



Australian Government
Australian Research Council

Australian Research Council

Accountable Authority Instructions

FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

These Instructions (known as Accountable Authority Instructions or 'AAIs') have been developed to provide you with an informative and detailed resource management framework for the work of the Australian Research Council (ARC). They are meant to help you with your work.

We all need to ensure that we do the right thing and manage our resources to the standards and expectations set by Government. In this regard, the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act) and associated *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014* (PGPA Rules) provide that I, as the ARC's Accountable Authority (Chief Executive Officer), may issue Accountable Authority Instructions to officials on any matter necessary or convenient for carrying out, or giving effect to, the PGPA Act or the PGPA Rules.

As your Chief Executive my responsibilities under the PGPA Act include, to:

- manage resources in an efficient, effective, economical and ethical manner;
- establish an audit committee;
- prepare a corporate plan;
- ensure systems are in place to deal with risk and control;
- ensure accounts and records are properly maintained;
- prepare annual budget estimates, annual financial statements and an annual performance statement;
- pursue each recoverable debt; and
- give instructions to officials where necessary.

Under the PGPA Act, the Finance Minister has delegated certain powers to me, as the Accountable Authority and I am, of course, accountable as to how these delegated powers are carried out.

In turn, I am able to sub-delegate powers to officials within the ARC so that we can manage our resources effectively. In doing so, just as I am accountable, so you too are accountable to me for how you exercise these delegated powers. You should be aware that these powers cannot be further sub-delegated.

The legislation allows us to use our initiative and tailor procedures to meet Government needs.

These current AAIs have been compiled using the standard model prepared by the Department of Finance and customised to suit the ARC's operational requirements. They will be reviewed periodically to ensure that they continue to meet best practice, the needs of Government and those of the ARC.

The Chief Financial Officer is always available to provide advice and guidance.

Professor Aidan Byrne

1 June 2015

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OFFICIAL TRAVEL

Official travel is any travel where a **Commonwealth entity** is responsible for any of the direct or indirect costs associated with that travel (noting the exceptions for using the coordinated travel procurements). This includes travel by **officials**, contractors and consultants to undertake work duties at the direction of the employer to achieve one or more Commonwealth entity objectives. Arrangements for the purpose of official travel will generally be entered into under section 23 of the **PGPA Act**. In limited cases you may need to enter an arrangement for official travel under section 32B of the **FFSP Act**, or other specific legislation.

Official travel should only be undertaken where there is a demonstrated business need and where other communication tools, such as teleconferencing and videoconferencing, are an ineffective option.

Key Guidance	Key References
Resource Management Guide No 400, <i>Approval and commitment of relevant money</i>	PGPA Act: s15, s21, s23
Resource Management Guide No 405, <i>Official International Travel - Use of the Best Fare of the Day</i>	PGPA Rule: s18
Resource Management Guide No 404, <i>Official Domestic Air Travel - Use of the Lowest Practical Fare (Domestic Air Travel Policy)</i>	

Instructions – All officials

- You must not enter into an **arrangement** for **official travel** unless you have been **delegated**, or **authorised** to exercise power to enter into an arrangement of this type (e.g. under section 23 of the **PGPA Act** or specific legislation).
- You must not enter into an arrangement for official travel unless the requirements in these instructions have been met (see AAI - Approving commitments of relevant money and entering into arrangements).
- You must act in accordance with the **CPRs** when procuring official travel (see AAI - Procurement).
- Where the Government has established **coordinated procurements** for a particular travel activity, you must use the arrangement established for that activity, unless an exemption has been provided or reimbursement is to be provided to a third party (i.e. a non-Commonwealth entity cannot access coordinated travel procurements) for airfares, accommodation and/or car rental or a travel allowance is to be provided for accommodation arrangements.
- You must
 - use your **entity's** contracted travel management company (TMC) to book domestic and ex-Australia international airfares under the Deed of Standing Offer for the Provision of Whole of Australian Government Travel Management Services.
 - use the contracted accommodation program management services provider for accommodation arrangements under the Deed for the Provision of Accommodation Program Management Services to the Australian Government.
 - use the contracted car rental services providers for car rental arrangements under the Deed for the Provision of Car Rental Services to the Australian Government.
 - use the contracted travel card and related services provider for card payment services under the Deed for the Provision of Travel Card and Related Services to the Australian Government.
- For official international travel, unless the **accountable authority** has agreed that the travel is exempt, you must obtain approval for the need to travel in accordance with the following approval requirements:
Where the total estimated cost (**GST** inclusive) of international travel, either individually or for a delegation or group activity, is:

- \$50,000 or less, the travel must be approved by the relevant accountable authority;
- more than \$50,000, the travel must be approved by the relevant **Minister**.

Official travel includes travel by Committee Members and **officials** on official business. It also includes travel by non-ARC **officials** travelling on official ARC business, including consultants, contractors, guests, award holders and clients.

Detailed conditions governing official travel by **officials** are prescribed in the ARC's Enterprise Agreement or equivalent individual **official's** employment agreement, as applicable, and in the ARC's internal travel policies and procedures.

Additional instructions relating to official travel are that:

- The Chief Executive is the only delegate authorised to approve international travel requests. The EGM or the CFO are to approve international travel requests from the Chief Executive;
- Where the total estimated cost of international travel, either individually or for a delegation or group activity, exceeds \$50,000, approval is to be sought from the relevant Minister;
- No international travel arrangements (i.e. bookings) are to be made without first having the written approval of the Chief Executive;
- No delegate is to approve his or her own travel; and
- Where the completed travel differs from the planned travel, the **official** who travelled should provide details of the variation.