



# NSW Government Travel and Transport Policy

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# 1. Policy Statement

## 1.1 Objectives

The key objectives of this policy are:

- to ensure agencies have the appropriate travel and transport tools available to support their business needs while maintaining purchasing transparency
- to ensure spending on travel and transport across the NSW government is sustainable and achieves best value for money
- to provide agencies with an overarching framework to guide their travel and transport decision making
- to promote innovative and collaborative approaches to working.

## 1.2 Definitions and Scope

This policy covers all official travel, both air and surface, undertaken by public officials using public money. It applies to all public service departments, other public sector organisations and services reporting to a Minister. In the case of organisations that are not public service departments, the approval of the responsible Minister should be obtained for any departure from the provisions of this policy. This policy should also be adopted by State Owned Corporations (SOCs) and Public Trading Enterprises (PTEs) as it contains sound guidance regarding official travel.

*Official travel* means where a public sector organisation or service responsible to a Minister uses public monies to pay for the travel of a public official or any other person.

*Public official* means an officer or employee of a public sector organisation or service reporting to a Minister, or any other person remunerated by and performing under the direction or auspices of such an organisation or service.

The Ministers' Office Handbook maintained by the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPC) is the authoritative source of guidance in respect of travel by Ministers and their staff. The Handbook is published on DPC's website at [www.dpc.nsw.gov.au](http://www.dpc.nsw.gov.au).

This policy does not cover individuals or employees of organisations who provide services under contract to a public sector organisation or service unless specified by an agency. Where necessary, travel provisions in respect of such contract personnel should be set out in the relevant conditions of contract.

## 1.3 Ethical Conduct

All activities must be conducted in an ethical and transparent manner and comply with the values, principles and articles in the [Code of Ethics and Conduct for NSW government sector employees](#) and the [NSW Procurement Policy Framework](#).

Staff will ensure they are not, or are not perceived to be in a conflict of interest with any supplier. Those staff who have, or may be perceived to have, a vested interest in the outcome of a purchase or decision should disclose any conflict to their manager and discuss whether they should exclude themselves from any role in the purchase or decision.

Suppliers must conduct their business with government in a fair and honest manner and cooperate with agencies in the resolution of disputes in a non-adversarial manner. They must not engage in conduct or practices that are anti-competitive and all potential conflicts of interest must be declared and managed transparently. Suppliers are to comply with all legal obligations and must not impede agencies in meeting their legislative and policy requirements.

## 2. Making travel decisions

### 2.1 Travel and transport as strategic assets

The resources used for travel should be viewed as strategic assets by agencies and support the delivery of services to the public.

Under the NSW government's devolved procurement framework, agencies have autonomy in deciding the appropriate mix of travel and transport options to meet their business needs. In making these decisions they must abide by all relevant NSW government policy. Agencies must also ensure that they have transparent reporting arrangements in place to ensure they are able to demonstrate value for money is being achieved in the travel and fleet management processes.

### 2.2 Minimising travel

#### 2.2.1 Use of technology and innovative approaches to working

Agencies should seek to optimise the use of technology and innovative approaches to working. Technologies such as teleconferencing and videoconferencing are now well entrenched in business and should be considered prior to committing to travel.

There are also many collaborative tools (eg [GovDex](#)) that allow groups to work together and share information online. These can be particularly useful in reducing the number of times working groups need to meet.

#### 2.2.2 Working collaboratively with others

Clusters and agencies should ensure that they are working collaboratively with each other. Where multiple agencies are travelling to the same event, consideration should be given to reducing the number of staff attending. Employees should be encouraged to act as representatives of NSW government, not just their agency, where this is appropriate.

### 2.3 Choosing the most appropriate form of travel

#### 2.3.1 Short trips

For short trips, particularly within the Sydney metropolitan area, employees should prioritise walking and public transport. Taxis and ride-sharing options (eg Uber) should only be used when there is no appropriate and timely public transport option available.

Agencies may wish to consider purchasing general Opal cards for use by staff in the Sydney metropolitan area, or allow staff to use their own Opal cards.

#### 2.3.2 Employee owned vehicles

In some cases it may be appropriate for employees to use their own vehicles for work related travel purposes. Agencies should consider whether this is an option they wish to provide to their employees, and if so must ensure that guidance is provided on appropriate vehicle types, insurance levels and how to claim relevant expenses either directly through the agency or via the tax system.

### **2.3.3 Car share vehicles**

Car sharing vehicles (eg GoGet, Hertz24/7) should be considered by agencies that have offices in areas where sufficient share-cars are available. Use of these vehicles is recommended for shorter trips where a fleet vehicle is not available and public transport options are limited. Car-sharing services may not be economically viable in low population density areas or for trips longer than a few hours.

### **2.3.4 Car rentals**

Bookings for car rentals must be made through the NSW Government [Contract 1008 Travel Management Services](#). Please refer to the [car hire contract](#) for information on NSW government's approved car hire providers.

Agencies should provide employees with guidance on when a car rental should be used instead of a car share or fleet vehicle.

### **2.3.5 Fleet vehicles**

Agencies are responsible for managing their fleet requirements through the relevant NSW Procurement prequalification scheme. Employees should be provided with guidance on when use of fleet vehicles is considered appropriate by the agency. In general, use of fleet vehicles is considered appropriate if:

- a specialised vehicle is required for work related purposes (eg to carry specific equipment, a government branded vehicle etc)
- public transport options are limited
- driving is more cost and time effective than flying

### **2.3.6 Air travel (including charters)**

Bookings for air travel must be made through [Contract 1008 Travel Management Services](#). Aircraft charters should also utilise the whole-of-government contracts already in place.

Economy class travel should be used for all official travel within Australia and overseas with the following exceptions:

- CEOs, senior executives, statutory officers and chairpersons of NSW Government boards and committees may fly premium economy or business class to Western Australia, the Northern Territory and overseas
- A public official travelling with a Minister may, if required, travel in the same class as the Minister
- a public official travelling with a Government delegation may, with approval of the CEO or delegate, travel in the same class as other delegates
- Ministers may waive the requirement to fly economy class for medical reasons.

For all official travel, the lowest logical fare of the day must be used for all domestic flights.

This is the cheapest fare available that meets the traveller's logistical needs. The public official may nominate their desired date and time of departure to the appointed supplier when booking air travel.

### **2.3.6.1 Airline Loyalty Schemes**

Public officials, with approval of the relevant Secretary or delegate, may accept loyalty or frequent flyer points from any airline in respect of official travel. The lowest logical fare of the day (i.e. the cheapest fare available meeting the traveller's logistical needs) needs to be used for all domestic flights. Public officials can only specify destination, date and nominated time. Program membership cannot influence airline choice.

Where any airline loyalty points are accrued from official travel, these points must be used to pay for further official travel.

Airline loyalty points accrued from official travel must not be used for personal travel or for other personal benefits.

Any outstanding points accrued from official travel must be sacrificed in writing by the membership holder to the airline(s) concerned when the public official's employment is terminated or their appointment ends.

As per clause 2.3.6, bookings for air travel using loyalty or frequent flyer points must be made through Contract 1008 Travel Management Services.

## **3. Approvals and bookings**

### **3.1 Approvals and guidance for employees**

Agencies should provide employees with guidance on when travel is appropriate for specific roles. Information on the approval processes that apply to their cluster should also be made available. In general, the following approvals are required:

- Official travel by air and charter of aircraft for travel must be approved by the chief executive officer (CEO), person in charge of any other public sector organisation or service reporting to a Minister, or their delegate. Approval is to be given prior to any official travel being undertaken. Please note Norfolk Island and Lord Howe Island are to be treated as domestic travel for approval purposes.
- Overseas travel as part of an approved Public Service Commission Leadership Academy activity can be approved by the Public Service Commissioner under delegation from the Premier<sup>1</sup>.
- Ministerial approval is required for all other official overseas (including charters) travel by public officials, including to New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. Ministers may delegate this function to CEOs or other person in charge of the public sector organisation or service reporting to the Minister. Written approval is to

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<sup>1</sup> Agencies remain responsible for the cost of overseas travel approved by the Public Service Commissioner and so should also obtain appropriate approvals for travel expenditure.

be given prior to any official overseas travel being undertaken. Overseas travel, by any means, should only be undertaken where there are significant benefits to the Minister's own administration or the State.

The Premier has asked Ministers to exercise the strictest economy in approving this travel and ensure that it can be funded within the budget allocation for the organisation concerned. Ministers are asked to maintain close scrutiny of official travel overseas in their portfolios.

Information to be provided to the approver in support of proposed overseas travel includes the objectives, scope and expected benefits of the trip, estimated cost and the destinations and organisations being visited.

### **3.2 Private travel**

[Contract 1008 Travel Management Services](#) must not be used to book private travel.

There may be exceptional circumstances where private travel occurs as an adjunct to official travel by a public official (eg where a period of private leave is approved as set out in this Policy) or private travel by another person (such as a spouse) in conjunction with travel by public officials. Circumstances such as these are rare and are not to be encouraged.

However, if it is appropriate and necessary to arrange private travel as an adjunct to official travel, a public official may choose to use the services of the supplier approved under [Contract 1008 Travel Management Services](#) in a private capacity subject to the following conditions:

- a) "NSW government rates" under [Contract 1008](#) are not applied to the private travel
- b) the private travel is paid for separately at the time of the booking from the public official's private accounts
- c) the private booking is made at the same time as the booking for official travel
- d) a government-issued credit card or other account is not used in any circumstances.

### **3.3 Bookings**

Agencies should provide employees with advice on their specific booking requirements for fleet and car share vehicles. Air travel and accommodation should be booked via [Contract 1008 Travel Management Services](#).

The NSW Government [Contract 1009 Virtual Travel Card Payment](#) or P Cards should be used for bookings when available.

### **3.4 Travel insurance**

The Treasury Managed Fund (TMF) provides protection to NSW government agencies, parliamentarians, employees, officers and other approved persons against the insurable exposures and losses faced by government. Protection includes workers compensation,

liability, property, motor vehicle accident and other (volunteer and overseas travel) cover.

Insurance & Care NSW (icare) has contracted an [overseas travel and emergency services provider](#) to assist staff on official overseas travel with medical or security emergencies.

The service provider has doctors available to assist in most capital cities throughout the world and can arrange both pre-travel advice and 24 hour emergency medical assistance including advice, treatment and medical evacuations where necessary. It will also arrange for evacuation where civil security is threatened.

The approved supplier under [Contract 1008 Travel Management Services](#) will provide details on how to register with the overseas travel and emergency services provider prior to departure and also arrange travel insurance. The [TMF](#) workers compensation or [general lines service provider](#) is also available to provide advice of overseas travel protection prior to departure.

## **3.5 Travel allowances**

### **3.5.1 Payment of actual travel expenses**

Wherever possible, agencies are encouraged to implement repayments of actuals only (rather than per diem payments) using the rates in the relevant industrial instrument as an upper limit for repayments.

Various expense and work related allowances in the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2009* are adjusted annually. These can be accessed via the NSW Industrial Relations [website](#).

The travel rates included in the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award* represent a reasonable rate for establishing the grade of hotel that should be booked.

### **3.5.2 Senior officials**

Senior executive officers may be reimbursed for actual expenses up to the maximum limits for reasonable travel and overtime meal allowance expenses set out annually by the [Australian Taxation Office](#).

### **3.5.3 Processing travel claims**

Claims for official travel expenses should be made within one month of the travel taking place. Claims should be supported by relevant documentation.

### **3.5.4 Documentation supporting official travel**

Documentation supporting all travel expenses must be kept in accordance with the requirements of the [Australian Taxation Office](#).

## 4. Agency guidelines

The Procurement Board issues operational guidelines which may be adopted (with or without variation) by agencies to support the implementation of this policy.

### 4.1 Travel guidelines

Agency travel guidelines should provide guidance and information for employees on:

- Circumstances where travel is appropriate
- Health and safety, particularly on issues specific to the agency's operations
- Approval and booking processes
- Claiming travel allowances and payments
- Use of airline lounges

Agencies should ensure that appropriate travel data is collected that allows ongoing analysis of whether travel expenditure is being managed appropriately and travel decisions meet the strategic needs of the agency.

### 4.2 Fleet and car use guidelines

Agency fleet and car use guidelines should provide guidance and information for employees on:

- Health and safety, particularly on issues specific to the agency's operations
- Personal use of fleet vehicles and use of employee vehicles for work related travel
- The agency's fringe benefit policy and reporting requirements
- Vehicle booking systems, including bookings for car share and rental vehicles
- Record keeping

Agencies should ensure that appropriate vehicle usage data is collected that allows ongoing analysis of whether the fleet is being maintained at its optimal size and is fit for purpose.