



AFP National Guideline on travel and living away from home

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1. Disclosure and compliance

This document is classified **UNCLASSIFIED** and is intended for internal AFP use.

Disclosing any content must comply with Commonwealth law and the [AFP National Guideline on disclosure of information](#).

Compliance

This instrument is part of the AFP's professional standards framework. The [AFP Commissioner's Order on Professional Standards \(CO2\)](#) outlines the expectations for appointees to adhere to the requirements of the framework. Inappropriate departures from the provisions of this instrument may constitute a breach of AFP professional standards and be dealt with under Part V of the [Australian Federal Police Act 1979](#) (Cth).

2. Acronyms

AFP	Australian Federal Police
ATO	Australian Tax Office
FMA	Financial Management and Accountability
LAHFA	Living away from home allowance

3. Definitions

AFP corporate credit card - is a card issued to AFP officials to pay for travel and living away from home expenses per this guideline

Approved expenses - means:

- air travel
- accommodation
- hire cars/taxis/airport shuttles
- parking and fuel
- taxes and tolls.

Domestic travel - is official travel to any destination in Australia and its Territories. New Zealand is also classed as domestic travel for the purposes of claiming travel allowance and approval through Spendvision, however bookings must be made through the International Travel Team.

Financial Management and Accountability Regulation 9 (FMA Reg 9) approver - refers to an official identified in Annexure B of the [AFP Commissioner's Order 4 - Finance \(CO4\)](#) as having delegation to approve travel.

Frequent traveller - is an official who travels more than 15 times per year domestically, or overseas and domestically.

International Best Fare - is the lowest fare available on the day the travel is booked (including any amendments to an existing booking), on a regular scheduled service (that is, not a charter flight) and which suits the business needs of the traveller.

Overseas travel - is official travel of 21 days or less outside Australia that is not defined as domestic travel.

Living away from home allowance (LAFHA) - is a fortnightly allowance paid to an official to compensate for additional expenses incurred and any disadvantages suffered, because the official is required to live away from their usual place of residence in order to perform their employment-related duties for more than 21 days.

Lowest Practical Fare (LPF) - is the lowest fare available on the day the travel is booked which suits the practical needs of the traveller.

Non refundable fare - is a fare that, once issued, cannot be refunded but **may** be later converted to future travel on the same carrier for the same passenger if re-booked prior to the original date of travel (not necessarily to the same destination).

Official - has the same meaning as appointee in s. 4 of the [Australian Federal Police Act 1979](#) (Cth).

Official travel - is all travel by officials for, or on behalf of, the AFP which is authorised by a relevant FMA Reg 9 approver, acquitted by the official and authorised by a relevant delegate.

Qantas Business Travel - is the AFP's contracted travel management company.

Reasonable cost - means all AFP travel-related expenses pre-approved to effectively and efficiently conduct AFP business.

Relevant approver - means the delegate with financial management responsibility for the cost centre for which the travel is being approved

Travel allowance - is a monetary daily amount provided to officials on official travel including an overnight stay. Prepaid allowances are not paid for overseas travel.

4. Authority to create the guideline

This guideline was issued by the Manager Human Resource Strategies using power under s. 37(1) of the [Australian Federal Police Act 1979](#) (Cth) as delegated by the Commissioner under s. 69C of the Act.

5. Introduction

This National Guideline informs officials undertaking official travel for the AFP of the legislation, policies and procedures for domestic and overseas business travel. Exclusions are outlined in s. 7 of this guideline.

This should be read with relevant governance instruments, including:

- [Australian Federal Police Commissioner's Order 4 - Finance CO4](#)
- [AFP Practical Guide for IDG Determination of Travel Benefits](#)
- [AFP Practical Guide on domestic travel and living away from home](#)
- [AFP Practical Guide on overseas travel and living away from home](#).

6. Principles

Travel is often an integral part of work-related activities for officials. This guideline helps ensure:

- accurate records are kept for all travel
- officials are not 'out of pocket' for reasonable costs incurred during travel.

Officials, approvers and authorising officers must ensure all costs associated with travel meet the requirements of s. 44(1) of the [Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997](#) (Cth) by being efficient, effective and ethical uses of public money.

Officials performing duties outside Australia and subject to a Commissioner's determination under s. 40(H)(2) of the [Australian Federal Police Act 1979](#) (Cth) remain subject to legislation and AFP governance instruments relating to travel. Refer to the [AFP Practical Guide for IDG Determination Travel Benefits](#).

7. Exclusions

This guideline does not cover:

- staff relocations
- International Deployment Group deployments (refer to [AFP Practical Guide for IDG Determination Travel Benefits](#))
- officials covered by a determination
- the booking of travel for Air Security Officer duty
- reassignment of duties.

The domestic application of this guideline applies to genuine travel, and does not apply where:

- a s. 40(H)2 composite is payable under the [Australian Federal Police Act 1979](#) (Cth)
- the official is travelling under a s. 27 Determination under the [Australian Federal Police Act 1979](#) (Cth).

Contractors

Consultants and long term contractors engaged via a direct contract with the AFP generally should not have an AFP corporate credit card and should submit any travel related expenditure claims as part of their periodic invoice (except if otherwise stipulated in their contract).

8. Travel or living away from home

8.1 Travel

Approved travel should only be for periods of 21 days or less or when an official is away for more than 21 days but does not reside in the one location.

When travel exceeds 21 days, National Manager Human Resources may deem the period to be official travel. In these cases, the delegate would consider issues such as:

- tax implications (in conjunction with the AFP Tax team)
- accommodation benefits ie no cooking, refrigeration facilities
- anticipated length of travel.

8.2 Living away from home

If an official must reside away from their usual place of residence for more than 21 days to

perform AFP duties, they are deemed to be living away from home. Under these circumstances the official cannot receive a daily travel allowance but may receive a 'living away from home allowance' (LAFHA).

AFP officials are still deemed to be living away from home in the situation where they return home on days off but the time away including these days exceeds 21 days.

The LAFHA is a fortnightly allowance pro rated for when the official lives away from home. It is comprised of a meals and incidental component. Portions of the allowance will be subject to Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) depending on the structure of the payments and if a living away from home allowance declaration is completed and submitted within the required timeframe.

Officials cannot claim successive periods of the daily travel allowance in situations where they should be receiving LAFHA.

The living away from home allowance rate (and all other travel rates) is reviewed annually and is paid fortnightly in arrears via payroll.

Further clarification on 21 day rule

Where travel was genuinely not expected to extend beyond 21 days but becomes apparent that it will, the official will not be entitled to travel allowances **from that point**, but rather entitled to LAFHA.

9. Responsibilities for travel and LAFHA

9.1 Officials

Requisitions

Officials requesting official travel must ensure:

- they obtain written approval from the relevant approver before undertaking travel
- policies and procedures are followed and correct approval is given prior to the travel being undertaken
- planning is adequate and costs are minimised whenever possible
- the best fare of the day is purchased (where possible)
- they obtain and submit relevant receipts and documentation for all expenditure (other than meals/incidentals domestically)
- no unnecessary or excessive expenditure is incurred on behalf of the AFP
- no private expenditure is charged to the AFP corporate card
- officials generally must not make their own international arrangements. In some cases, however, liaison post travel within regions may be organised locally by officials located internationally.

Acquittals

Officials acquitting official travel must ensure:

- they acquit travel expenses in [Spendvision](#) no later than 28 days after travel is completed
- they keep all receipts, including boarding passes
- unknown or incorrect transactions (e.g. taxi costs) are followed up and resolved/noted
- they review the statement and link the travel transactions with the appropriate travel requisition
- expenditure incurred on behalf of other officials is clearly identified and supported with relevant documentation
- travel is acquitted with approval from the FMA Act s. 44(1) approver.

9.2. Authorising officers/approvers

Approvals

The relevant FMA Reg 9 approver must pre-approve all official arrangements after ensuring:

- the travel is for official AFP business
- the travel is warranted (i.e. there are no alternatives such as video conferencing or telephone conferencing)
- there are sufficient funds available
- the travel duration meets business requirements
- all relevant costs associated with the travel are fully captured on the online request form, or [Travel Approval Form - International](#) (AFP Forms)
- a separate Reg 9 approval is obtained for passports, visas and Third Person note, airline booking fees, change fees etc.
- domestic travel has been booked through the online booking tool (where possible) to ensure maximum value has been obtained
- meals provided as part of conference/course attendance are documented and travel allowance is not claimed for these meals
- supporting documentation is provided/obtained and reviewed.

Acquittals

When approving travel acquittals, the acquittal approver (FMA Act s. 44(1) delegation) must ensure that:

- written approval was obtained prior to the travel being booked
- corporate card expenditure is in accordance with this guideline
- only approved expenses have been included.

10. Travel expenses

The AFP will cover all pre-approved reasonable costs as per the practical guides on travel and LAFHA.

The AFP Corporate Credit card must only be used to pay for business expenses. Officials must retain original travel documentation to acquit their expenses on return to the office and to support any claim for additional expenses. For further detail refer to the:

- [AFP Practical Guide on overseas travel and living away from home](#)

- [AFP Practical Guide on domestic travel and living away from home.](#)

The AFP is not obliged to reimburse officials for expenses incurred outside this guideline or related Practical Guides, unless the expense is approved by the Chief Financial Officer. Officials incurring expenses outside AFP guidelines risk delayed or partial reimbursement or disciplinary action if the expense is inappropriate.

11. Travel allowance

11.1 Domestic travel

Travel allowance for meals and incidentals is payable where an **overnight stay** is involved. If there is no overnight stay, the Official is not entitled to meal and incidental allowances. The allowance is calculated based on:

- one hour before the scheduled departure time
- duration of trip
- one hour after the scheduled return time for all transportation via a commercial carrier (i.e. aeroplane, bus, train or boat).

For all other means of transportation, the allowance is based on the actual time of departure and arrival.

AFP allowances reflect government recommended rates as updated annually. Once a travel request is entered into Spendvision, the approving delegate receives an email informing them that travel needs to be approved. Once approved, the travel allowance will be paid into the Official's payroll account automatically, generally before the travel commences. Refer to the [AFP Practical Guide on domestic travel and living away from home.](#)

11.2 Overseas travel

Travel allowances do not apply to overseas travel requirements. Expenditure must be 'reasonable' and not exceed recommendations. Refer to the [AFP Practical Guide on overseas travel and living away from home.](#)

Officials must nominate on their travel approval form whether they are requesting additional funds over and above recommended amounts to cover travel expenses prior to travel. Documentation to support the additional requirement for funds must be attached and signed by the relevant approver.

11.3 Domestic living away from home allowance

AFP allowances reflect government recommended rates for living away from home domestically. This fortnightly allowance is paid in arrears into the official's payroll account automatically. Refer to the [AFP Practical Guide on domestic travel and living away from home.](#)

Officials considered as living away from home domestically of more than 21 days where accommodation and meals are provided, may only claim the incidental component of the living away from home allowance. Where only accommodation is provided (not meals), an official can claim the pro rata weekly amount for meals and incidentals. The allowance is not affected

where the meals provided are minor and infrequent.

11.4 Overseas living away from home

The AFP provides a reasonable rate for overseas living away from home which varies depending on the location. This fortnightly allowance is paid in arrears directly to the official's payroll account. Refer to the [AFP Practical Guide on overseas travel and living away from home](#).

12. Preferred suppliers

Officials must use the following suppliers for domestic travel:

- Air travel and accommodation: Qantas Business Travel.
- Short term hire vehicles: Thrifty Car Rental.

Instructions on how to use these suppliers are in the [AFP Practical Guide on domestic travel and living away from home](#).

13. Documentation

13.1 Record keeping

Officials must maintain all documentation for the travel:

- request
- approval
- expenses, for example:
 - boarding passes
 - airline itineraries
 - e-tickets
 - accommodation documentation
 - travel related receipts.

This documentation **must be retained for 7 years** in accordance with Australian Tax Office requirements.

The online acquittal process for domestic travel ([Spendvision](#)) is on the AFPHUB.

13.2 Travel diary (overseas travel)

The Australian Tax Office requires international/overseas travel diaries to be maintained. If receipts cannot be obtained, officials must record the expenditure in the travel diary. This diary is an official diary provided by the AFP and should be electronic but may be paper based.

The diary must be submitted with the AFP Corporate Credit Card statement so the relevant approver can authorise expenditure.

13.3 Hire car Fringe Benefits Tax declaration

Hire car use may incur Fringe Benefits Tax. A declaration must be completed for each hiring, and the hirer must ensure it is submitted to the AFP Tax Team to avoid receiving a Reportable Fringe Benefits Assessment.

14. Private travel

14.1 Unaccompanied travel

Private travel (non AFP business) at the beginning or end of official travel may be permitted if:

- the travel purpose is properly documented before the travel and
- the absence does not inconvenience the business area.

The private travel component and associated costs must be paid separately by the official and must not be charged to the AFP's corporate credit card. The Official is not entitled to any allowances for any personal component of a travel.

Officials must use leave (as appropriate, recreation leave, long service leave or leave without pay) for absences not specifically required for AFP business (except between periods of authorised travel, where it is impractical to return to normal duties).

The maximum amount of leave allowed, either prior to or after the official travel requirement, is 5 days. Additionally, the period of private travel cannot be more than 50% of the official travel. Any non official travel in excess of the above means the AFP may be liable to pay fringe benefits tax as the Australian Tax Office (ATO) may view the trip as having a dual purpose.

Any request for deviation from the set itinerary or most direct route is viewed by the ATO as an indication of a dual purpose trip. Therefore, these requests will generally not be approved. If a request is supported by the Reg 9 approver, the AFP Tax team must be consulted.

The AFP does not provide travel insurance for private travel.

14.2 Spouse, partner and dependant travel

Officials must seek Reg 9 approval prior to travel where a spouse, partner or dependant is accompanying them. If approved, officials must document the accompanied travel component and ensure it does not compromise AFP business.

The AFP does not fund any costs (including travel insurance) incurred for an accompanying spouse, partner or dependant.

15. Overseas travel requirements

Passports and visas

Before embarking on official overseas travel, officials must ensure they:

- possess an official/diplomatic passport and appropriate visas
- comply with any all customs, quarantine and immigration requirements.

The AFP will meet the cost for an official or diplomatic passport and visas needed for official business.

The AFP will not fund the cost of a personal passport.

Health

Health precautions are recommended for some countries. Officials must ensure they have the required inoculations when on official AFP business.

Officials must be cleared by Medical Services prior to undertaking overseas travel.

Security

AFP officials must complete and submit the [International Travel Notification](#) form (AFP Forms) before undertaking official and/or personal overseas travel. This form is the only approved method for reporting overseas travel to Security Reporting and Referrals.

Every AFP official must receive a Defensive Security Brief (DSB) prior to undertaking official or personal overseas travel. The briefing will be initiated by Security – Defensive Security Briefing Team upon receipt of an International Travel Notification form.

When travelling in certain AFP Security designated high risk locations, an AFP official may be advised by Security that the carriage of items of sensitive AFP and personal equipment including ICT equipment will be prohibited, as authorised by the AFP Commissioner's Order on Security (CO9).

Officials must also monitor relevant Australian Government travel warnings in relation to the security environment.

16. Use of vehicles

Private vehicles

Officials should use AFP vehicles, where appropriate and available, before using private vehicles for official travel. Use of personal vehicles must be approved by the relevant approver.

Taxis/chauffeured vehicles

Chauffeured vehicles must not be used unless endorsed by an appropriate AFP Manager as per the travel request form. For safety and security it may be appropriate to use such transport at some international locations.

Officials should not assume any entitlement to use such services.

21. Airline lounge memberships

The AFP **may** fund **one** business airline lounge membership for an official who is not part of any Australian Workplace Agreement or supplementary contract. The AFP does not fund airline

life membership programs or memberships in excess of one year. The delegation for this approval sits with a Manager or above.

22. Frequent flyer memberships

Government policy states that airline reward and loyalty points, where awarded for official travel, must not be used for private purposes or to upgrade the class of travel, and where possible should be used to reduce the cost of future flights required for official travel.

Officially earned points cannot be transferred or used by any other person other than the AFP official who accumulated the points.

As part of its contractual arrangement with Qantas Business Travel, the AFP does not participate in 'frequent flyer' programs. However, where applicable, officials will receive award tier status credits. If officials accrue frequent flyer points using Jetstar, Virgin Blue and overseas carriers, those points **must** be used for official travel and cannot be used for private purposes. Officials must advise their points balance to the AFP Travel Manager every quarter.

Qantas Club members automatically receive a complimentary frequent flyer membership. Any points accrued through accommodation, car hire, foreign exchange purchases and flights on One World partner members, cannot be redeemed for purchases on the Qantas in-store site.

23. Further information

For further interpretation and advice about this guideline, contact:

Travel Help Desk

AFP Travel Manager: Chris Telfer
Phone: 137 650 or (03) 9607 7650
Email: chris.telfer@afp.gov.au

The AFP Tax Team (for FBT enquiries)

Email: tax@afp.gov.au

Relocations (for LAFHA enquiries)

Email: Relocations@afp.gov.au

International Travel (for bookings/visa/passport enquiries)

Phone: 142 989, 143 767, 143 814, 144 086, 144 533, 144 500 or, 02 6131 4500

24. References

Legislation

- [Australian Federal Police Act 1979](#) (Cth)
- [Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997](#) (Cth)
- [Financial Management and Accountability Regulations 1997](#) (Cth).

AFP governance instruments

- [AFP Commissioner's Order 4 - Finance \(CO4\) CFI 20 Official Travel](#)
- [AFP Commissioner's Order 4 - Finance \(CO4\) Annexure B - Schedules of Delegations](#)
- [AFP Commissioner's Order 9 - Security \(CO9\)](#)
- [AFP Practical Guide for IDG Determination Travel Benefits](#)
- [AFP Practical Guide on domestic travel](#) and living away from home
- [AFP Practical Guide on overseas travel](#) and living away from home.

AFP Forms

- [International Travel Notification](#)
- [Travel Approval Form - International](#)

Useful links:

- [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade \(Smarttraveller\)](#)
- [International SOS](#) (emergency medical assistance overseas)
- [Jetstar StarClass Business Class Travel](#)
- [Qantas Hints for Your Health in Flight](#)
- [Qantas OnLine Booking Tool](#) Qantas Business Travel
- [SeatGuru](#) (Airline seating, amenities and information)
- [Skytrax](#) (Airline quality)
- [Spendvision](#)
- [Travel Doctor](#) (advice for overseas travel)
- [Travelex Card Services](#)
- [World Health Organisation](#)
- [XE](#) (currency rates and conversion).