

OFFICIAL

# Premier's Guideline

## AIR TRAVEL BY MINISTERS AND THEIR STAFF

Effective from August 2022

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## Purpose statement

Air travel is an important element to the function of many portfolios and can provide significant benefits to the State. However, care should be taken to use public resources prudently.

South Australia's Ministerial Code of Conduct sets out the expected standards of conduct by Ministers of the Crown. The Code articulates the expectation that Ministers behave according to the highest standards of constitutional and personal conduct in the performance of their duties. They must act honestly and diligently and with propriety in the performance of their public functions and duties and ensure that their conduct does not bring discredit upon the Government or the State.

The Code also requires that Ministers account to Parliament fully and effectively for all public money over which Parliament has given them authority. By extension, this covers all expenditure of public funds for domestic and international travel. The Code also includes provisions to ensure that ministers are not compromised by offers of hospitality and goodwill and, more specifically, requiring ministers not to accept free air travel or accommodation without my prior approval.

This Guideline articulates the South Australian government's policy in relation to domestic and international travel by South Australian Government Ministers and their staff,<sup>1</sup> and sets out the process for Ministers and their staff to follow to ensure financial accountability.

This Guideline also aims to maximise the value of air travel to South Australia by ensuring:

- ministerial air travel aligns with South Australia's strategic priorities and is coordinated effectively across government
- air travel is designed to deliver benefits to South Australia, and
- approved air travel will achieve value for money.

## Context

This Guideline should be used in conjunction with any applicable determinations of the Remuneration Tribunal of South Australia for Members of Parliament, as published from time to time by the Remuneration Tribunal ([www.remtribunal.sa.gov.au/reports-and-determinations](http://www.remtribunal.sa.gov.au/reports-and-determinations)).

This Guideline should also be used in conjunction with:

- [South Australia Ministerial Code of Conduct](#)
- Parliament of South Australia House of Assembly Members Handbook
- Treasurer's Instruction 13: [Expenditure incurred by Ministers and Ministerial Staff](#)
- Procurement Services SA: [Travel Management Services Contract Guide](#)
- Premier and Cabinet Circular 035: [Proactive Disclosure of Regularly Requested Information](#)
- Premier and Cabinet Circular 040: [Air Travel](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Air travel by South Australian public sector employees, including Chief Executives, is governed by Premier and Cabinet Circular 040: Air Travel

- Premier and Cabinet Circular 042: [Cyber Security Incident Management](#)
- Commissioner's Determination 3.2: [Employment Conditions – Remuneration – Allowances and Reimbursements](#)<sup>2</sup>
- [Code of Ethics for South Australian Public Sector](#)

Overseas air travel includes travel outside of Australia and Australian Territories. Where air travel within Australia and the Australian Territories forms part of a more extensive itinerary encompassing other overseas destinations, the principles for overseas travel apply.

## Authority and accountability

This Guideline applies to Ministers and members of a Minister's personal staff as employed under section 71 of the *Public Sector Act 2009* – Employment of Ministerial staff.

It is the responsibility of Ministers and their staff to comply with the requirements of this Guideline.

All overseas air travel proposed to be undertaken for the primary purpose of conducting official government business by Ministers must be approved by the Premier.

Ministers and their staff may undertake domestic air travel under their own authority.

## Application

### Seeking Approval for Overseas Travel

1. Ministers must first obtain the Premier's approval to travel overseas prior to making travel arrangements or engaging parties external to the South Australian government to establish an overseas program.
2. Once an overseas travel request has been approved, the Premier's Chief of Staff will provide a copy to the Department of the Premier and Cabinet's Diplomatic Relations and Protocol. Upon being advised of approved travel, Diplomatic Relations and Protocol will liaise with:
  - the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to advise of pending ministerial travel
  - the relevant Ministerial office to ensure appropriate passport arrangements are in place<sup>3</sup>
  - the Department of the Premier and Cabinet's Office of the Chief Information Officer to arrange an information security threat awareness briefing prior to departure (if required), and
  - across government to ensure a coordinated approach to international travel, leverage established government relationships and mitigate any risk of duplication of effort.

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<sup>2</sup> Noting Appendix 1: Overseas Travel Arrangements of Commissioner's Determination 3.2 does not apply to overseas travel by Members of Parliament, Members of the Judiciary, the Agent-General and employees in the office of the Agent-General.

<sup>3</sup> Ministerial offices are responsible for ensuring necessary visa requirements are met for all international travel.

3. Ministerial requests to the Premier relating to overseas travel must set out the reason for travel and proposed dates, including proposed engagements, the importance of these engagements, and expected outcomes. Overseas travel solely for the purposes of information gathering will not be approved.
4. Ministers are required to use the Minute template, [Approval for Minister to Travel](#), available on the Department of the Premier and Cabinet's Extranet, and submit to the Premier for consideration.
5. As set out in the Minute template, when seeking approval for overseas travel Ministers must provide:
  - a draft itinerary, including details of proposed meetings
  - the names of the person(s) proposed to travel with the Minister (ministerial staff, spouse/domestic partner and public servants)
  - estimated cost of the trip (travel, accommodation and incidental expenses for the Minister and each person travelling with the Minister), and
  - source of funding for all elements of the trip.
6. All overseas travel must provide value for money. Realistic estimates should be included as to the cost of the overseas trip. Related costs should be accounted for separately, for example, the cost of hosting a major business or trade function.
7. Ministers are reminded that they are representing the South Australian Government at all times when travelling overseas. While itineraries may include rest periods, they should be kept to a minimum and be the exception, rather than the rule.
8. Leave while on official overseas travel is not encouraged and will only be approved in the case of ministerial staff at the discretion of the Premier's Chief of Staff. In the case of Ministers (as well as Chief Executives), leave while on official overseas travel will only be approved at the discretion of the Premier. Any request should be included in the application for final travel approval.
9. Leave while on official overseas travel may result in Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) being payable. Any FBT payable should be included as part of estimated costs in the application for final travel approval. Ministers are responsible for ensuring they comply with FBT requirements.

*Cabinet submission – Ministerial Business-Related Overseas Travel*

10. Once the Premier has approved the Minister's overseas travel, the Minister is required to prepare a Cabinet submission to advise Cabinet of the proposed travel and to recommend that the Governor appoints an acting Minister for the duration of the Minister's absence. The submission must be considered in Executive Council before the proposed travel commences.
11. The Minister is required to use the Cabinet submission template, [Ministerial Business-Related Overseas Travel](#), available on the Department of the Premier and Cabinet's Extranet. The Cabinet submission must also attach a copy of the approved Minute to the Premier and a copy of the draft itinerary.

12. Cabinet Office with the Department of the Premier and Cabinet can provide support to agencies in preparing an overseas travel-related Cabinet submission, where required ([DPCCabinetOffice@sa.gov.au](mailto:DPCCabinetOffice@sa.gov.au)).

#### *Security for overseas travel*

13. Relevant security threat awareness briefings must be conducted with agency security staff prior to any overseas departure.<sup>4</sup>
14. Agencies should consider the prevailing travel advice provided by the Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade. Specific consideration should be given to the nature and purpose of the visit, measures to stay secure, the sensitivity and value of information being taken and what mobile communications equipment to take (if any).
15. In recognition that the South Australian Government has information of significant value, the Department of the Premier and Cabinet's Office of the Chief Information Officer ([CyberSecurityOCIO@sa.gov.au](mailto:CyberSecurityOCIO@sa.gov.au)) will provide an information security threat awareness briefing prior to departure, if required. It is strongly preferred that this briefing occurs at least two weeks prior to departure.
16. On return from overseas travel, the Office of the Chief Information Officer must be provided a summary of any suspicious activities and/or gifts provided.

#### Principles

##### *Booking air travel*

17. State Government travel arrangements are only to be used by travellers on government business. Travellers must purchase travel (air and accommodation) in accordance with the State Government's travel arrangements and associated services. Procurement Services SA within the Department of Treasury and Finance can provide support to agencies where required ([Contact@procurement.sa.gov.au](mailto:Contact@procurement.sa.gov.au)).
18. It is expected that air travel and accommodation will be booked with the travel arrangement provider's online booking tool in all but exceptional circumstances; for example, where an airline is not available through the tool. Travellers must book the lowest logical fare<sup>5</sup> compatible with their business needs.
19. Where cost effective and compatible with the traveller's business needs, travellers should consider selecting international flights with airlines offering a direct route to and from Adelaide.
20. Offers of funded air travel or accommodation by other governments or private organisations must be reviewed and approved by the Premier, and only approved where benefits to the State can be identified and no conflicts of interest or security matters are identified.
21. Accommodation must be of an appropriate standard and reasonable cost. Government discount rates available through the online booking tool should be used wherever practical.

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<sup>4</sup> Agency Security Executive, Agency Security Adviser or IT Security Adviser

<sup>5</sup> The lowest fare available at the time the travel is booked that is compatible with the business needs of the Traveller

22. When air travel is altered and results in airfare credits, these must be used as soon as is feasible.
23. Any frequent flyer points (or similar) accumulated while travelling on official business should be redeemed for official business use. Membership of a loyalty program should not determine airline selection.

#### *Standard of air travel*

24. Ministers are entitled to 'Business Class' air travel. 'First Class' is not permitted unless the airline does not provide 'Business Class' or an upgrade is available at no cost to government.
25. Ministerial staff are entitled to 'Business Class' air travel for overseas visits, and 'Economy Class' air travel for domestic visits. A higher class of travel is not permitted unless the airline provides an upgrade at no cost to the government, or otherwise as approved by the Premier's Chief of Staff. The Premier's Chief of Staff may approve a higher class of air travel for ministerial staff in appropriate circumstances.

### **Exemptions**

There are no exemptions associated with this Premier's Direction.

### **Monitoring and compliance**

#### Reporting on Ministers' overseas travel to Cabinet

Ministers must prepare and lodge a Cabinet note for Cabinet within 28 days of returning from overseas travel to advise Cabinet of the outcomes of the overseas visit.

The Cabinet note must include:

- a statement of the travel objectives
- a detailed summary of the regions and cities visited
- summaries of meetings held and outcomes and how these will be followed up
- reference to any documents or publications obtained or considered to be of interest as a Minister
- the names of organisations or parliaments visited
- recommendations arising from the travel, and
- expected outcomes and indicative timeframes relating to these recommendations.

The Department of the Premier and Cabinet's Diplomatic Relations and Protocol unit will maintain a database of overseas ministerial travel and travel outcomes.

#### Publicly available Ministerial overseas travel reports

In accordance with Premier and Cabinet Circular PC035 – [Proactive disclosure of regularly requested information](#), Ministers must proactively publish overseas travel reports to the public via departmental websites.

The publicly available reports must include overseas travel arrangements, outcomes of overseas travel (where not commercial in confidence), and the costs associated with Ministers' travel and public sector employees travelling with the Minister.

For further advice on publicly available overseas travel reports, please contact State Records of South Australia in the Attorney-General's Department ([StateRecords@sa.gov.au](mailto:StateRecords@sa.gov.au)).

## **Distribution and publication**

This Premier's Guideline is available on the Department of the Premier and Cabinet Extranet, along with additional guidance material. Diplomatic Relations and Protocol oversees the distribution of the Premier's Guideline to Ministers' offices.

## **Document Control**

Review number: 1  
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## **For more information**

Diplomatic Relations and Protocol, DPC

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