



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure and Transport

Travel Policy

November 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Scope	3
Authority	3
Guiding Principles	3
Best Fare Of The Day	4
Domestic Travel	5
International Travel	6
Travel Costs	7
Receipts, Reimbursement and Reconciliation	9

Scope

This policy governs the arrangements for official travel undertaken by departmental employees.

Authority

This policy should be followed in accordance with the Chief Executive's Instructions (CEIs) issued by the Secretary under the authority of section 52 of the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997*.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the APS Values and Code of Conduct, other relevant Chief Executive's Instructions and Financial Circular's 2009/10 and 2009/11.

In following this policy employees should have particular regard to the need to demonstrate honesty and integrity in the use of Australian Government resources.

Guiding Principles

The Department's travel policy is based on 'reasonableness', flexibility and personal accountability.

Employees are expected to neither gain nor lose financially as a result of undertaking official travel.

The Department will pay for all fair and reasonable expenses incurred while undertaking official travel, generally through direct payment to the service provider using a Travel Card or, where the use of Travel Card is not possible, by reimbursement of personal expenditure.

In determining whether an expense is reasonable, employees and supervisors **must** consider the purpose, specific circumstances, business outcomes, and total cost of visit.

Employees are expected to exercise prudent business and personal judgment regarding decisions and expenditure covered by this Policy. In particular, employees are to consider the most cost-effective outcome when arranging travel. Guidance to staff as provided from time to time should also be taken into account.

When considering the most cost-effective travel options employees should seek to maintain an appropriate balance between work and home responsibilities and ensure Occupational Health & Safety and personal safety issues are fully taken into account.

Air travel should only be undertaken where other communication tools, such as teleconferencing and videoconferencing, are an ineffective option.

All air travel bookings **must** be made through the Department's Travel Service Provider.

Best (Lowest Practical) Fare of the Day

All employees are required to use the Best Fare of the Day when making travel bookings.

Domestic

For domestic travel, the Best Fare of the Day is the lowest fare available on the day the travel is booked which suits the practical business needs of the traveller, and:

- for outbound flights, leaves within a 45 minute window before the latest possible departure flight; and
- for return flights, leaves within a 45 minute window after the earliest practical return flight time.

Note: The 45 minute time window relates to only scheduled flight times departure, it does not relate to airline check-in times or travel time to the airport.

International

For international travel, the Best Fare of the Day is the lowest fare available on the day the travel is booked which suits the practical business needs of the traveller, and considers:

- for outbound flights, the cost of flights that would depart within a 24 hour window before the latest possible departure flight (that is, the latest flight that will enable the traveller to meet their overseas commitments);
- for return flights, the cost of the flight that leaves within a 24 hour window after the earliest practical return flight; and
- includes any additional accommodation, meals, ground transport, incidental costs and lost work time and associated with the 24 hour windows.

Note: The 24 hour windows for calculating the international Best Fare of the Day apply to the international legs and not the domestic legs of the trip. Accordingly, once the appropriate international flights have been booked on the basis of the Best Fare of the Day, then having regard to connectivity, the most appropriate domestic leg should be added to the trip.

In assessing the Best Fare of the Day, it would be appropriate to consider:

- health and safety issues for officers requiring certain facilities;
- ability to ensure connections for further flights are met;
- impact on personal responsibilities (such as family); and
- avoiding an unreasonable number of transits or stopovers.

Where employees decline the 'best fare' offered they will be required to provide an explanation to the travel service provider and non-acceptance and explanation will be included in monthly management reports.

Domestic Travel

Approval

All employees must obtain agreement from their supervisor for their proposed travel plans.

Formal approval for travel is incorporated in the post-travel Travel Card acquittal process by both the traveller and their supervisor. Where travel plans vary significantly from those originally proposed, employees (or the person organising the travel for outsiders) shall consult again with their supervisor before proceeding with their travel or varying arrangements.

Where travel is being arranged for people who are not departmental employees, the same arrangements apply except that travel arrangements must be discussed and agreed with an employee at the SES level prior to travel being booked. If travel arrangements are to vary significantly these should again be discussed with the relevant SES employee before travel arrangements are confirmed.

Class of Travel

The class for domestic travel is economy class for non-SES employees and business class for SES employees.

Exceptions are where an employee is accompanying an official or other departmental employee who travels at a higher class and for work purposes the employee is required to maintain contact with that person.

The relevant Executive Director may approve an alternative class of domestic travel for any flight of more than three hours scheduled duration.

International Travel

Approval

All employees must obtain prior approval from either the Secretary or a Deputy Secretary for their proposed international travel arrangements.

Class of travel

Business class or its equivalent will be the standard for international travel.

Travel at a class higher than business class requires prior approval from the Secretary or a Deputy Secretary.

Rest periods

Where international travel involves travelling time of more than 12 hours, the employee will not be required to attend work before having had a reasonable opportunity to recuperate, either at the destination or en route. An employee is taken to be at work during this rest period, which shall not exceed 48 hours.

Overseas charter

The Department is registered as a Safe Travel Charter Partner. Employees are required to visit the [Smartraveller website](#) so that there is a clear understanding of local conditions before undertaking international travel.

All employees travelling overseas, both for work or personal business, are encouraged to register with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade before travelling. The registration information provided by you will assist in communicating with you in case of emergency.

Insurance

Employees are covered under the Department's Comcover insurance policy while on official international travel. Please refer to the insurance guidelines available on [ENTR](#).

Passport responsibilities

It is recommended all employees carry an official passport while undertaking official international travel.

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is the issuing authority of official passports. Please refer to the Passport Guidelines available on [ENTR](#).

Overseas security briefing

Employees are expected to sign the Departmental Security Briefing form each time they travel internationally on official business.

Further information on this process can be found in the Department's Protective Security Manual available on [ENTR](#).

Travel Costs

Airport lounge

The Department will not pay lounge membership fees.

Where complimentary access to an airport lounge is offered, employees who have a role in aviation regulation should refer to the CEI on Hospitality, Business Catering and Gifts before accepting such hospitality.

Reward and Loyalty Points

The Australian Public Service Commission is responsible for the Australian Public Service Code of Conduct and also maintains circulars concerning public servant usage of air travel and accumulation and usage of airline reward and loyalty points.

It is Government policy that airline reward and loyalty points, where awarded for official air travel, are not to be used for private purposes and where possible should be used to reduce the cost of future flights required for official travel.

Accommodation

Accommodation used when on official travel should be at a standard which can be seen to be cost effective and appropriate to the purpose of the travel undertaken.

Where the situation warrants, such as security, conference venue or room availability, employees may stay at a higher level of accommodation. Any such decision should be in consultation with the relevant supervisor.

As an alternative, employees may make their own private accommodation arrangements. In lieu of accommodation expenses, employees may contribute up to \$50 per night to assist in covering the expenses of their hosts. The contribution must be paid for using a Travel Card, and may include such purchases as a gift, wine, groceries, meals etc.

Meals

While travelling, employees are not expected to accept eating arrangements of a lesser standard than they would have at home, and reasonable expenditure on meals and beverages consumed with meals (both alcoholic and non-alcoholic) is considered a legitimate travel-related expense. Employees may select reasonably priced restaurants or eating places that suit their preferences, dietary or religious requirements.

Modest tips at establishments in countries where this is considered the cultural norm, or where gratuities are added to the account, are acceptable official expenses.

Tipping in Australian establishments is not accepted.

Vehicles

Taxis are to be used as determined by business travel requirements. Chauffeur driven hire car services should not be used for general travel where taxis are readily available, unless it can be justified as the most cost-effective option.

Car rental

Rental cars should be a type of vehicle appropriate for the type of business being undertaken.

Personal vehicle used for business

Employees may use private vehicles for official travel in accordance with arrangements set out in the Department's Enterprise Agreement.

Other expenses

The Department will pay for other travel-related expenditure that it considers fair and reasonable. Employees are expected to use their personal judgement and take into consideration the need to defend or explain any such incidental expenditure.

Payment, Supporting Documentation, Reimbursement and Reconciliation

Payment

All travel-related expenditure should be made through direct payment to the service provider using a departmental Travel Card.

However, there may be unforeseen circumstances during travel where the use of Travel Card is not possible. In these circumstances, travellers may need to claim reimbursement for official travel purchases that have been made using a traveller's personal funds in accordance with the Department's reimbursement procedures.

The Department's use of a widely accepted Travel Card for all travel-related purchases should result in very few occasions where reimbursement of travel expenses will be necessary.

In exceptional circumstances and for international travel only, where it is identified that the likelihood of non-acceptance of the Travel Card and the subsequent use of personal funds is high, approval can be sought, through the international travel approval process, to advance funds to the traveller's personal bank account. All funds advanced will need to be reconciled and fully acquitted post-travel.

Consistent with the Chief Executive Instruction on Credit Cards, credit cards must not be used for cash withdrawals.

Reconciliation (Acquittal)

Travellers must undertake post-travel expense reconciliation through the Department's credit card management system confirming that the costs were incurred for official travel purposes. The relevant supervisor must endorse that the costs are legitimate business expenses and are reasonable.

In determining whether an expense is reasonable, employees and supervisors **must** consider the purpose, specific circumstances, business outcomes, and total cost of visit.

In instances where purchases made on the Travel Card are not considered reasonable by the Department, then those purchases will be deemed to be for personal and unofficial use and repayable by the cardholder to the Department.

Employees should ensure that use of Travel Cards and acquittal procedures are followed strictly in accordance with the Department's credit and travel card guidelines and procedures.

Supporting Documentation

Supporting documentation, including relevant approvals, receipts and tax invoices relating to all expenses charged to Travel Cards must be managed as required by the Department's corporate credit and travel card guidelines and Cardholder Undertakings.

Receipts or tax invoices relating to all personal expenses requiring post-travel reimbursement must be retained and submitted with any claim for reimbursement.

