

Grief to Grace Fund – Frequently Asked Questions

Who is eligible?

Financial support is only available for people **resident in Australia or New Zealand**. Individuals must be aged **18 or over**.

Normally an individual would receive this funding **only once**. However, additional requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Anyone who has attended the Grief to Grace program before at their own expense, but would like to attend it again using this funding, is welcome to apply for this funding.

Board members of RVMP Inc and their families and friends are welcome to apply for this funding.

We will keep your contact with us, and all the information you share with us, **confidential and private**. We will only breach that confidentiality in an emergency which poses a threat to your life or the life of other people.

How can I start the process?

You can visit the international retreat calendar at the Grief to Grace website and find a site where you think you could attend the retreat.

Most sites offer the program in **English**, but some offer it in **Spanish, French, and Polish**. Please check that the site where you want to go is offering the retreat in a language in which you are fluent.

You will need to contact your preferred site directly via email. They will tell you if they have capacity to take you. They will also take you through their screening process beforehand.

The site where you apply will keep all your screening information **confidential and private**. They will not share any of this information with us.

What happens next?

When you have been screened and accepted for a program at a site, you can let us know. We will then contact the site directly to ask for confirmation that you've been accepted. **We won't ask for any other information.**

We will then pay your retreat fee directly to the site up front, which will secure your place on the retreat program.

Some sites have a small non-refundable application fee. We will cover this as well for you.

Please read each site's retreat payment conditions carefully, as some have deadlines by which the retreat fee is due in full.

I want someone to come with me on the program

If you have someone who also wants to attend the same program with you – for example, a parent, brother or sister, or spouse – they must approach the Grief to Grace site you have chosen and be screened and accepted on that program as well.

If they are accepted for the same program, and would like to access funding, we can assist them as an individual applicant. They will need to contact us directly themselves.

I need a carer to accompany me who will NOT be attending the program

You would have to negotiate the inclusion of a carer as a non-participant with the individual Grief to Grace site that you want to visit. We would not be able to assist this person with any funding.

My mother also wants to go on the retreat, but she wants to go to another site

She is welcome to contact her preferred site and be screened and accepted there. She will also need to contact us individually for funding. We will only deal directly with the person who is asking for funding, not via a third party.

How do I get my airfare covered?

You will need to book and pay for your flights to and from the site yourself. Once you have attended the program and have returned to Australia or New Zealand, we will contact the site to confirm that you attended the program. **We will not ask for any other information.**

Once we receive that confirmation, we will ask for your air travel receipts. We will reimburse you directly to any bank account you nominate for the value of one return economy air fare to and from the site.

This will cover the **full economy air travel cost** - so for example, a regional flight to an international airport in Australia or New Zealand, from there to the country where the site is, and for any other internal flights you need to take to get you to the site of the retreat and then home again.

If you want to upgrade your flight, **be sure to get a quote at the same time for the economy flight cost.** This will help us to reimburse you correctly.

Reimbursement for air travel will be made directly to a named bank account provided by you to us. We will only reimburse for flights for which we have been given a receipt.

I want to stay longer in the country where the retreat is being held

This travel fund was created for the purposes of helping people to attend a Grief to Grace retreat. That is its primary purpose and main priority. Our fund will only reimburse **a return economy air fare to and from the country where the retreat is being held, and only for a stay of a reasonable period.**

If you want to stay for a longer or undefined period in that country (for example, **longer than 90 days**, which is a standard tourist visa for many countries), and so you book a one-way ticket to attend the retreat, we will reimburse you **for that one-way ticket only.**

If you plan to spend more than 90 days overseas, or plan to have multiple stops on a longer journey, please contact us to discuss your plans and we will advise you on what we will reimburse.

All reimbursement is dependent on us receiving confirmation from the retreat site that the participant has attended the retreat.

What about other travel expenses?

You will have to cover other travel costs yourself. This might include visas, transfers, travel insurance, hotels, and taxis. If you wish to upgrade your plane seat to premium economy or business class, you will have to cover this cost yourself, as we will only reimburse to the value of an economy flight with your airline/s. Please ensure that you obtain a quote from the airline for the same flight at economy level so that we can reimburse you appropriately.

You should communicate with the Grief to Grace site you have chosen about whether they can provide you with an airport pickup. They can also advise you about local hotels or other places to stay before and after the retreat if you need time.

It is advisable to take a day or so before the retreat to adjust to the time difference at your site. You may also need time after the retreat to rest before you travel back to Australia or New Zealand.

What else might I need to think about?

You will need to be responsible for your own travel insurance and any visa requirements and health requirements for your host country (including vaccination). Please check these when you are planning your trip. Also, make sure you have a current passport!

What if something goes wrong?

RVMP Inc accepts no liability for any mishaps during your journey. You should carry adequate travel insurance to protect you. The Grief to Grace site to which you travel carries public liability and professional indemnity insurance for your time during the retreat program.

If your retreat program is cancelled, we will ask the site to refund your retreat fee to us. We may also ask the site to hold it over for a future program if that is what you wish, and if you are accepted into that future program. You may also re-apply at another date, or for another site, as long as your retreat fee has been refunded to us.

I belong to a religious community, and they can't afford to send me overseas

Please contact us directly at rvmpsec@gmail.com and we will discuss your situation with you.

I'm financially stretched, and it would be hard for me to pay for my airfare up front

There are several Australian and New Zealand Catholic and other charities who you can approach to ask for help with this. These include:

- For residents of **Maitland-Newcastle** diocese - <https://healingandsupport.org.au/>
- Your **local Safeguarding office or Catholic Professional Standards office** may be able to assist if you are a victim of clergy or diocesan sexual or other abuse.
- In New Zealand, you might be eligible for assistance from the **National Office for Professional Standards (NOPS)** and the redress scheme **Te Houhanga Rongo – A Path To Healing (APTH)**.
- Your **local St Vincent de Paul Society**.
- Your local chapter of the **Knights of the Southern Cross**.
- If you live in Victoria – **Pathways Victoria**.
- Some charities offer **No Interest Loans (NILs)** –
 - <https://goodshep.org.au/services/nils/>
 - <https://goodshep.org.au/nils-provider-finder/>
<https://goodshepherd.org.nz/good-loans/> in New Zealand.
- Some Grief to Grace sites overseas may also have some funds to assist applicants on a case-by-case basis.

Please give them the details of this funding program and ask the organisation to contact us directly if they want to discuss a way to help you get to a Grief to Grace program overseas.

Any other questions?

Please email us at rvmpsec@gmail.com and we will try to help you.