



## Title: Air Travel

**Application:** This policy outlines the planning, approval, and reporting processes for domestic or overseas travel for official purposes by:

- employees of government entities, as defined in section 24 of the *Public Service Act 2008*;
- police officers, appointed under the *Police Service Administration Act 1990*;
- non-Queensland Government employees travelling on, or in relation to, Queensland Government business.

**Effective Date:** *This policy was approved by the Premier on 30 December 2008.*

### Definitions

- **Agency** means entities and other organisations covered by this policy (see Application above).
- **Best value fare** is the lowest cost fare available at the time of booking to suit the agency's business needs and traveller's entitlements. Best value is determined having regard not only to fares but also other relevant costs such as accommodation and waiting time. Travellers are not expected to undertake circuitous itineraries or to travel in circumstances where there are unacceptable safety or security concerns in order to access lower fares.
- **Chief executive** means the chief executive of the relevant agency.
- **Domestic travel** means official travel within Australia including Australian territories.
- **Employee travel** means official travel by an employee where the employee's travel costs are:
  - either fully or partially met by an agency (including expenses and allowances); or
  - funded from other sources, eg. fee-for-service activities, full costs covered by a conference organiser, grants and other funds.
- **Minister** means the minister of the relevant agency.

- **Non-employee travel** means official travel on, or in relation to, government business where travel costs are fully or partially met by an agency for:
  - agencies' clients eg. patients, witnesses, children in care, people in custody, students, and escorts (eg of patients, children in care, or partners) where relevant;
  - consultants and contractors;
  - international job candidates; and
  - members of official delegations.
- **Official travel** means agency-approved travel for agency and/or government business.
- **Overseas travel** means official travel between Australia and an overseas country. Overseas travel does not include travel undertaken by an employee:
  - while on an appointment to an overseas Queensland government office; and/or
  - in accordance with a scholarship program or Government Interchange Program, provided the program arrangements have been approved by the relevant minister.
- **TMS** is the whole of Government Travel Management System.
- **Travel costs** means any costs, fees, allowances or expenses associated with or incidental to official travel, including but not limited to travel fares and accommodation and accommodation expenses.
- **Traveller** means any person:
  - as defined under 'Application' section above; or
  - undertaking non-employee travel who is travelling in an official capacity on, or in relation to, Queensland government business where travel costs are fully or partially met by an agency.

## Principles

Official travel must:

- advance the achievement of Queensland Government priorities;
- benefit the business of an agency;
- be undertaken only after exploring alternatives to travel;
- not duplicate activities of other agencies; and
- be undertaken at the most advantageous price and service level.

## **Policy:**

### **General**

#### ***Travel management***

Procedures for managing travel are as per agency policy and where applicable the whole of government Travel Management System (TMS).

#### ***Delegations***

Agencies are to have appropriate administrative and travel delegations in place for the purposes of travel. This includes recording of administrative delegations and ensuring that travel delegations are made in accordance with this and other policies as they apply.

#### ***Accompanying persons' travel expenses***

Except with ministerial approval, where an employee is on official business and is accompanied by a non-employee who is not travelling on or in relation to Queensland government business, the agency should not pay for the accompanying person's travel fares.

Exchange of a higher class ticket for a lesser class of travel in order to assist with travel costs for an accompanying person is not permitted.

#### ***Class of air travel***

Chief executives only may travel business class if offered by the carrier. However, they must not choose air travel based solely on the availability of business class travel. Other officers must travel best value fare economy class for both domestic and international travel, unless the chief executive considers that special circumstances apply. Examples of 'special circumstances' might include health and safety issues or travelling with the Minister or chief executive.

#### ***Travel and medical insurance***

Travel and medical insurance is not normally required for domestic travel. When travelling overseas the traveller must ensure that travel and medical insurance is obtained as per agency procedures. Costs associated with travel and medical insurance for overseas travel for official purposes will be met by the agency.

#### ***Workers' compensation***

An employee whose principal place of employment is in Queensland and who is travelling, either on domestic or overseas travel, for official purposes is entitled to workers' compensation cover. The compensation claim should consider the injury as if it had occurred in Queensland.

### ***Air travel indemnity***

The Queensland Treasury Air Travel Indemnity Policy relates to cover for Queensland government employees who are injured or killed in an aircraft accident while on official duties. Contact Queensland Treasury ([www.treasury.qld.gov.au](http://www.treasury.qld.gov.au)) for further information.

### ***Excess baggage***

Travellers should consider alternatives to paying excess baggage such as couriering or posting material prior to departure. Personal excess baggage should be paid for by the traveller when not directly related to official travel.

### ***Valet parking***

Use of valet parking must be approved by the chief executive.

### ***Loyalty programs***

Frequent flyer points or other loyalty program benefits accrued in the course of official travel are not for the traveller's personal use. Where appropriate, frequent flyer points or other loyalty program benefits accrued for official travel may be used by the agency to redeem further official travel.

### ***Lounge club memberships***

Membership of lounge clubs may be considered an operational requirement for chief executives. Membership must not be provided for other employees (existing memberships at the time this policy is released may continue until the expiry date) unless they are frequent travellers as determined by the chief executive. An employee might be regarded as a 'frequent traveller' if their normal duties require that they travel at least three times a month.

This policy does not prevent travellers with private memberships from making use of lounge club facilities.

### ***Travelling on government aircraft***

Refer to the guidelines for the use of government aircraft for official transport issued by the Premier.

### ***Consultation***

In addition to specific consultation requirements set out below, and when planning an overseas trip other relevant agencies should be consulted so that unnecessary duplication of trips is avoided.

### ***Charter services***

Charter services should only be used where there are no regular passenger transport services for the intended destination and where there are no alternatives to such travel.

Where air charter is required, agencies are to ensure that the charter service has a current Air Operator's Certificate issued by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority or the equivalent national standard where charter services are used for travel within a country overseas.

### ***Combining official and private travel***

Prior approval must be obtained from the chief executive (or delegate) if an employee wishes to combine official travel with private travel. The agency will bear the costs directly associated with the official travel only.

### ***Recall to duty while on personal leave***

Chief executives may recall to duty, employees who are undertaking recreation leave and are travelling either domestically or internationally as part of this leave.

Expenses for fares and accommodation may be allowed during the recall to duty, but only those additional to the expenses which would normally have been incurred by the employee while on private travel. Where an employee is recalled to duty, that portion of the travel is deemed to be an official overseas trip and expenses incurred are to be refunded proportionately by the agency.

### ***Travelling expenses, hospitality and gifts***

Refer to:

- The Department of Employment and Industrial Relations (DEIR) directive relating to international travelling, relieving and living expenses;
- DEIR directive relating to domestic travelling, relieving and living expenses;
- The Public Service Commission (PSC) guidelines for personal expenses and the use of credit cards;
- PSC policy relating to gifts and benefits; and
- relevant sections of the agency code of conduct.

### ***Carbon offsets***

Carbon offsets must be purchased for all Queensland government air travel. The Department of Public Works will coordinate the purchase of the carbon offsets.

## ***Transport to and from Brisbane Airport***

Employees must use the Airtrain service <http://www.airtrain.com.au/timetable.php> when travelling to and from the Brisbane CBD and Brisbane's domestic and international airport terminals during the operating hours of the service.

Any exception from this policy must be approved by the officer authorised to approve the air travel being undertaken by the travelling officer and be based on evidence that it is (or was) impracticable to use the Airtrain service.

Valid grounds for exemption might include:

- value for money (e.g. where there are a number of people to be transported and the cost of a taxi service is less than that of the Airtrain service);
- a significant quantity of goods are being transported in addition to personal luggage; or
- the traveller is physically unable to use the train service.

## **Domestic Travel**

### ***Alternatives to travel***

Agencies' travel approval processes must ensure alternatives to travel such as videoconferencing and teleconferencing are considered prior to travelling.

### ***Approvals***

Approval to undertake domestic travel is to be obtained according to agency policy and where applicable the TMS.

## **Overseas Travel**

### ***Purpose of overseas travel***

Only travel considered essential to agency and/or government objectives should be considered. All other avenues for gaining relevant knowledge or experience should be considered before overseas travel is proposed.

### ***Approvals and notifications***

Overseas travel is to be approved by the relevant minister.

Employees and travel arrangers (for all travellers) must review the procedures detailed below to determine the relevant approvals required before proceeding with overseas travel arrangements. Refer to the travel approval flow chart at [http://www.qgm.qld.gov.au/09\\_travel/index.htm](http://www.qgm.qld.gov.au/09_travel/index.htm)

Following approval for official travel to proceed, and approximately six weeks prior to travelling, a copy of the completed overseas travel approval form must be sent to the agency's travel contact officer for inclusion in the agency overseas travel database.

Where a number of travellers are undertaking the travel for the same purpose and at the same time, only one overseas travel approval form is required.

Ministerial approval is required for urgent travel. If the traveller is not able to complete the overseas travel approval form prior to leaving Australia, the agency must do so within seven days from the commencement of travel being undertaken.

### ***Chief executives***

The Premier's approval and the relevant minister's support is required for overseas travel by chief executives. A Premier's Briefing Note is to be sent from the Minister to the Premier as a cover for the completed overseas travel approval form and providing sufficient prior notice for consideration by the Premier.

### ***Assessment of security and health risks***

Agencies must have appropriate regard to safety, security and health risks for employees before approving any overseas travel. This may include consideration of information available from the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Security Planning and Coordination area of the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, and other sources as appropriate. Approval for overseas travel should be withdrawn where there is an unacceptable or potential risk to the employee's safety, security or health.

In seeking approval for overseas travel, the relevant minister must be advised of any travel proposed to areas where significant safety, security and/or health risks exist.

### ***Passports***

Employees can choose to use either their personal passport, or they can apply for an official passport. Agencies will pay for official passports, and as government property, official passports will be retained securely by the agency when not being used.

## **Visas**

Travellers must ensure that appropriate visas are obtained for their overseas destinations. Different visa arrangements may be required for official passports than for personal passports.

## **Vaccination**

Employees are to obtain the relevant vaccination/s advised by the consular travel advisories. Agencies will pay for vaccinations.

Where an employee may not be able to be vaccinated, chief executives should assess the risk before approving any overseas travel.

## **Leave while on official overseas travel**

Any period of leave to be taken while overseas on official travel should be approved by the chief executive and noted by the Minister as part of the approval process.

Employees should ensure that personal travel insurance is obtained for any period of personal leave taken as part of official overseas travel. Only personal passports may be used while on leave in conjunction with an official overseas trip.

## **Emergent health or security risk**

It is an employee's responsibility to ensure that they are contactable by their agency at all times where possible during official overseas travel. If an employee becomes aware of a safety or security risk while travelling, they should attempt to contact their agency in the first instance or the nearest Australian embassy, consulate or high commission. Information on consular assistance is available from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

## **Reporting**

### **Employees**

Employees must complete an overseas travel report within two weeks of return from overseas travel to the agency's overseas travel contact officer.

### **Agency**

Agency recording of overseas travel should be sufficient to meet the reporting requirements under section 95 of the *Financial Management Standard 1997*.

Agencies should consider the need to record and report on overseas travel for non-employees whose travel costs are fully or partially funded by an agency.

## Attachments

- Travel approval flow chart
- Queensland Government Overseas Travel Approval Form
- Premier's briefing note - Chief Executives Overseas Travel Approval
- Queensland Government Overseas Travel Report

## Legislative Provisions

- *Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977*
- *Financial Management Standard 1997*
- *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*
- *Public Service Act 2008*
- *Workers' Compensation and Rehabilitation Act 2003*
- DEIR directives regarding:
  - International travelling, relieving and living expenses;
  - Domestic travelling and relieving expenses; and
  - Recreation leave.