



Travel, Allowances, and Expense Policy

12 September 2016 v1.1

Approved

Australian Digital Health Agency

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This document has been approved on the basis that the appropriate input has been obtained during its development.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This policy establishes guidelines and responsibilities for ensuring that travel, allowance and expenses are valid, necessary, and comply with government and tax legislative requirements. It sets a benchmark for officials to carry out their duties in a way that meets community expectations regarding the appropriate use of taxpayer funds.

The policy:

- describes the types of travel, allowances, and expenses that are eligible for reimbursement;
- informs employees, contractors, and consultants of their responsibilities; and
- outlines how to book travel arrangements and reimbursement options for travel and business expenses.

1.2 Intended audience

This document is intended for Australian Digital Health Agency employees, contractors and consultants.

1.3 Scope

This policy applies to both domestic and international travel for:

- all Agency employees, contractors, and consultants; and
- contractors, consultants, and staff from other organisations who are travelling at the Agency's request.

This policy supersedes and revokes all previous travel, allowance, and expense policies released by the Agency.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Agency's *Accountable Authority Instruction (AAI) 5.4*: Official Travel.

This policy is issued by the Chief Executive Officer. All officials are required to act in accordance with this policy.

2 Official travel

2.1 What is official travel?

Official travel is travel undertaken for the purpose of transacting and advancing the Agency's business, and must only be undertaken where there is a demonstrated business need.

Before travelling, officials should consider the suitability of alternate arrangements such as teleconference or videoconference meetings, and consider any time and cost savings offered by these other modes with collaboration or other benefits of face to face meetings.

Travel arrangements must be made in such a way as to:

- minimise the overall cost of the trip;
- minimise the period of absence from the traveller's usual place of work;
- minimise the overall number of trips the traveller is required to make; and
- ensure the safety of the traveller.

The Agency uses the Department of Health's Shared Service Centre Travel System. Under this system, travel is subject to Whole of Australian Government (WoAG) travel arrangements, which states that all air travel, accommodation, and car rentals must be sourced through the mandatory Travel Management Company.

To allow for enhanced reporting of travel expenditure, and to provide travel data that complies with the requirements of the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), it is mandatory for Agency employees and contractors to use the Agency's Diners Club account (Corporate Travel Service) to pay for airfares, travel management company fees, domestic accommodation, and domestic car rentals.

The Shared Service Centre's Travel Team assists Agency officials with most aspects of domestic travel.

2.2 Roles

Role	Description
Official	For the purposes of this Policy, independent contractors and consultants are not officials.
Traveller	The official (as above) travelling for business purposes.
Authoriser	The official with delegation to approve the official's business travel according to the <i>Chief Executive Officer Authorisation of Agency Officials in relation to financial decisions.</i>

The roles of participants in official travel are as follows.

3 Domestic travel

3.1 Authorising travel

3.1.1 Officials travelling

Before booking any business travel, the traveller must obtain written approval from an official who holds a travel authorisation. Refer to the Chief Executive Officer Authorisation of Agency Officials in relation to financial decisions, available on the intranet, for relevant travel authorisers.

In emergency situations, where prior approval cannot be obtained and documented in the normal way through the SAP ESS travel module, written approval must be obtained and recorded as soon as practicable after travel arrangements are made (e.g. next working day).

Written approval is required:

- for domestic and international travel, including amendments to bookings;
- to make changes to an existing booking where the change increases the cost of the travel;
- to claim additional expenses in excess of a prescribed allowance; and
- for use of a private vehicle.

3.1.2 Travel authorisers

When approving proposed official travel, travel authorisers must ensure that:

- the traveller could not use any other communication method to achieve the objective of the trip;
- the journey is for official purposes only, or is in accordance with an individual official's entitlements;
- overnight accommodation is only approved when there is a specific business need;
- travel duration is sufficient to meet all of the proposed business needs; and
- funding is available to cover the proposed expenditure.

Executive General Managers (EGMs) cannot approve their own travel; this must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or the Chief Financial Officer (CFO). The CEO is the only person authorised to approve their own travel.

3.2 Arranging travel

3.2.1 Travel Management Company (TCM)

All air travel must be arranged and booked through the TMC, which is Qantas Business Travel (QBT), as required under the Health Shared Services travel arrangements.

Employees and contractors must book accommodation and car rental services through QBT.

3.2.2 Airfares

All domestic air travel should be at the lowest practical fare, in economy class of major carriers.

In exceptional circumstances the CEO, CFO, or EGM may approve travel other than the lowest practical fare if one or more of the following apply:

- an official has health issues requiring certain facilities, in which case a medical certificate is required;
- an official's personal responsibilities (such as family commitments) would otherwise be severely adversely affected;
- the lowest practical fare:
 - is not the most direct route;
 - o does not ensure connections to further flights;
 - does not take into account excess baggage fees; or
- flight sector flexibility is required for air travel, in which case the traveller should consider selecting a semi-flexible fare type instead of a fully flexible fare.

Officials must compare fare classes and types across airlines servicing the particular route required. Each flight sector (outbound and inbound) is to be considered separately. Personal preference for particular carriers or aircraft types should only be booked where the booking is also the lowest practical fare.

3.2.3 Accommodation

Value for money is the primary consideration when booking accommodation.

Officials booking accommodation in connection with official travel must seek to obtain accommodation in close proximity to their intended destination (e.g. location of meeting, conference) so as to minimise the cost of travel between hotel and place of business.

When making accommodation bookings, officials must ensure that the accommodation chosen is within the relevant rates approved for SES and non-SES employees (see Appendix A Rates of travelling allowance, relevant to each pay grade). Bookings outside the approved rates must be electronically approved by the relevant travel authoriser through SAP ESS prior to finalising the booking.

3.2.4 Staying with friends and relatives

Officials who elect to stay in non-commercial accommodation (that is, with friends and relatives) may do so, but an accommodation allowance will not be payable. Any cost to the Agency, such as transportation costs, must be less than the value of the accommodation allowance that would have otherwise been paid (see Appendix A Rates of travelling allowance).

3.3 Travel Allowances (TA)

Travel allowances will be paid in accordance with the Agency's agreed rates of travelling allowances (see Appendix A).

3.3.1 Overnight TA

An official who is required to be absent from their usual place of work overnight, will be paid an allowance for each absence.

3.3.2 Part-day TA

An official who is required to be absent from their usual place of work on official business for a period of 10 hours or more, but is not absent overnight, will be paid an allowance for each absence.

The payment of a meal allowance will be reduced where the Agency has separately paid the costs of meals (e.g. the Agency has paid a conference fee that includes a component for meals).

- Overnight TAs will be paid by direct credit into the traveller's bank account. For the traveller to receive payment by direct credit at least two working days prior to departure, their travel must be approved in the SAP ESS at least four working days prior to departure.
- Part day TAs will be included in the traveller's next available pay. Please note that a part day TA is a taxable allowance.

3.4 Taxis and public transport

Where practicable and more cost-effective, travellers should consider walking or public transport before using taxis. A travel authoriser may pre-approve the use of taxis, where there is a business need and value for money can be demonstrated.

Where the use of taxis is pre-approved, Cabcharge vouchers will be issued to the traveller. The traveller will be responsible for returning the Cabcharge stub and tax receipt for each voucher used.

Where public transport is used, the traveller will be responsible for payment of relevant fares and will be required to input details into SAP ESS at the time of acquittal, or submit an approved Claim for Payment, with valid tax invoices (see Appendix B Claim for payment form, and submit to accounts.payable@digitalhealth.gov.au for reimbursement).

Officials must not include tips or gratuities in taxi fare transactions.

The Agency supports the use of taxis in the following circumstances:

- travel to and from business meetings, conferences, and seminars where public transport is not available or practicable;
- travel home after working late, after 8.30pm (by prior written approval of the relevant authorised approver manager) where personal safety is a consideration;
- travel to and from airports, accommodation, or when travelling between Agency offices or to external meetings, where public transport is not available or practicable;
- by exception, when prior written approval of an authorised approver is obtained, such as:
 - \circ on a special-purpose occasion, or
 - where, due to illness or injury, an official is physically incapable of returning home using their normal form of transport.

Expenditure associated with travel from home to Agency offices will not be reimbursed under any circumstances.

A travel authoriser may pre-approve the use of ride-sharing transport instead of a taxi; a tax invoice is required for reimbursement, or the official can use the Agency ride-sharing account.

Unless otherwise allowable in the Credit Card Policy, credit cards will not be allocated where an official is eligible for an allowance in accordance with this policy.

3.5 Alternate methods of travel

While commercial air travel is the preferred means of transport, alternative means of travel may be approved where it is in the Agency's best interest. The table below identifies the Agency's policy regarding alternate travel methods.

Travel Method	Policy		
Hire car	The use of limousine or chauffeur driven hire vehicles is not permitted and costs will not be paid by the Agency.		
Rental car	 The use of a rental car will be considered where: the cost is less than other forms of transport, taking into account potential additional time to travel; large or bulky materials are to be transported; or travel to a remote destination is required. Car rental services must be booked through QBT. 		
Traveller's private car	 The use of a traveller's private car will be considered where the arrangement is cost-effective and the following can be evidenced by the EGM: current drivers licence; comprehensive insurance; and current valid registration. The motor vehicle allowance payment will be the lesser of either: the calculated Motor Vehicle Allowance (see below); or the amount of the commercial airfare. 		

3.5.1 Motor vehicle allowance

Unless there is an individual written contractual arrangement, motor vehicle allowance rates will be paid in accordance with current ATO rates.

The current rates as of August 2016 are detailed below:

Engine Capacity (non-rotary)	Engine Capacity (rotary)	Rate (cents per km)
Above 2,600cc	Above 1,300cc	72
1,601 to 2,600cc	801 to 1,300cc	71
1,600cc and under	800cc and under	59

All reasonable parking and toll charges incurred on company business will be reimbursed by the Agency. A tax invoice or receipt must be produced for reimbursement to occur. Valet parking fees, traffic offences, parking fines, or other motor vehicle fines will not be reimbursed.

3.6 Acquittal of travel

Approximately five days after the end date of a trip, an official travelling will be sent a workflow email requesting that the trip be acquitted. The official must acquit all official travel within seven days of receipt of the email. Contact <u>travel@digitalhealth.gov.au</u> for support. Failure to acquit the trip may result in a deduction from an official's pay.

3.6.1 Travel debts

A travel debt may be recorded if the duration of an overnight trip is changed (e.g. overnight accommodation is no longer required) or a meal deduction is entered into the trip after the initial travel allowance payment has been made. If this occurs, an invoice will be issued to the traveller advising the amount of the overpayment (i.e. debt on the part of the official) and the due date for payment.

If an official is undertaking travel within the next four weeks of an instance of previous official travel, any outstanding travel debts that have not been repaid will be offset against any future payments due to the traveller's SAP vendor record.

3.6.2 Additional expenses

The official may claim additional pre-approved expenses incurred while travelling on the Agency's business. These additional expenses may include:

- accommodation in excess of the prescribed rate, or as a result of urgent and unforeseen situations;
- bridge and motor tolls;
- public transport costs; or
- taxi costs if written pre-approval has been given.

Any additional expenses must be recorded against the relevant trip in the SAP ESS travel module, at the time of acquittal, or the traveller must complete a Claim for Payment form with supporting receipts attached and submitted to the authorising officer for re-approval.

3.7 Restrictions and requirements

3.7.1 Accompanied travel

Officials are not entitled to claim accompanied travel for official travel (e.g. spouse or dependents).

3.7.2 Airline lounge membership

Corporate paid lounge membership for one airline lounge per financial year for officials is to be determined on a case-by-case basis, and approved by the CEO or CFO. In making such a decision, the CEO or CFO will consider the traveller's expected number of trips (frequency) and any particular special needs. Any such request must be made via a business case authorised by the traveller's EGM. As a minimum, the official travelling must travel at least once per fortnight.

Requests for an airline lounge membership are to be made by contacting the <u>travel@digitalhealth.gov.au</u>.

Other officials may purchase a lounge membership for themselves using the Agency's corporate rate. Please direct all enquiries to <u>travel@digitalhealth.gov.au</u>.

The Agency will not meet the cost of lounge memberships for consultants, contractors, or committee members.

3.7.3 Non-officials

If a consultant or contractor is required to travel on behalf of the Agency at the Agency's expense, they must comply with the instructions in this policy as they apply to non-SES officials.

3.7.4 Personal travel

Travel authorisers may give approval to vary an itinerary for business travel to include personal travel, if the following requirements are met:

- changes are consistent with the requirements of this policy;
- any travel allowance calculation is based solely on the time the traveller would have been engaged in official business had they not chosen to include personal travel; and
- the Agency will not meet the additional costs of any personal travel, including costs of changing flights, accommodation costs, or incidentals.

3.7.5 Travel difficulties

Officials may occasionally experience difficulties when travelling; for example, extended plane delays or strikes. In making alternative arrangements, the traveller must:

- either contact QBT on 1300 773 856 to change flights, or AOT Hotels on 1300 767 869 to change accommodation, or both; and
- if extending a trip, obtain prior written authorisation by the original approval (where possible) and an amendment to the travel request must be completed on return, during the trip acquittal process.

If a traveller is unable to contact QBT and needs to personally pay for their emergency airfare, then the traveller is to be reimbursed for the cost of the lowest practical fare available at the time of booking.

3.7.6 Travel incentive schemes

The Agency does not belong to a frequent flyer scheme and flights booked through the TMC do not accrue any frequent flyer points to the traveller.

However, travellers are permitted to link their frequent flyer number to business travel bookings, which allow travellers to use online check-in, record meal and seat preferences, and use check-in scanners at airports for faster check-in and lounge access.

Travellers are permitted to accrue "status credits" on their frequent flyer accounts, as these cannot be transferred or redeemed for cash or any other value. For frequent travellers, this can result in free lounge membership which represents a saving to the Agency, as these travellers would otherwise qualify for Agency reimbursed lounge membership.

4 International travel

International travel must be approved by the CEO.

International travel is any business related travel where:

- travel is from Australia;
- travel is to Australia;
- the trip is undertaken for a short or long term overseas mission; or
- travel to attend conferences and training as part of personal development, even if the expenses are paid for by the official and reimbursed by the Agency.

Domestic travel requirements apply, except as detailed in this section.

4.1 Arranging international travel

4.1.1 Airfares

QBT will provide the official with three quotes based on the logical international best fare.

Business class travel is permitted for overseas travel.

4.1.2 Accommodation

Accommodation should be at a standard reasonably equivalent to that provided for the official in Australia. Value for money is the overarching consideration when booking accommodation, along with proximity to the venue of the meeting or conference. The most cost-effective accommodation should be selected within the required location.

If accommodation cannot be booked through QBT and the official proposes to use the Agency Credit Card to pay for overseas accommodation, the CFO is to be advised and provide written approval. Where this is the case payment of the travel allowance will be adjusted to ensure the accommodation component of the allowance is not advanced to the official.

4.1.3 Travel Allowances (TA)

Accommodation allowances will be paid, where accommodation is not paid by other means, in accordance with the rates published annually by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

Meals and incidentals allowances will be paid, unless an Agency's Credit Card is used, in accordance with the overseas meals and incidentals rates published annually by the ATO. The incidental component of the allowance is provided to assist with private costs such as laundry, dry-cleaning, newspapers, minibar, gratuities (where appropriate), and private telephone calls.

Officials must advise when meals are provided at an event attended by the officials, as travelling allowances will not be paid in respect of those meals.

4.2 Travel diary

The official will need to maintain an overseas Travel Diary while they are away to comply with Fringe Benefits Tax provisions. This allows the Agency to claim a reduction in the taxable value of the benefit. Please see Miscellaneous Taxation Ruling MT 2038 Fringe Benefits Tax: travel diaries.

The diary must include the following details:

- the date the entry was made;
- the place where the activity was undertaken;
- nature of the activity; and
- costs associated with the activity.

Note: a diary entry is to be made even if a receipt cannot be obtained.

The overseas Travel Diary must be completed and emailed to the delegate within 21 days of the traveller's return to Australia. If the diary is not submitted, Fringe Benefit Tax (FBT) will be imposed and the FBT liability recovered from the official.

4.3 Acquittal

Original receipts for accommodation, hospitality, or additional expenditure must be retained by the official until acquittal has been finalised.

If an Agency Credit Card has been used to pay for overseas accommodation, meals, incidentals in lieu of a travel allowance, or any other costs associated with travel, a copy of the credit card statement and receipts must accompany the acquittal documentation.

4.4 Gifts and benefits

Officials must be able to demonstrate that they cannot be improperly influenced in the performance of their duties by offers of gifts or other inducements. Officials should observe guidance in AAI 11.0: Managing Relevant Property, when making and receiving gifts.

4.5 Insurance

The Agency holds insurance with Comcover for official overseas travel. The insurance policy covers an official on approved travel outside their home country or country of assignment for up to 180 days. This includes death or bodily injury arising from an accident or illness, compensation for lost or damaged baggage and personal effects belonging to the traveller or for which they are responsible, and emergency medical repatriation.

For lost or damaged baggage, the official should seek compensation from the airline in the first instance.

The insurance policy excludes coverage for periods outside the scope of approved official overseas travel, such as leave or other private activities if the amount of leave taken is in excess of 50% of the total travel period. It is strongly recommended that the official obtain additional travel insurance to cover items excluded by Comcover. Any additional insurance is at the official's own expense.

Enquiries about insurance should be sent to the CFO.

4.6 **Passports and Visas**

The maintenance of a passport is considered a personal expense and will generally not be reimbursed by the Agency. Visas and inoculations will be reimbursed if they are required for official travel.

5 Business Expenditure

5.1 Catering

5.1.1 Catering involving stakeholders

Any expenses relating to external stakeholder meals or catering outside normal working hours must be pre-approved by the CEO, CFO, or EGM.

Catering expenses are limited to the provision of food and non-alcoholic beverages with external stakeholders, or any other non-Agency employee directly associated with the Agency's business activity.

The Agency will reimburse meal expenses for external stakeholders up to the value of SES meal allowances (see Appendix A Rates of travelling allowance) for each stakeholder. Any additional expenditure, or any charges for alcohol consumption, will not be reimbursed by the Agency.

Expenses related to catering within normal work-hours (e.g. sandwiches during a working lunch) must be approved by a GM, EGM, CFO, or CEO. Catering that exceeds basic standards must be approved by the CEO, in line with the Accountable Authority Instructions approved by the Board.

5.1.2 Internal Catering

Any meal or catering expenses for internal staff outside normal working hours must be within the maximum allowance for SES level, within budget, and approved in advance by the CEO, CFO, or EGM.

The Agency does not reimburse for the cost of:

- alcohol;
- coffee meetings;
- drinks after work;
- celebratory cakes; and
- farewell gifts and cards.

All of the above items are to be funded from staff contributions.

Claims for both external and internal catering expenses must clearly state the reason for the expense, the names of all people involved, and must be accompanied by tax invoices.

Expenses related to catering within normal work-hours (e.g. sandwiches during a working lunch) must be approved by a GM, EGM, CFO, or CEO. Catering that exceeds basic standards must be approved by the CEO, in line with the Accountable Authority Instructions approved by the Board.

5.2 Home Office Equipment and Supplies

Where the Agency has an agreement with an employee or contractor to work from home, the Agency will provide the necessary office equipment. The equipment required will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, be solely used for the purpose of the Agency business, and will remain the property of the Agency. Costs associated with wear and tear will be reimbursed by the Agency: however, costs resulting from reckless damage or misuse will need to be reimbursed to the Agency.

Reimbursement for reasonable office supplies associated with operating the equipment (e.g. printer cartridges and paper) can be claimed.

5.3 **Relocation Expenses**

If a relocation agreement has been approved by the CEO, the Agency will reimburse the staff member up to the maximum total amount approved in the agreement. Tax invoices or receipts will be required to substantiate the costs incurred. Further information can be obtained from the People and Culture team.

Acronyms

Acronym	Description
AOT	AOT Hotels – Government Services Division
ATO	Australian Tax Office
CEO	chief executive officer
CFO	chief financial officer
EGM	executive general manager
GM	general manager
LPF	lowest practical fare
QBT	Qantas Business Travel
SES	Senior Executive Service
ТА	travel allowances
ТМС	travel management company
WoAG	Whole of Australian Government

Appendix A Rates of travelling allowance



RATES OF TRAVELLING ALLOWANCE

NON-SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3	COLUMN 4	COLUMN 5	COLUMN 6
	Accomm- Odation Expenses	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Incidental Expenses
	s	s	\$	\$	\$
Adelaide	157.00	24.90	28.00	47.75	18.20
Brisbane	201.00	24.90	28.00	47.75	18.20
Canberra	168.00	24.90	28.00	47.75	18.20
Darwin	202.00	24.90	28.00	47.75	18.20
Hobart	132.00	24.90	28.00	47.75	18.20
Melbourne	173.00	24.90	28.00	47.75	18.20
Perth	233.00	24.90	28.00	47.75	18.20
Sydney	183.00	24.90	28.00	47.75	18.20
High Cost) * Country) Centres)	see Note below	24.90	28.00	47.75	18.20
Tier 2) Country) Centres)	** 132.00	22.30	25.45	43.85	18.20
Other) Centres)	110.00	22.30	25.45	43.85	18.20

* Note: High Cost Country Centres Accommodation Expenses as listed at Attachment C

** Note: Tier 2 Country Centres as listed at Attachment C

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RATES OF TRAVELLING ALLOWANCE

SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3	COLUMN 4	COLUMN 5	COLUMN 6
	Accomm- Odation Expenses	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Incidental Expenses
	\$	\$	\$	s	\$
Adelaide	208.00	27.10	38.35	53.70	26.05
Brisbane	251.00	27.10	38.35	53.70	26.05
Canberra	223.00	27.10	38.35	53.70	26.05
Darwin	269.00	27.10	38.35	53.70	26.05
Hobart	176.00	27.10	38.35	53.70	26.05
Melbourne	228.00	27.10	38.35	53.70	26.05
Perth	255.00	27.10	38.35	53.70	26.05
Sydney	229.00	27.10	38.35	53.70	26.05
High Cost) Country) Centres)	* see Note below	27.10	38.35	53.70	26.05
Tier 2) Country) Centre)	** 152.00	24.90	25.45	49.60	26.05
Other) Country) Centres)	127.00	24.90	25.45	49.60	26.05

* Note: High Cost Country Centres Accommodation Expenses as listed at Attachment C

** Note: Tier 2 Country Centres as listed at Attachment C

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Appendix B Claim for payment form

<u>i</u>	Australian Government
	Australian Digital Health Agency

Claim for Payment Form

Part A: Ir	voice	& Payme	ent Deta	ils (Refer	to <u>Claim for</u>	Payment Help	pcard for as	sistanc	e in com	pleting this	form.)				
1. Nature of	of Payme	ent													
Type of payme	nent: Select					(Company Code: Select								
2. Receivir	ng Office	r's Declarati	ion – only	required f	or Non Pu	rchase Ord	er Payme	nts							
I declare that the goo I declare that a valid								for purpo	ose and th	at this paymen	t is in acco	rdance with contra	acted terms.		
.Name:				Signature	2	2	9/08/2016	Phor	ne:		[Div/Branch:			
3. Paymen	t Details	;													
Vendor No.			Name						Invoice	Date					
Invoice/Ref No.			Amour	nt Payable			Descript	ion							+
4. Paymer	nt Instruc	tions													
Date invoice received		Contrac	Contracted Payment Terms: Select		Select	Payment Method:		Sele	elect RCT		RCTI:	Sele	ect		
RCTI agreement filed: Select		RCTI De	RCTI Delivery Select			RCTI Text:									
5. Coding	Informat	ion / Accoun	t Assignm	ent											
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Completed form along with supporting documentation should be forwarded to the Shared Services Centre (SSC) MDP 356 or accounts.payable@health.gov.au