

Robyn Lambley  
Chair  
Public Accounts Committee  
GPO Box 3721  
DARWIN NT 0801

**Chief Executive Officer**

Level 14 NT House  
22 Mitchell Street  
DARWIN NT 0800

**Postal Address**

GPO Box 4396  
DARWIN NT 0801

**T** 08 8999 7554

**F** 08 8941 1491

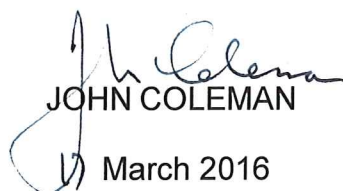
**E** john.coleman@nt.gov.au

Dear Madam Chair

**RE: QUESTIONS ON NOTICE – LATITUDE TRAVEL**

Please find attached the answers for a set of questions on notice. The questions on notice were received following my appearance before the Public Accounts Committee on 4 February 2016.

Yours sincerely



JOHN COLEMAN

17 March 2016

# **PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

## **Question Taken on Notice**

**Date:** Public Hearing, 4 February 2016

**Subject:** Latitude Travel

**From:** Ms Natasha Fyles MLA

**To:** John Coleman

**Agency:** Department of the Chief Minister

---

**Number:** 1

**Question:** Are you able to provide this committee with a copy of the terms of reference that each department was working under?

**Answer:** Attached are two memorandums which were sent to CEOs requesting that the audit into Latitude Travel take place.

Department of the Chief Minister requested agencies undertake an internal compliance audit as re-affirmed in the memorandums dated 18 December 2015 and 22 January 2016, terms of reference agencies were required to undertake included:

- A six month compliance audit for the period of 1 July 2015 to 31 December 2015 with the new Air Travel policy.
- Conduct an internal audit into transactions relating to travel companies Latitude Travel, Winnellie Travel and Latitude 69.
- Analyse all transactions between 1 July 2009 to 18 December 2015
- Identify any potential anomalies which may be referred to Police for further investigation.

It is understood that, at the request of the Public Accounts Committee, the Auditor-General is now assessing the results, scope and conduct of the audit to develop an opinion as to whether the objectives were achieved.



DEPARTMENT OF  
THE CHIEF MINISTER

# MEMORANDUM

TO: NTPS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS TRIM No:  
FROM: CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
RE: ROUTINE SIX MONTHLY TRAVEL REVIEW

---

On 29 June this year, I wrote to all Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) informing them of the introduction of a new Northern Territory Government *Air Travel Policy*. The whole-of-government travel policy came into effect on 1 July 2015 and aimed to improve processes and accountability and to deliver cost reductions.


The policy continues to improve as recommendations from the independent KPMG Travel Review are adopted and implemented.

The NT Government accepted the recommendations of the KPMG Travel Review, including establishing six monthly audits to ensure compliance with the new travel procedures. All agencies are required to conduct this audit and provide me with any findings of compliance or non-compliance, or identify areas for improvement. **Your written advice informing me of the outcomes of the review is due by 31 January 2016.**

In light of recent court convictions relating to travel companies Latitude Travel, Winnellie Travel and Latitude 69, CEOs are also required to conduct an internal audit in accordance with agency processes of travel booked with these companies. It is important that CEOs are confident that they have received value for tax payer funds on travel transactions with these companies. **I require CEOs to provide a report back to me in writing on the outcomes of their audit, including any transaction anomalies by 31 January 2016.**

Should you have any operational questions regarding either of these requests, please contact David Ryan, Executive Director, Corporate Services, Department of the Chief Minister on 89 996 355 or [david.ryan@nt.gov.au](mailto:david.ryan@nt.gov.au).

Please note the tender for a single corporate travel provider is due to be awarded early 2016. The *Air Travel Policy* will be updated accordingly.

  
JOHN COLEMAN  
18 December 2015

# MEMORANDUM

TO: **NTPS CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS**      TIMM No:

FROM: **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

SUBJECT: **TRAVEL AUDIT – LATITUDE TRAVEL**

---

On 18 December I wrote to all Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) requesting that an internal audit into transactions with travel company, Latitude Travel, be undertaken.

It has come to my attention that some agencies are only auditing records dating back six months or are expecting that the Department of Corporate and Information Services will scan through financial transactions for them. This should not be the case.

All agencies are required to:

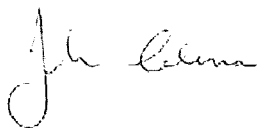
- Conduct an internal audit into transactions relating to travel companies Latitude Travel, Winnellie Travel and Latitude 69.
- Analyse all transactions between 1 July 2009 and 18 December 2015 (in accordance with the holding of financial information).
- Identify any potential anomalies which may be referred to Police for further investigation.

Agencies seeking assistance in accessing data from the finance system should contact the Department of Corporate and Information Services Corporate Reporting team at [financereporting.dcis@nt.gov.au](mailto:financereporting.dcis@nt.gov.au) or 8999 1645.

**I request CEOs to provide a report back to me in writing on the outcomes of their audit, including any transaction anomalies by 31 January 2016.**

**I will convene a meeting of CEOs on Friday 29 January from 1000-1100 for those agencies who have identified transaction anomalies. Please make yourself available and be prepared to answer questions about the identified anomalies.**

Should you have any operational questions regarding this request please contact David Ryan (8999 6355) or Robert Csar (8999 6338) from the Department of the Chief Minister's Corporate Services Division.



JOHN COLEMAN

22 January 2016

# **PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

## **Question Taken on Notice**

**Date:** Public Hearing, 4 February 2016

**Subject:** Latitude Travel

**From:** Ms Nicole Manison MLA

**To:** John Coleman

**Agency:** Department of the Chief Minister

---

**Number:** 2

**Question:** You mentioned in the media release there were non-compliance issues... How many are we talking about?

**Answer:**

With the introduction of the new Northern Territory Government Air Travel Policy from 1 July 2015, one of the recommendations from the independent KPMG Travel Review was the introduction of six monthly travel compliance audits.

Twenty-four government agencies have completed travel compliance audits from 1 July 2015 to 31 December 2015.

All audits go through a Risk and Management committee. These usually comprise of both internal and external individuals.

In the case of the Department of the Chief Minister, there is an external chair and cross-agency representation from the Department of Treasury and Finance and Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment.

Internal audits of this nature are carried out by financial and audit staff that have experience in undertaking this exercise.

Department of the Chief Minister and Tourism NT are currently undergoing a travel compliance audit for the period of 1 July 2015 to 31 December 2015 by external

auditors as part of the NT Auditor-General's normal audit program. Results of the audit will be tabled in parliament as is normal practice.

All agencies undertook their own audits for the six month period.

Agency's working papers of the audit and actual details of the number of non-compliance minor matters are held with each government agency.

Agency CEs provided a confirmation and summary of minor matters identified of their audits to the Department of the Chief Minister.

All agencies identified non-compliance minor matters with the new Air Travel Policy including:

- non-use of single travel management provider
- insufficient documentation to support Best Value Fair
- official travel expenses not acquitted within seven days
- official travel approved after the date of the recorded travel booking.

Issues raised as non-compliance are predominately due to individuals and agencies still familiarising themselves with the Air Travel Policy.

It is expected that the next audit will identify fewer instances of non-compliance as people continue to familiarise themselves with the policy.

Departments are continuing to provide staff education and awareness of the Air Travel Policy with aim to improve compliance results going forward.

It is also expected ongoing six monthly compliance reviews undertaken by agencies will improve awareness and compliance with the Air Travel Policy.

---

# PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

## Question Taken on Notice

**Date:** Public Hearing, 4 February 2016

**Subject:** Latitude Travel

**From:** Ms Robyn Lambley MLA

**To:** John Coleman

**Agency:** Department of the Chief Minister

---

**Number:** 3

**Question:** Can we have those documents tabled? I guess one of the reasons we are meeting today is to create more transparency and accountability, so it would be good if both those policy documents were made available.

---

**Answer:** Please find attached:

- Ministerial and Ministerial Officer Travel Policy (which also applies to the Office of the Leader of the Opposition).
- Northern Territory Government Air Travel Policy.

Please note that both of the attached policies are due to be updated following the awarding of the tender for a single corporate travel provider. A number of adopted recommendations from the KMPG Report into Government Travel are due to be worked through with the successful provider. The policies will be updated accordingly.



## **Ministers and Ministerial Office Staff Travel Policy**

**NT Government travel must be necessary for  
government business, value for money and  
responsibly managed**

July 2015  
Version 2.0



Document details	
<b>Document title</b>	Ministers and Ministerial Office Staff Travel Policy
<b>Contact details</b>	Corporate Services Email: <a href="mailto:dcm.finance@nt.gov.au">dcm.finance@nt.gov.au</a> Phone: 8999 5030
<b>Date and version</b>	July 2015 Version 2.0
<b>Approved by</b>	John Coleman
<b>Date approved</b>	2 July 2015
<b>Document review</b>	Annually

Change history			
Version	Date	Author	Change details
0.1	April 2015	Taya Petsheny	First draft and consolidation of existing
0.2	June 2015	Taya Petsheny	Inclusion of whole of government policy and guidelines
1.0	June 2015	Taya Petsheny	Policy for consultation and Cabinet approval
2.0	July 2015	David Ryan	Changes approved by the Accountable Officer

Acronyms	
The following acronyms are used in this document	
Acronyms	Full form
CCC	Corporate Credit Card
DCIS	Department of Corporate and Information Systems
EIMS	Electronic Invoice Management System
FFP	Frequent flyer points
FMA	<i>Financial Management Act</i>
MR	Movement requisition
NTG	Northern Territory Government
NTPFES	Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Service
NTPS	Northern Territory Public Sector
OCM	Office of the Chief Minister
OCPE	Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment
OLO	Office of the Leader of the Opposition
PSEMA	<i>Public Sector Employment and Management Act</i>
RPT	Regular public transport
RTD	Remuneration Tribunal Determination
TA	Travel allowance

**Ministers and Ministerial Office Staff Travel Policy**

<b>Acronyms</b> The following acronyms are used in this document	
TRIPS	Travel Request Information Processing System

## Contents

<b>1 Purpose</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>2 Policy Principles</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>3 Legislation and related references</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>4 Definitions</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>5 Scope</b> .....	<b>8</b>
5.1 In scope .....	8
5.2 Out of scope .....	8
<b>6 TRIPS</b> .....	<b>8</b>
6.1 Roles and responsibilities .....	8
6.1.1 Travel booking officers .....	8
6.1.2 Travel desk/clerk .....	9
6.1.3 Accounts payable .....	9
6.1.4 TRIPS agency administrator .....	9
6.1.5 Movement requisitions (MR) .....	9
<b>7 Approval to travel</b> .....	<b>9</b>
7.1 Prior approval .....	9
7.2 Approval and delegations .....	10
7.3 International travel .....	10
<b>8 Travel planning</b> .....	<b>10</b>
8.1 Need for travel .....	10
8.2 Travel booking .....	11
8.2.1 Corporate travel provider booking services .....	11
8.2.2 Payment of official travel .....	11
<b>9 Travel</b> .....	<b>11</b>
9.1 Commercial airlines .....	11
9.1.1 Class of travel .....	11
9.1.2 Airline credits .....	12
9.1.3 Excess baggage .....	12
9.1.4 Transport to/from airports .....	12
9.2 Charter .....	12
9.3 Vehicle hire, private hire or taxi .....	12
9.3.1 Vehicle hire .....	13
9.3.2 Private hire .....	13
9.3.3 Taxi .....	13
9.4 Road travel .....	13
9.4.1 Private vehicle for official travel (By-law 32) .....	13
9.4.2 NTG fleet vehicle .....	14
9.4.3 External stakeholder use .....	14
9.4.4 Fuel .....	14
9.4.5 Use whilst on leave .....	14
9.5 Accommodation .....	14
9.5.1 Standard .....	14
9.5.2 Additional accommodation costs .....	14

## Ministers and Ministerial Office Staff Travel Policy

9.5.3	Hotel frequent guest programs .....	14
9.6	Insurance .....	14
9.6.1	Workers compensation.....	14
9.6.2	Travel insurance.....	15
<b>10</b>	<b>Travel Expenses .....</b>	<b>15</b>
10.1	Hospitality .....	15
<b>11</b>	<b>Travelling allowance (TA) .....</b>	<b>15</b>
11.1	Ministers.....	15
11.2	Ministerial Staff.....	16
11.3	Same day intrastate travel.....	16
11.4	Same day interstate travel.....	16
11.5	Overnight travel.....	16
11.5.1	Ministers.....	16
11.5.2	Ministerial Staff.....	16
11.6	Start and finish times.....	17
11.6.1	When travelling by air (excluding charter).....	17
11.6.2	When travelling by other form of transport.....	17
11.7	Long term travel .....	17
11.8	Double benefit.....	17
11.9	Over payment of official allowances .....	18
<b>12</b>	<b>Cash advance .....</b>	<b>18</b>
12.1	Definition and purpose .....	18
12.2	Foreign currency .....	18
12.3	Security .....	18
12.4	Acquittal of Cash Advance .....	19
<b>13</b>	<b>Extension of official travel for private purposes.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>14</b>	<b>Acquittal of travel.....</b>	<b>19</b>

## 1 Purpose

This policy specifies the accountability requirements for planning, undertaking and managing travel paid by the Northern Territory Government (NTG) for Ministers and ministerial office staff.

These guidelines apply to all intrastate, interstate and overseas official travel regardless of the source of funds, the duration of travel or the purpose of travel.

## 2 Policy Principles

Official travel must be:

- i. Necessary – most effective way to meet government business needs.
- ii. Beneficial – business benefits aligned to agency and NTG priorities.
- iii. Value for money – economical and cost efficient travel.
- iv. Accountable – sound financial and internal controls for travel decisions.

## 3 Legislation and related references

Across Government Contracts

Agency Official Hospitality Policy

Agency Private Motor Vehicles used on Agency Official Business Policy

Credit Card Policy and Procedures Guidelines

[FMA](#)

Northern Territory of Australia [Remuneration Tribunal](#) Determinations

NTG Aviation Operations Specifications

Official International Travel Guidelines (Department of the Chief Minister)

*Procurement Act*

[PSEMA](#) By-law 30 Travelling Allowance

[PSEMA](#) By-law 31 Camping Allowance

[PSEMA](#) By-law 32 Vehicle Allowance

[Public Sector Determination](#) 1 of 2015

Statement of Standards for Ministerial Staff

[Treasurer's Direction A6.3.4](#) – Official Travel, Hospitality and Personal Telephone Expenditure

## 4 Definitions

**Accountable Officer / Chief Executive Officer** refers to the most senior position in an NTG agency or entity as defined under the PSEMA and the FMA.

## Ministers and Ministerial Office Staff Travel Policy

**Best Value Fare** is the lowest cost fare available at the time of booking that suits the agency's business needs and the Traveller's entitlements and logistical needs. In addition to cost, Best Value Fare considers personal safety, travel time, fare flexibility and practical suitability.

**Charters** refers to passenger air charter services for long-haul or short-haul air travel to destinations where Regular Public Transport (RPT) services are unavailable or do not efficiently meet particular travel requirements.

**Chief of Staff** refers to the most senior position in the OCM and OLO.

**Delegated officer** means the person(s) in OCM and OLO with authority for administrative and/or travel decisions delegated by the agency's Accountable Officer.

**Corporate Travel Provider** is the contractor that processes NTG official air travel bookings to access discount airfares. Bookings for services related to other travel requirements may be available.

**Intrastate travel** means travel to destinations within the Northern Territory.

**Interstate travel** means travel within the states and territories of Australia, excluding the Northern Territory.

**International travel** means official travel between Australia and an overseas country, including external Australian territories such as Christmas Island and Norfolk Island.

**Minister** includes Ministers, or and MLA representing the Minister, of the OCM and the Opposition Leader.

**Ministerial Office Staff** refers to staff of the OCM and the OLO.

**Movement requisition** means the record that requests and describes details of the official travel, evidences approval of travel, payment of allowances and travel acquittal. MRs are uniquely identified electronic forms managed and processed in TRIPS.

**NTG employee** refers to staff of NTG agencies, Government Business Divisions and entities employed under relevant legislation.

**Official travel** means approved travel undertaken by a Traveller for an NTG business purpose. Official travel is paid by the NTG and must be strictly for NTG business purposes. It excludes circumstances where the travel undertaken is normal to duties usually undertaken by the Traveller that are regularly performed away from headquarters.

**Police Airwing** means air operations provided by NTPFES, using police aircraft.

**Regular Public Transport (RPT)** refers to public passenger services provided to transport people, generally for a fare, over specified routes with fixed schedules and to/from fixed terminals.

**Remote travel** means travel into areas where there is limited traffic/assistance and/or no mobile phone coverage. The ministerial office has an added responsibility for the safety of staff who undertake remote travel.

**RTD** means the relevant current Remuneration Tribunal Determination

**Same day travel** is where the Traveller is required to travel beyond the confines of their region but will return within the day (travel will not require an overnight stay).

## Ministers and Ministerial Office Staff Travel Policy

**Traveller** is used to describe a broad category, when used it includes:

- i. Ministers and ministerial office staff.
- ii. NTG employees.
- iii. non-NTG employees travelling on, or in relation to, NTG business, where there is an agreement for their travel costs to be covered by the NTG.

**Travelling Allowance (TA)** is an allowance available to the Traveller to cover meals and incidental travel related costs.

## 5 Scope

### 5.1 In scope

- i. Official air travel of Travellers to intrastate, interstate and international destinations.
- ii. Travel on commercial airlines and air charter services.
- iii. Air travel funded by the NTG and external sources, including the Commonwealth Government.
- iv. Air travel provided by the Police Airwing (excepting pilots), with bookings to be made with NTPFES.

### 5.2 Out of scope

- i. Travel arranged for citizens and NTG clients, which is paid by the NTG but is not classed as travelling on NTG business (examples include patients, witnesses and prisoners).
- ii. Members of the Legislative Assembly and Electorate Officers when booked through the Department of the Legislative Assembly.

## 6 TRIPS

TRIPS is the whole-of-government system used for recording MRs, approving official travel requests and automating the payment of TA.

### 6.1 Roles and responsibilities

The agency's Accountable Officer has overall responsibility for ensuring the Ministers and Ministerial Office Travel Policy is adhered to within their agency and maximising benefits to the Territory from agency travel.

The agency's Accountable Officer must maintain internal controls over the acquisition of services and expenditure of public monies, including official travel services, to a standard that will satisfy accountability requirements and audit scrutiny.

All officers and persons involved in undertaking, managing or processing official travel must comply with the Ministers and Ministerial Office Staff Travel Policy and adhere to related accountability frameworks.

Ministers or ministerial office staff must not seek to obtain personal gains or benefits from their role or linked to their responsibilities for NTG travel, either directly or indirectly.

#### 6.1.1 Travel booking officers

These are the ministerial office staff responsible for booking official travel with the corporate travel provider. Generally, this would be an administrative or personal assistant.

## Ministers and Ministerial Office Staff Travel Policy

The Approver must review and consider the official travel request as presented in the TRIPS MR and decide whether the:

- i. official travel is needed, adequately justified and beneficial
- ii. request is reasonable, value for money and in compliance with the Ministers and Ministerial Office Staff Travel Policy, including class of travel, Best Value Fare and booked with the corporate travel provider.

Approvers must exercise their delegated authority appropriately and competently.

Approvers must not approve their own travel.

### 6.1.2 Travel desk/clerk

This is the NTG officer who checks all details are correct including official time and allowance entitlements for all Travellers and monitors underpayments and overpayments of official TA.

The NTG officer organises payment of ministerial office travel related expenses and attaches the approved MR and/or email approval to the invoice in EIMS.

### 6.1.3 Accounts payable

DCIS Accounts Payable processes the payment of allowances to the Traveller and checks the comments section for instructions or information related to the payment.

### 6.1.4 TRIPS agency administrator

This is the person(s) who: manage delegate access to the TRIPS system; monitor and report on un-acquitted travel and travel compliance; and liaise with DCIS TRIPS system owners to correct MR workflow issues.

### 6.1.5 Movement requisitions (MR)

The Traveller, or travel Booker on behalf of the Traveller, must complete a MR in TRIPS for air travel, including same day travel. The TRIPS requisition is a key record for each travel instance that evidences accountability for the planned expenditure of public monies.

Full and accurate details are to be recorded in the TRIPS MR to document and explain the travel such that the Delegated Officer will be able to make an informed decision. This includes identifying the purpose, duration, mode and class of travel; that the flights represent Best Value Fares; accommodation; cost estimates and agency ledger codes.

The Traveller or travel Booker must record in the TRIPS MR that the Best Value Fare has been chosen.

TRIPS will automatically calculate the Traveller's entitlement to TA based on employment, travel times and details recorded in the MR.

## 7 Approval to travel

### 7.1 Prior approval

Travellers or travel booking officers are required to complete an email template and obtain prior approval from the Approver for all travel requiring an overnight stay and for all same day travel requiring travel by airline, boat or charter.

No travel is to be undertaken or expenses committed without a MR being completed.



### 7.2 Approval and delegations

Prior to confirming a booking and/or making payment, approval from the Delegate is mandatory. This can be via an email as long as the email approval is attached to the TRIPS MR which has been raised as the official record before commencement of travel. The TRIPS MR is approved once the final itinerary has been received from the corporate travel provider. The email approval is available as an option to assist with the process and to achieve best value for money outcomes.

The Approver must review and consider the official travel request and decide whether the:

- i. official travel is needed, adequately justified and beneficial
- ii. request is reasonable, value for money and in compliance with the Ministers and Ministerial Office Staff Travel Policy, including class of travel, Best Value Fare and booked with the corporate travel provider.

Approvers must not approve their own travel.

The Accountable Officer must have appropriate delegations in place for approval of official travel MRs and approval of travel expenses. Delegations must be in accord with this Ministers and Ministerial Office Staff Travel Policy.

### 7.3 International travel

International travel must first be endorsed by the Chief of Staff prior to submission for approval from the Chief Minister with the request to be justified in terms of need, business benefits, costs and timing.

Following the Chief Minister's approval, travel booking officers are to book overseas travel through the same processes as domestic air travel, including raising a MR in TRIPS (with approved ministerial briefing attached) and booking with the corporate travel provider.

Requirements for overseas travel, additional to this policy, are provided in the *Official International Travel Guidelines* issued by the Department of the Chief Minister. The guidelines address additional considerations, including personal security, passports and health advisories that Travellers need to consider when planning overseas travel.

The Traveller or Travel Booking Officer are responsible for notifying Protocol NT of proposed and approved international travel. Protocol NT will alert DCMs Security and Emergency Recovery Team and brief the Office of Asian Engagement, Trade and Investment within the Department of Business and the Commonwealth Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade as required.

## 8 Travel planning

### 8.1 Need for travel

Travellers and the Delegated Officer are to consider alternatives to air travel (such as video-conferences or teleconferences) where the alternatives can achieve similar business outcomes and incur fewer costs.

Official travel must be required for operational and/or strategic reasons, including client service obligations, NTG representation at the national level, government priorities, skills or knowledge advancement and agency business specific factors; having regard to costs, benefits and travel alternatives.

## **Ministers and Ministerial Office Staff Travel Policy**

Travellers are to justify the requirement to travel, with the justification described in the TRIPS MR or via a memorandum or document attached to the requisition.

### **8.2 Travel booking**

#### **8.2.1 Corporate travel provider booking services**

Travel booking officers or Travellers must confirm that the TRIPS MR has been approved before proceeding to finalise any travel bookings. Generally, travel booking officers will have already researched flight and travel information to identify flight times, costs and availability in order to prepare the requisition.

Travel booking officers or Travellers must book official air travel through the corporate travel provider. Access to a range of discounted airfares is facilitated through booking with the corporate travel provider and ability to select Best Value Fare. Travel on Police Airwing flights is booked direct with NTPFES and is subject to NTPFES approval.

Booking via the corporate travel provider's online booking tool is the preferred method and should be used for travel. For complex official travel, involving multiple destinations and Travellers, or where changes to travel itineraries are likely, booking via the corporate travel provider's consultant service may be more cost effective and can be utilised.

Travel booking officers must record the unique TRIPS MR number as the reference for each booking.

Ticket credits resulting from previous cancelled flights are to be used where these are available and cost effective.

Travel booking officers and Travellers should also book accommodation and other travel services with the corporate travel provider where the provider can access suitable accommodation and/or services at discounted rates and the requirements are known in advance.

#### **8.2.2 Payment of official travel**

Where a corporate travel provider account or a third-party business travel account is the preferred payment arrangement for an agency, individual travel transactions will be processed by the supplier then itemised in a monthly statement and paid in bulk by the agency through the Government Accounting System. Agencies are to apply standard verification, reconciliation and payment processes.

Under no circumstances are private travel costs to be paid by the NTG.

## **9 Travel**

### **9.1 Commercial airlines**

#### **9.1.1 Class of travel**

Ministers and one accompanying staff member are entitled to travel business class. All other officers' travel will be at economy class.

The Chief of Staff or delegate may approve a staff member to travel business class, premium economy class or upgrade on their FFPs where special circumstances apply.

Travellers must not exchange a higher class of fare for a lesser class fare in order to assist with travel costs for a non-NTG employee or to derive any personal gain.

### 9.1.2 Airline credits

Where a credit from an airline is received it is to be used for subsequent official travel use while taking into consideration the flexibility of the credit. This will be monitored by DCM.

### 9.1.3 Excess baggage

Where bulky or heavy materials are needed for the official travel purpose, the Traveller should arrange transport via a courier or freight company as a preference to paying airline excess baggage fees.

Travellers must pay any costs for private excess baggage from their personal funds.

### 9.1.4 Transport to/from airports

Travellers should use either RPT services or OCM or OLO fleet vehicles, where available, when travelling to and from airports.

Travellers should consider reasonable costs for transport options and select an appropriate and cost effective option.

## 9.2 Charter

Charter services are able to be used where RPT services are not available or where a charter represents a practical and justifiable travel approach, such as for emergency situations or group bookings where charters are cost effective, meet time demands and avoid excessive delays for scheduled air services.

Travel booking officers are to use the across-government contracts for short-haul and long-haul air charter services and to book charters in accordance with the contracts (refer to the NTG Central intranet site for information on contracts and processes to source an air charter service).

Interstate and international charter services must first be endorsed by the Chief of Staff with the request to be justified in terms of need, business benefits and costs and require approval from the Chief Minister.

The NTG Aviation Operations Specifications define the minimum requirements that apply to operators of air charter services for the NTG to ensure the health and safety of Travellers.

All travel by charter (even same day travel) requires a MR. For same day charter travel, one MR can be completed for all Travellers (separate MRs are not required for each person). For same day charter travel, a list of names, titles and organisations for all persons travelling is to be either recorded in the TRIPS 'Reason for Travel' field or attached to the MR.

For overnight air charter travel, a separate MR must be completed for each Traveller.

Non-NTG employees travelling on an official charter and not receiving TA or incurring other costs may be listed together on one MR.

## 9.3 Vehicle hire, private hire or taxi

Travellers should consider using OCM or OLO fleet vehicles as the preferred option. Agency pool vehicle availability is identified in the Vehicle Booking System. On availability, pool vehicles are required to be booked in the same system. Additional costs of hiring a vehicle should be the second choice, if the pool vehicles are not available.

### 9.3.1 Vehicle hire

The government contract for vehicle hire is currently held with various hire companies. Information is available on the Across-government contracts – [car rental](#) section on the NTG Central intranet site. Details of vehicle bookings are to be included on the MR.

Hire car insurance covers collision damage waiver and loss damage waiver only. Additional driver coverage must be obtained if applicable.

Travellers may participate in hire car club membership programs that are free of charge or at their own cost.

### 9.3.2 Private hire

Bookings for private hire vehicles should not include waiting times and drivers should not be asked to wait between transfers.

Any significant costs will be queried and Travellers may be invoiced for costs for inappropriate use.

Private hire cars also accept payment by Cabcharge.

### 9.3.3 Taxi

Where taxi fares are required for official travel an estimate of costs should be included on the MR. The Travel and Ministerial Support Officer (OCM) and Administrative Assistant (OLO) can provide Cabcharge vouchers once official approval has been given.

It is the Traveller's responsibility to return any unused Cabcharge vouchers within seven days of completing their travel. Lost or stolen Cabcharge vouchers are to be reported to Business Services immediately on [OfficeServices.DCM@nt.gov.au](mailto:OfficeServices.DCM@nt.gov.au) or phone 8999 6403.

If taxi fares are paid for using personal funds, a reimbursement can be sought as part of the travel acquittal process once approval has been obtained.

## 9.4 Road travel

### 9.4.1 Private vehicle for official travel (By-law 32)

[By-Law 32](#) refers to the use of a private vehicle for official travel. The By-Law 32 Allowance refers to the payment that relates to the usage of that private vehicle.

By-Law 32 details the requirements associated with using a private vehicle for official travel purposes. It refers to the approval to use your private vehicle for official travel – the approval includes an indemnity declaration and insurance provisions. In some instances, an allowance may also be claimed and payable.

All applications are to be approved by the Chief of Staff, and approval is not automatic.

Applicants need to demonstrate that it is more economical to use a private vehicle than an official vehicle. Where use is associated with official travel there is a need to clearly state the benefits of using a private vehicle in preference to a commercial hire car or fleet vehicle.

Travellers who prefer to or who are required to use their own vehicle for official purposes must complete the application form which is available on the [NTG Central](#) intranet site and seek approval from the Chief of Staff prior to commencing travel.

Approval is required even if no By-Law 32 allowance is being claimed.

## **Ministers and Ministerial Office Staff Travel Policy**

The agency's Travel Desk/Clerk facilitates the processing of the forms for the by-law 32 allowance and maintains a register of all approvals. They also forward relevant details to DCIS to enable payment of approved claims.

### **9.4.2 NTG fleet vehicle**

Only Ministers and ministerial office staff on official business should travel in NTG-plated (pool) vehicles. NTG plated pool vehicles are not available for private use.

### **9.4.3 External stakeholder use**

The Chief of Staff may authorise visitors, contractors or consultants to travel as passengers or drive an NTG plated pool vehicle provided the purpose of travel is work related.

### **9.4.4 Fuel**

Fuel should be purchased where possible from suppliers who accept the fuel card supplied with the vehicle. It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that the correct type of fuel (e.g. unleaded petrol, diesel, etc.) is used when refuelling. The correct odometer, to the nearest kilometre, must be provided to the service station attendant.

### **9.4.5 Use whilst on leave**

A contract vehicle will be available for reasonable personal use within and outside the NT during paid leave periods, with the approval from the Chief of Staff.

Use of a vehicle during periods of extended leave will be considered for approval by the Chief of Staff on a case-by-case basis. Running costs (for example tyres, petrol and oil) for use outside the Northern Territory during paid leave periods will not be met by the ministerial office.

## **9.5 Accommodation**

### **9.5.1 Standard**

Travellers and travel booking officers are to ensure that accommodation is appropriate to the purpose of travel, destination and the Traveller's requirements and role. Accommodation is to be at a reasonable cost, standard and location that provides value for money, justifiable and not excessive.

Travel booking officers are to record accommodation in the TRIPS MR and book through the corporate travel provider wherever feasible.

### **9.5.2 Additional accommodation costs**

Personal expenses are not to be charged to the agency. These costs will be queried and Travellers will be invoiced for non-official expenditure incurred.

Reasonable internet costs (less than \$50 per day) that are not included in the room charge can be paid.

### **9.5.3 Hotel frequent guest programs**

Participation in these programs is a matter for Travellers but should not be at additional costs to the ministerial office.

## **9.6 Insurance**

### **9.6.1 Workers compensation**

Travellers are covered by workers' compensation while on official duty travel which includes:

## Ministers and Ministerial Office Staff Travel Policy

- for travel by road – from departure time from home/work base and return
- for travel by air – commencing when the Traveller travels to the airport from work/home base and return.

When Travellers elect to use personal time in conjunction with official travel, they need to be aware that they will not be covered for the personal time under the workers' compensation provisions.

### 9.6.2 Travel insurance

Ministers and ministerial office staff are self-insured for domestic travel. International travel is not covered under these self-insurance arrangements (Treasurer's Direction M2.1.4 refers).

Travellers will be contacted directly by the corporate travel provider in the event of any emergency warnings being issued for booked travel destinations.

International travel insurance is taken out by the agency which provides coverage for unknown and unanticipated circumstances and baggage loss. International travel insurance can cover Travellers for the period they are on official duty and for travelling times only.

## 10 Travel Expenses

All Travellers are required to abide by the Ministers and Ministerial Office Staff Travel Policy and its intent in that reasonable business expenses can be claimed and personal items cannot be claimed.

### 10.1 Hospitality

Ministerial Office Staff hospitality expenditure associated with travel requires approval from a delegated officer together with the completion of the Hospitality Declaration.

On return from travel, all Traveller tax compliant invoices/receipts are to be provided to support the hospitality expenditure.

Where information or documentation relating to official travel or related costs is missing or was not received, the Traveller may make a statutory declaration advising of the information and costs. Statutory declarations must be completed in accordance with the legal requirements for such declarations and be submitted to the Accountable Officer (or their delegate) to decide on the suitability and acceptance of the declaration as documentation for accountability purposes.

Ministers and ministerial office staff are not to approve their own hospitality.

## 11 Travelling allowance (TA)

The value of TA available to a traveller is calculated by TRIPS, based on the Traveller's entitlements and information in the approved MR. The TA is automatically processed close to the date of travel and deposited directly into the Traveller's bank account.

### 11.1 Ministers

Ministers' TA is to be paid in accordance with the RTD which outlines employment entitlements for all Members and Office Holders.

TA does not apply to all other instances of travel including overseas and interstate destinations. In these instances official expenses incurred in conjunction with travel will be submitted by the Minister for approval by the delegate upon acquittal.

## 11.2 Ministerial Staff

Ministerial office staff TA is paid equivalent to that specified in By Law 30 of the PSEMA and will apply to all instances of official travel.

## 11.3 Same day intrastate travel

Where intrastate travel is required, TA is only payable if the departure time and/or the return time, are outside normal working hours.

- i. Where the journey is at least 12 hours duration, breakfast, lunch and dinner allowances apply (up to midnight, then the full day rate applies).
- ii. Where the journey is at least 10 hours but not 12 hours and depending on departure and arrival times:
  - a. if an early start – breakfast and lunch allowances apply
  - OR
  - b. if a late start – lunch and dinner allowances apply.
- iii. Where the journey is at least eight hours duration, lunch allowance will apply.

The proposed time of departure is to be entered into TRIPS (there is no lead time as for air travel) and the anticipated time of return. The actual times should be confirmed during the acquittal process.

Payment where intrastate travel is not overnight is provided equivalent to [By-law 30](#):

“30.4 Where an employee, in the course of employment, is required to travel away from headquarters which does not extend overnight, the Chief Executive Officer may:

- (a) reimburse an employee costs necessarily incurred; or
- (b) provide TA for meals taken away from headquarters due to that travel.

30.5 This By-law does not apply in circumstances where the travel undertaken is normal to the duties usually undertaken by the employee which are regularly performed away from headquarters.”

## 11.4 Same day interstate travel

Where interstate travel does not require overnight accommodation but the departure and return day/dates are different (for example, late night or red eye flights) then it is deemed to be overnight travel and TA is payable.

Reimbursement for meals purchased during same day travel or a request for an advance payment for the same requires Chief of Staff approval in equivalent to By Law 30(4) and 30(5).

## 11.5 Overnight travel

### 11.5.1 Ministers

Other than Ministers entitled to TA pursuant to the RTD, Ministers overnight travel TA will be pursuant to section 11.1.

### 11.5.2 Ministerial Staff

TA is payable to Ministerial Office Staff required to undertake official travel resulting in an overnight stay.

TA rates (including meal allowances and camping allowance) are determined by the Commissioner for Public Employment and issued each January. The Accountable

## Ministers and Ministerial Office Staff Travel Policy

Officer (or delegate) may substitute a lesser or greater amount if the allowance determined by the Commissioner is not considered appropriate for particular travel.

### 11.6 Start and finish times

#### 11.6.1 When travelling by air (excluding charter)

TA will be paid to Ministerial Office Staff from the time of departure to the time of return. When travelling by air the official travel start and finish times are calculated:

- for domestic flights – one hour before the scheduled departure and one hour after return
- for overseas flights – two hours before the scheduled departure and two hours after return.

#### 11.6.2 When travelling by other form of transport

For other forms of transport the commencement of travel shall be from the time of departure of the vehicle or vessel. When travel involves a combination of several different rates (for example, commercial/camping) the entitlement will be calculated on a 24 hour clock for the commercial period, that is nights spent in commercial accommodation will be calculated as one complete day.

In situations where Ministerial Office Staff are camping, but in a 'commercial' location and camping rates or other additional expenses such as shelter sheds, caravan parks are charged, an additional allowance may be paid in accordance with the provisions under By-Law 31 (3b).

### 11.7 Long term travel

All Ministerial Office Staff travel to commercial destinations for periods longer than two weeks in one place will be reviewed with payment of TA at the daily rate ceasing before or at the end of the first two weeks (this does not apply to travel where camping allowance is paid).

Where the Ministerial Office Staff member is travelling and intending to be away for a period of more than two weeks, serviced apartment style accommodation or similar should be obtained. Where apartment styled accommodation can be obtained, a weekly amount of TA is to be determined in conjunction with the Ministerial Office Staff member and their Delegate and approved by the Chief of Staff. This amount then becomes payable for the whole period instead of the full commercial TA being paid for the whole period.

TA in these situations will be administered on a case-by-case basis as it is expected that some meals should be able to be prepared and taken at the accommodation place rather than purchased individually. For example, breakfast should be able to be provided and provision for making lunch using the facilities of apartment-style accommodation may also be appropriate.

### 11.8 Double benefit

The intent of the Ministers and Ministerial Office Staff Travel Policy is to be adhered to when receiving a meal allowance or a separately provided meal (as in attendance at meetings and conferences) in that two meal benefits should not be received for the one meal.

All travellers are responsible for ensuring that they do not receive a 'double payment/benefit' while travelling. That is, a Traveller is not to receive a meal benefit, or a meal provided at an event while also receiving the TA dollar component for that meal.



## Ministers and Ministerial Office Staff Travel Policy

It is the individual Traveller's responsibility to ensure that the correct amount of TA is paid and that all relevant supporting information is provided.

Where a Traveller stays at locations that provide meals and accommodation and the agency will be charged for the provision of those meals and accommodation, incidentals only will be paid. When completing the MR the traveller is responsible for clearly marking the MR 'incidentals only'.

When Travellers are receiving camping allowance and accommodation and/or meals are provided by other means, then the amount of the allowance should be adjusted at the discretion of the delegated officer.

### 11.9 Over payment of official allowances

Over payments of official allowances occur when the total of the official allowances paid to the Traveller from the original MR, is greater than the total of the official allowance that is calculated on the acquitted MR.

This generally occurs when the Traveller returns from the official travel earlier than originally expected or the travel has been cancelled.

Traveller will need to negotiate repayment of overpaid official allowances either by:

- a) an adjustment in TRIPS for regular travellers
- b) raising of an invoice through Accounts Receivable.

Approvers are to withhold approval of further official travel for Travellers that have outstanding repayments of TA.

## 12 Cash advance

### 12.1 Definition and purpose

A cash advance is a request for additional monies to be paid prior to travel and, if approved, can be either actual cash paid to the Traveller or monies deposited to the Traveller's bank account.

A request for a cash advance can be sought by a Traveller about to travel to cover additional official expenses such as approved entertainment expenses, conference room hire, on-ground transport costs, etc.

The request for a cash advance must be clearly noted on the MR and approved in accordance with the Delegations.

### 12.2 Foreign currency

If any unused monies are in a foreign currency, it is the responsibility of the Traveller to have the foreign currency converted back to Australian dollars (AUD). The Traveller then repays this unused amount back to the RTM that issued the original cash advance. All receipts and the foreign currency exchange rate are to be included with the acquittal of the cash advance.

### 12.3 Security

Where there is an identified need to carry large sums of cash, the onus to maintain security rests with the Traveller. Some suggested avenues to assist in ensuring the safety of cash and other valuables includes:

- do not leave cash or valuables unattended in hotel rooms
- secure cash and valuables in a hotel safe

## Ministers and Ministerial Office Staff Travel Policy

- do not carry the cash all in one place/one bag
- only withdraw the amount of cash required each day, leaving the remainder in the bank or similar.

It is the responsibility of the traveller who obtained a cash advance to ensure the security of the money at all times.

### 12.4 Acquittal of Cash Advance

Upon return from travel the cash advance is to be fully acquitted with receipts to support all expenses and any unused monies are to be repaid to the RTM.

Acquittal of the cash advance includes a record of daily expenses completed for each day while travelling with all receipts attached.

Where information or documentation relating to official travel or related costs is missing or was not received, the Traveller may make a statutory declaration advising of the information and costs. Statutory declarations must be completed in accordance with the legal requirements for such declarations and be submitted to the Accountable Officer (or delegate) to decide on the suitability and acceptance of the declaration as documentation for accountability purposes.

## 13 Extension of official travel for private purposes

Official travel is for work purposes and should be kept separate to private travel. Linking private travel arrangements and taking planned leave in conjunction with an official travel trip is to be discouraged and minimised.

Ministerial Office Staff must provide reasons and obtain prior approval from the Accountable Officer (or delegate) if seeking to combine private travel with official travel. In making a decision the delegate must consider that there is no additional cost to the NTG.

Combining official and private travel may give rise to a Fringe Benefits Tax liability in some circumstances. The Approver must obtain advice and consider any potential taxation liability in assessing such requests.

TA and other travel costs are not payable for any period of leave that is for the Traveller's private purposes.

## 14 Acquittal of travel

Travellers must acquit official travel in TRIPS within seven working days of returning to the workplace to evidence that the travel was actually taken as planned and booked. Evidence of acquittal is recorded in the TRIPS MR. Any Cabcharges used for the travel must also be acquitted.

Where information or documentation relating to official travel or related costs is missing or was not received, the Traveller may make a statutory declaration advising of the information and costs. Statutory declarations must be completed in accordance with the legal requirements for such declarations and be submitted to the Accountable Officer (or delegate) to decide on the suitability and acceptance of the declaration as documentation for accountability purposes.

Travellers will be automatically reminded via email of the requirement to acquit travel, with escalation of outstanding acquittals sent to agency contacts. Reports of outstanding acquittals are made available to agencies.

Approvers are to withhold approval of further official travel for Travellers that have not acquitted previous travel without specific approval of the Chief of Staff. Where actual

## **Ministers and Ministerial Office Staff Travel Policy**

travel taken was different and not in accordance with the original MR, details of the changes and reasons for changes must be entered into TRIPS and the MR resubmitted to Approvers for review and further approval. The details are to include and quantify any changes to travel costs.

Where changes to the travel taken affect the amount of TA due, TRIPS will calculate and notify the difference. Additional TA, if required, will be automatically paid to the Traveller. If less TA is required, arrangements to adjust payment or reimburse the difference will be made.



## **NT Government Air Travel Policy**

**NT Government air travel must be necessary for government business, value for money and responsibly managed**

Version 1

June 2015

## Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Purpose</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Policy Principles</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Definitions</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Scope</b> .....	<b>4</b>
	4.1 In scope .....	4
	4.2 Out of scope.....	4
<b>5</b>	<b>Responsibilities</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Policy Statements</b> .....	<b>5</b>
	6.1 Pre-travel assessment.....	5
	6.1.1 Need for travel.....	5
	6.1.2 Overseas travel.....	5
	6.1.3 Charters .....	5
	6.2 Travel request .....	6
	6.2.1 Movement requisition .....	6
	6.2.2 Flights .....	6
	6.2.3 Travel costs.....	6
	6.2.4 Class of air travel .....	6
	6.2.5 Combining official and private travel .....	7
	6.2.6 Accommodation .....	7
	6.2.7 Other official travel costs .....	7
	6.3 Travel approval .....	8
	6.3.1 Endorse movement requisition .....	8
	6.3.2 Approve movement requisition .....	8
	6.3.3 Delegations .....	8
	6.4 Travel booking.....	8
	6.4.1 Corporate travel provider booking services .....	8
	6.5 Payment.....	9
	6.5.1 Payment of official air travel .....	9
	6.5.2 Payment of Travelling Allowance.....	9
	6.6 Post-travel review.....	10
	6.6.1 Acquittal of travel.....	10
	6.7 Travel related issues .....	10
	6.7.1 Excess baggage.....	10
	6.7.2 Transport to/from airports.....	10
	6.7.3 Work health and safety.....	10
	6.7.4 Travel insurance.....	11
	6.7.5 Agency travel procedures.....	11
<b>7</b>	<b>Glossary of Acronyms</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Supporting documentation</b> .....	<b>11</b>

## 1 Purpose

This policy specifies the accountability requirements for planning, undertaking and managing air travel paid by the Northern Territory Government (NTG).

## 2 Policy Principles

Official travel must be:

- i. Necessary – most effective way to meet government business needs.
- ii. Beneficial – business benefits aligned to agency and NTG priorities.
- iii. Value for money – economical and cost efficient travel.
- iv. Accountable – sound financial and internal controls for travel decisions.

## 3 Definitions

**Best Value Fare** is the lowest cost fare available at the time of booking that suits the agency's business needs and the Traveller's entitlements and logistical needs. In addition to cost, Best Value Fare considers personal safety, travel time and practical suitability.

**Charters** refers to passenger air charter services for long-haul or short-haul air travel to destinations where Regular Public Transport (RPT) services are unavailable or do not efficiently meet particular travel requirements.

**Chief Executive Officer / Accountable Officer** refers to the most senior position in an NTG agency or entity as defined under the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act* (PSEMA) and the *Financial Management Act* (FMA).

**Corporate Travel Provider** is the contractor that processes NTG official air travel bookings to access discount airfares. Bookings for services related to other travel requirements may be available.

**Delegated officer** means the person(s) in an agency with authority for administrative and/or travel decisions delegated by the agency Chief Executive Officer.

**Intrastate travel** means travel to destinations within the Northern Territory.

**Interstate travel** means travel within the states and territories of Australia, excluding the Northern Territory.

**Movement requisition** means the record that requests and describes details of the official travel, evidences approval of travel, payment of allowances and travel acquittal. Movement requisitions are uniquely identified electronic forms managed and processed in TRIPS.

**NTG employee** refers to staff of NTG agencies, Government Business Divisions and entities employed under relevant legislation.

**Official travel** means approved travel undertaken by a Traveller for an NTG business purpose. Official travel is paid by the NTG and must be strictly for NTG business purposes.

**Overseas travel** means official travel between Australia and an overseas country, including external Australian territories such as Christmas Island and Norfolk Island.

**Police Airwing** means air operations provided by NT Police, Fire and Emergency Services (NTPFES), using police aircraft.

**Regular Public Transport (RPT)** refers to public passenger services provided to transport people, generally for a fare, over specified routes with fixed schedules and to/from fixed terminals.

**Same day travel** is where the Traveller is required to travel beyond the confines of their region but will return within the day (travel will not require an overnight stay).

**Travelling Allowance (TA)** refers to an allowance available to NTG employees to cover meals and incidental travel related costs, as specified in By Law 30 of PSEMA.

**Travel Booker** is the NTG officer responsible for booking official air travel with the corporate travel provider. Generally, this would be an administrative assistant and for small agencies or units it can be the Traveller.

**Traveller** means the person undertaking the official air travel and includes:

- i. NTG employees
- ii. non-NTG employees travelling on, or in relation to, NTG business, where there is an agreement for their travel costs to be covered by the NTG (examples include contractors and consultants).

**TRIPS** is the whole-of-government system used for recording movement requisitions, approving official travel requests and automating the payment of Travelling Allowance.

## 4 Scope

### 4.1 In scope

- i. Official air travel of Travellers to intrastate, interstate and overseas destinations.
- ii. Travel on commercial airlines and air charter services.
- iii. Air travel funded by the NTG and external sources, including the Commonwealth Government.
- iv. Air travel provided by the Police Airwing (excepting pilots), with bookings to be made with NTPFES.

### 4.2 Out of scope

- i. Travel arranged for citizens and NTG clients, which is paid by the NTG but is not classed as travelling on NTG business (examples include patients, witnesses and prisoners).
- ii. Ministers and ministerial staff.
- iii. Members of the Legislative Assembly and Electorate Officers.

## 5 Responsibilities

- i. Chief Executive Officers have overall responsibility for ensuring the NTG Air Travel Policy is adhered to within their agency and maximising benefits to the Northern Territory from agency air travel.
- ii. Chief Executive Officers must maintain internal controls over the acquisition of services and expenditure of public monies, including official travel services, to a standard that will satisfy accountability requirements and audit scrutiny.
- iii. All officers and persons involved in undertaking, managing or processing official air travel must comply with the NTG Air Travel Policy and adhere to related accountability frameworks.

- iv. NTG employees must never obtain personal gains or benefits from their role or linked to their responsibilities for NTG air travel, either directly or indirectly.

## 6 Policy Statements

### 6.1 Pre-travel assessment

#### 6.1.1 Need for travel

- i. Travellers and delegated officers are to consider alternatives to air travel (such as video-conferences or teleconferences) where the alternatives can achieve similar business outcomes and incur fewer costs.
- ii. Official travel must be required for operational and/or strategic reasons, including client service obligations, NTG representation at the national level, government priorities, skills or knowledge advancement, and agency business specific factors; having regard to costs, benefits and travel alternatives.
- iii. Travellers are to justify the requirement to travel, with the justification described in the TRIPS movement requisition or via a memorandum or document attached to the requisition (section 6.2.1 refers). For significant or high cost travel requests, particularly for overseas travel, more detailed documentation of the business benefits is required.

#### 6.1.2 Overseas travel

- i. Overseas travel requires approval from the relevant portfolio Minister with the request to be justified in terms of need, business benefits and costs.
- ii. Requirements for overseas travel, additional to this policy, are provided in the *Official International Travel Guidelines* issued by the Department of the Chief Minister. The guidelines address additional considerations, including personal security, passports and health advisories that Travellers need to consider when planning overseas travel.
- iii. Following the portfolio Minister's approval, Travel Bookers are to book overseas travel through the same processes as domestic air travel, including raising a movement requisition in TRIPS (with approved ministerial briefing attached) and booking with the corporate travel provider (section 6.4.1 refers).

#### 6.1.3 Charters

- i. Charter services are able to be used where RPT services are not available or where a charter represents a practical and justifiable travel approach, such as for emergency situations or group bookings where charters are cost effective, meet time demands and avoid excessive delays for scheduled air services.
- ii. Travel Bookers are to use the across-government contracts for short-haul and long-haul air charter services and to book charters in accordance with the contracts (refer to the NTG Central website for information on contracts and processes to source an air charter service).
- iii. Interstate charter services require approval from the relevant portfolio Minister with the request to be justified in terms of need, business benefits and costs.
- iv. Overseas charter services requires endorsement from the relevant portfolio Minister with the request to be justified in terms of need, business benefits and costs prior to seeking approval from the Chief Minister.



- v. The NTG Aviation Operations Specifications define the minimum requirements that apply to operators of air charter services for the NTG to ensure the health and safety of Travellers.
- vi. Travellers and Travel Bookers are to coordinate charter flights with other NTG employees and agencies wherever possible in order to reduce cost.

## **6.2 Travel request**

### **6.2.1 Movement requisition**

- i. The Traveller, or Travel Booker on behalf of the Traveller, must complete a movement requisition in TRIPS for air travel, including same day travel. The TRIPS requisition is a key record for each travel instance that evidences accountability for the planned expenditure of public monies.
- ii. Full and accurate details are to be recorded in the TRIPS movement requisition to document and explain the travel such that the Endorser/Approver will be able to make an informed decision. This includes identifying the purpose, duration, mode and class of travel; that the flights represent Best Value Fares; accommodation, cost estimates and agency ledger codes.

### **6.2.2 Flights**

- i. Travel dates and times for flights should be aligned close to the timing of the meetings, programs or events that will be attended in order to reduce cost and minimise time away from the workplace.
- ii. Travellers and Travel Bookers must not consider personal airline preferences or loyalty scheme memberships when selecting a flight and Best Value Fare.

### **6.2.3 Travel costs**

- i. Travellers and Travel Bookers must choose the Best Value Fare available for intrastate, interstate and overseas official air travel and compare online prices of the corporate travel provider and the airline.
- ii. The Traveller or Travel Booker must record in the TRIPS movement requisition that the Best Value Fare has been chosen.
- iii. Travellers and Travel Bookers are to ensure that travel costs are economic, reasonable and justifiable for the expenditure of public monies, with sound internal controls applied to ensure that value for money is obtained. This covers air fares, accommodation and other travel related costs.
- iv. TRIPS will automatically calculate the NTG employee's entitlement to Travelling Allowance based on employment, travel times and details recorded in the movement requisition.
- v. NTG agencies and entities are not to pay the travel costs of Ministers or ministerial staff (with the exception of the Department of the Chief Minister).
- vi. NTG systems or funds are not to be used to pay for any accompanying persons that are not Travellers, even where payment would subsequently be reimbursed to the NTG.

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

- i. Travellers are to travel economy class, unless the Traveller has an entitlement or approved exemption allowing another class of air travel.

- ii. Travellers are not to upgrade their travel to a higher travel class, including through the redemption of frequent flyer points, unless they are entitled to travel in that class.
- iii. Agency Chief Executive Officers are entitled to travel business class.
- iv. Specialist senior roles, where approved by Ministers, the agency Chief Executive Officer or where specified in their employment or engagement contract (examples include some Board Chairs and Directors-General), are eligible to travel business class.
- v. Chief Executive Officers may approve a Traveller to travel business or premium economy class where special circumstances apply, such as a requirement to accompany a Minister or Chief Executive Officer and work on the aircraft, or where the Traveller has a relevant medical condition.
- vi. Travellers must not exchange a higher class of fare for a lesser class fare in order to assist with travel costs for a non-NTG employee or to derive any personal gain.

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

- i. Official travel is for work purposes and should be kept separate to private travel. Linking private travel arrangements and taking planned leave in conjunction with an official travel trip is to be discouraged and minimised.
- ii. The Traveller must provide reasons and obtain prior approval from the Chief Executive Officer (or delegated Approver) if seeking to combine private travel with official travel. In making a decision, the Approver must consider the implications, including equity, precedent and appropriateness and ensure no additional cost to the NTG.
- iii. Combining official and private travel may give rise to a Fringe Benefits Tax liability in some circumstances. The Approver must obtain advice and consider any potential taxation liability in assessing such requests.
- iv. Travelling Allowance and other travel costs are not payable for any period of leave that is for the Traveller's private purposes.

#### **6.2.6 Accommodation**

- i. Travellers and Travel Bookers are to ensure that accommodation is appropriate to the purpose of travel, destination and the Traveller's requirements and role. Accommodation is to be at a reasonable cost, standard and location that provides value for money, justifiable and not excessive.
- ii. Travel Bookers are to record accommodation in the TRIPS movement requisition and book through the corporate travel provider wherever feasible (section 6.4.1 refers).

#### **6.2.7 Other official travel costs**

- i. Some official travel may incur other costs necessary for the business purpose, such as car hire, taxi fares or freight. Where the requirement is known in advance and the service is available, bookings should be made through the corporate travel provider (section 6.4.1 refers).
- ii. Travellers and Travel Bookers must follow standard expenditure processes for travel-related costs, including pre-approval and documentation requirements. Taxi fares should be paid via Cabcharge as the preferred method and recorded within NTG systems.

## 6.3 Travel approval

### 6.3.1 Endorse movement requisition

- i. Many agencies have an Endorser role in the consideration of official travel requests, usually the Traveller's supervisor or manager. Some agencies have multiple Endorser roles which are catered within the TRIPS workflows.
- ii. The Endorser provides the first level review of the TRIPS movement requisition to confirm that the requisition is accurate and complete and adheres to this policy, including travel times, selection of Best Value Fare, class of travel and appropriate accommodation.
- iii. The Endorser is to check the TRIPS movement requisition and, where the official travel is supported, endorse the requisition, record reasons and forward the requisition to the Approver. The Endorser can reject the movement requisition where travel is not supported or arrange to have the requisition updated or modified.

### 6.3.2 Approve movement requisition

- i. The Approver must review and consider the official travel request as presented in the TRIPS movement requisition and decide whether the:
  - a. official travel is needed, adequately justified and beneficial
  - b. request is reasonable, value for money and in compliance with the NTG Air Travel Policy, including class of travel, Best Value Fare and booked with the corporate travel provider.
- ii. Approvers must exercise their delegated authority appropriately, competently and without bias.
- iii. Approvers must not approve their own travel.
- iv. The Approver should confirm that the Traveller has acquitted previous movement requisitions prior to approving future travel (section 6.6 refers).

### 6.3.3 Delegations

- i. Agency Accountable Officers must have appropriate delegations in place for approval of official travel movement requisitions and approval of travel expenses. Agency delegations must be in accord with this NTG Air Travel Policy.

## 6.4 Travel booking

### 6.4.1 Corporate travel provider booking services

- i. Travel Bookers or Travellers must confirm that the TRIPS movement requisition has been approved before proceeding to finalise any travel bookings. Generally, Travel Bookers will have already researched flight and travel information to identify flight times, costs and availability in order to prepare the requisition.
- ii. Travel Bookers or Travellers must book official air travel through the corporate travel provider. Access to a range of discounted airfares is facilitated through booking with the corporate travel provider and ability to select Best Value Fare. Travel on Police Airwing flights is booked direct with NTPFES and is subject to NTPFES approval.

- iii. Booking via the corporate travel provider's online booking tool is the preferred method and should be used for standard air travel, which represents the bulk of NTG travel. For complex official air travel, involving multiple destinations and Travellers, or where changes to travel itineraries are likely, booking via the corporate travel provider's consultant service may be more cost effective and can be utilised.
- iv. Travel Bookers must record the unique TRIPS movement requisition number as the reference for each booking.
- v. Ticket credits resulting from previous cancelled flights are to be used where these are available and cost effective.
- vi. Travel Bookers and Travellers should also book accommodation and other travel services with the corporate travel provider where the provider can access suitable accommodation and/or services at discounted rates and the requirements are known in advance.

## **6.5 Payment**

### **6.5.1 Payment of official air travel**

- i. Airlines require payment in advance for air fares. For accommodation, either advance payment or credit card notification to hold reservations is usually required. This necessitates payment via an NTG corporate credit card, corporate travel provider account or a dedicated business travel account.
- ii. Where payment is via NTG corporate credit card, Travel Bookers or Travellers are to contact their designated corporate credit cardholder to arrange payment. Travel Bookers can also be a corporate credit cardholder but must not be the Approver or the verifier.
- iii. The corporate credit cardholder must confirm that the official travel has been approved and booked prior to making a payment. The cardholder must comply with the NTG *Credit Card Policy and Procedures Guidelines*, including independent verification of credit card transactions.
- iv. Where a corporate travel provider account or a third-party business travel account is the preferred payment arrangement for an agency, individual travel transactions will be processed by the supplier then itemised in a monthly statement and paid in bulk by the agency through the Government Accounting System. Agencies are to apply standard verification, reconciliation and payment processes.
- v. Under no circumstances are private travel costs to be paid by the NTG.

### **6.5.2 Payment of Travelling Allowance**

- i. The value of Travelling Allowance available to an NTG employee is calculated by TRIPS, based on the employee's entitlements and information in the approved movement requisition. The Travelling Allowance is automatically processed close to the date of travel and deposited directly into the NTG employee's bank account.

## 6.6 Post-travel review

### 6.6.1 Acquittal of travel

- i. Travellers must acquit official travel in TRIPS within seven working days of returning to the workplace to evidence that the travel was actually taken as planned and booked. Evidence of acquittal is recorded in the TRIPS movement requisition. Any Cabcharges used for the travel must also be acquitted.
- ii. Where information or documentation relating to official travel or related costs is missing or was not received, the Traveller may make a statutory declaration advising of the information and costs. Statutory declarations must be completed in accordance with the legal requirements for such declarations and be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer to decide on the suitability and acceptance of the declaration as documentation for accountability purposes.
- iii. Travellers will be automatically reminded via email of the requirement to acquit travel, with escalation reminders of outstanding acquittals sent to agency contacts. Reports of outstanding acquittals are made available to agencies.
- iv. Approvers are to withhold approval of further official travel for Travellers that have not acquitted previous travel.
- v. Where actual travel taken was different and not in accordance with the original movement requisition, details of the changes and reasons for changes must be entered into TRIPS and the requisition resubmitted to Endorsers and Approvers for review and further approval. The details are to include and quantify any changes to travel costs.
- vi. Where changes to the travel taken affect the amount of Travelling Allowance due, TRIPS will calculate and notify the difference. Additional Travelling Allowance, if required, will be automatically paid to the NTG employee. If less Travelling Allowance is required, arrangements to adjust payment or reimburse the difference will be made.

## 6.7 Travel related issues

### 6.7.1 Excess baggage

- i. Where bulky or heavy materials are needed for the official travel purpose, the Traveller should arrange transport via a courier or freight company as a preference to paying airline excess baggage fees.
- ii. Travellers must pay any costs for private excess baggage from their personal funds.

### 6.7.2 Transport to/from airports

- i. Travellers should use either RPT services or NTG vehicles, where available, when travelling to and from airports.
- ii. Travellers should consider reasonable costs for transport options and select an appropriate and cost effective option.

### 6.7.3 Work health and safety

- i. An NTG employee is entitled to workers' compensation cover while travelling on official travel.

#### 6.7.4 Travel insurance

- i. NTG agencies are self-insured for domestic travel. Overseas travel and Government Business Divisions are not covered under these self-insurance arrangements. (Treasurer's Direction M2.1.4 refers).
- ii. Travellers will be contacted directly by the corporate travel provider in the event of any emergency warnings being issued for booked travel destinations.

#### 6.7.5 Agency travel procedures

- i. Chief Executive Officers can establish travel procedures, specific to the needs of their agency, where required.
- ii. Such agency travel procedures will supplement this policy and, where there is a conflict, this policy takes precedence.

## 7 Glossary of Acronyms

FMA	<i>Financial Management Act</i>
NTPFES	Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services
NTG	Northern Territory Government
PSEMA	<i>Public Sector Employment and Management Act</i>
RPT	Regular Public Transport
TA	Travelling Allowance
TRIPS	Travel Request Information Processing System

## 8 Supporting documentation

Official International Travel Guidelines (Department of the Chief Minister)

TRIPS User Guide

*FMA*

Treasurer's Directions

Credit Card Policy and Procedures Guidelines

*PSEMA*

By Law 30 – Travelling Allowance

Determinations by the Public Service Commissioner

Northern Territory Public Sector Code of Conduct

*Procurement Act*

Across Government Contracts

NTG Aviation Operations Specifications

# PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE

## Question Taken on Notice

**Date:** Public Hearing, 4 February 2016

**Subject:** Latitude Travel

**From:** Ms Natasha Fyles MLA

**To:** John Coleman

**Agency:** Department of the Chief Minister

**Number:** 4

**Question:** Will you make available to the Public Accounts Committee all documentation, information and all costs incurred on travel and related services provided by Latitude Travel to ministers and government agencies, broken down by:

Questions	Answer:
Minister?	Refer Traveller Name column.
How many trips have been organised by Latitude Travel since September 2012?	146 trips were organised since September 2012, 12 trips were organised prior to this date, refer attached table.
The total cost for each trip?	Refer Total Amount column.
The cost of airfares/charters?	Refer Air Fare and Air Charter columns.
The cost of accommodation?	Refer Accommodation column.
The itemised total of any other costs?	Refer Other Expenses column.
Who accompanied the minister?	Refer to listed Dates column with associated travel dates of minister.
What was the itinerary?	Refer Itinerary columns.
Who recommended and who approved Latitude Travel to organise the trip?	<p>All documentation including recommendations and approvals have been provided as requested.</p> <p>The majority of these documents have been previously provided to the Leader of the Opposition under Freedom of Information requests.</p> <p>This documentation covers ministerial travel paid by the Northern Territory Government.</p>

<p>By government agency, how many trips have been organised by Latitude Travel since September 2012?</p>	<p>Since September 2012 – 146 trips          Dept. Chief Minister: 132          Dept. Legislative Assembly: 2          Dept. Local Government and Community Services: 2          Dept. Lands Planning &amp; Environment: 1          Dept. of Business: 3          NT Police, Fire and Emergency: 5          Parks and Wildlife Commission NT: 1</p>
<p>For each trip in the above what was the total cost, the cost of airfares/charters, the cost of accommodation and the itemised total of any other costs?</p>	<p>Refer attached summary table.</p>
<p>On that audit review did you find any instances of payments being made for minister travel before ministerial approval was given?</p>	<p>No, payments are not made before approvals.</p>

---

**Answer:** Please find attached a summary table and documents requested with a guide provided above to address specified questions.