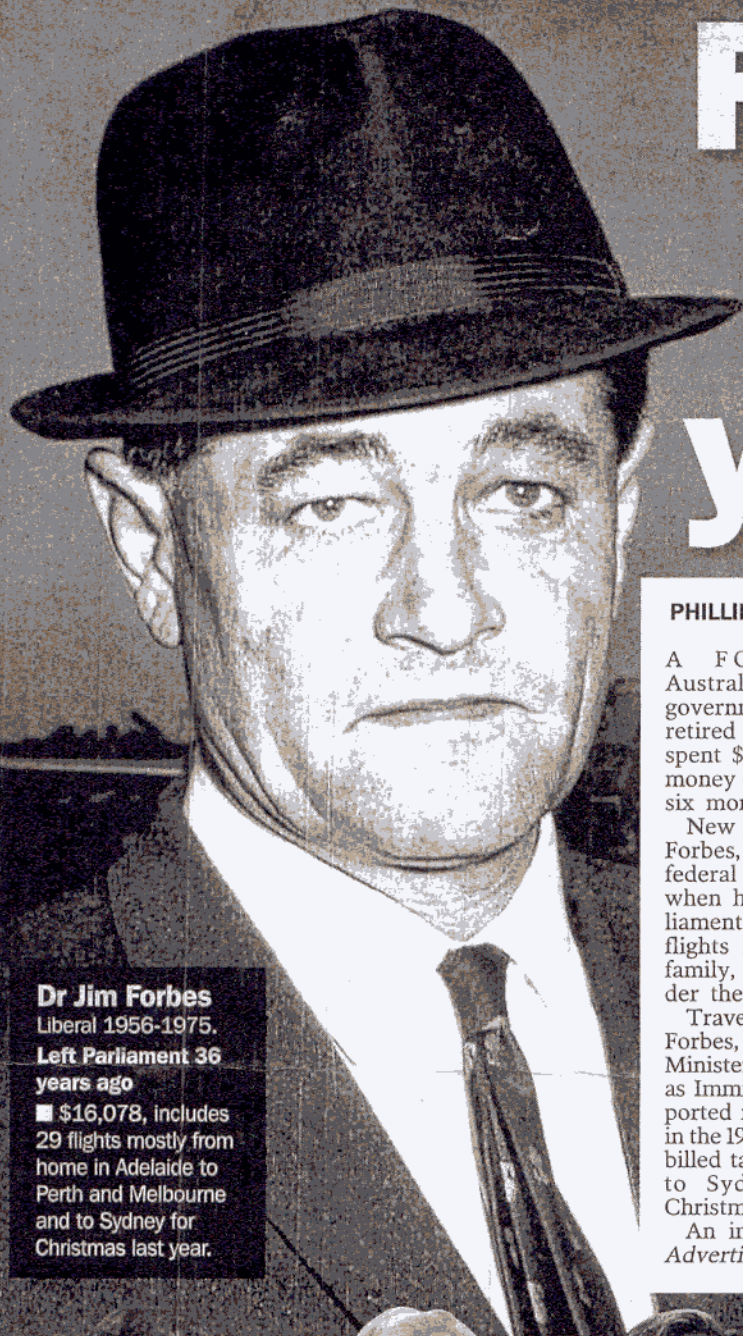


# Taxpayers fund 29 flights for polly who quit in 1975

## Free travel - even 36 years later



### Dr Jim Forbes

Liberal 1956-1975.

Left Parliament 36 years ago

■ \$16,078, includes 29 flights mostly from home in Adelaide to Perth and Melbourne and to Sydney for Christmas last year.

### PHILLIP HUDSON

A FORMER South Australian-based Menzies government minister, who retired 36 years ago, has spent \$16,000 of taxpayers' money on flights in the first six months of this year.

New figures show Dr Jim Forbes, 87, who was the federal member for Barker when he retired from Parliament in 1975, took 29 flights for himself and his family, costing \$16,078 under the Gold Pass scheme.

Travel records show Dr Forbes, who served as Army Minister under Menzies, and as Immigration Minister deported rock star Joe Cocker in the 1970s for having drugs, billed taxpayers \$1934 to fly to Sydney to celebrate Christmas last year.

An investigation by *The Advertiser* has found 26 for-

mer MPs - who have been out of Parliament for more than 20 years - still enjoy thousands of dollars a year worth of joy flights on top of their already generous superannuation.

A further 45 ex-politicians who left politics between 10 and 20 years ago are regular users of the travel perk. Some of the flights are used to travel to holiday hot spots such as Hamilton Island, Cairns and Broome.

As the Government warns of the need to make tough decisions to control spending to deliver its pledge to return the Budget to surplus, it continues to keep the uncapped Gold Pass scheme that costs taxpayers more than \$1.5 million a year, despite receiving high-level advice earlier this year to shut it down.

Former Nationals MP

Thomas McVeigh, who left Parliament 23 years ago, enjoyed 24 flights between Brisbane, Sydney, Adelaide and Cairns costing \$10,398.

Former Speaker Ian Sinclair has taken more than 700 flights, costing more than \$250,000, since he retired in 1998. He cost taxpayers \$14,394 for 40 flights in the first six months of this year.

It included four return trips for himself and a family member to Lord Howe Island where he has a holiday cottage.

Former Labor minister Alan Griffiths, who quit politics in 1996 after the "sandwich shop affair", is another heavy user of the scheme, and in the most recent six months took 23 flights between Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne, costing \$13,002.



### Thomas McVeigh

Nationals 1972-1988

■ \$10,398, includes 24 flights between Brisbane, Sydney, Adelaide and Cairns.



### Graham Richardson

ALP 1983-1994.

■ \$3919, includes 8 flights between Sydney, Brisbane and Townsville.



### Alan Griffiths

ALP 1983-1996.

■ \$13,002, includes 23 flights mostly between Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne.



### Ian Viner

Liberal 1972-1983

■ \$18,214, includes 14 flights between Perth, Melbourne and Brisbane.



### Michael Wooldridge

Liberal 1987-2001

■ \$15,451, includes 30 flights mainly between Melbourne and Sydney



### Ian Sinclair

National 1963-1998

■ \$14,394, includes 40 flights, including frequent visits to holiday home at Lord Howe Island.

\*All figures are for the first six months of this year.