers into an Excel spreadsheet similar to Table 1 and Council can then select an appropriate level of reimbursement per the total amount budgeted.

The deadline for Travel Award applications occurs with the close of abstract submissions OR thirty (30) days prior to the conference starting, whichever comes first. No further students will be considered after this date.