



**Australian Government**

**Department of Immigration  
and Border Protection**

# **Overseas Conditions of Service**

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This manual has been developed and produced by the Workforce Management Branch.

**Further assistance:**

For further assistance regarding information contained in this document please contact the Overseas Workforce Management team. Email <sup>s. 47E(d)</sup>   [@border.gov.au](mailto:____@border.gov.au)


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# 1. Part One – Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction

### Purpose

- 1.1.1 The Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) Overseas Conditions of Service (OCOS) Manual sets out the conditions of service for DIBP employees working in Australia based (A-based) positions overseas. This includes employees on long term postings and short term missions (STMs).
- 1.1.2 The intention of this manual is to provide both the conditions of service specific to A-based employees overseas and to provide guidance for managers making decisions in relation to these conditions.
- 1.1.3 The OCOS is arranged to assist employees with the various phases of their overseas placements. The section on long term postings is therefore presented in three parts to cover conditions and processes: before posting; at post; and returning from post.
- 1.1.4 The overseas conditions of service is intended to provide a package that allows Australian employees living overseas to maintain a standard of living similar to that in Australia, compensate employees for the general disruption associated with a posting and for working in some environments that can be challenging due to a range of factors.
- 1.1.5 Overseas allowances can vary during an employee's placement overseas, as can the duration and terms of the placement. Employees are advised to not overextend themselves financially.

### Authority

- 1.1.6 Under DIBP's *Enterprise Agreement (EA)*, pursuant to clause 11.34, the Secretary is authorised to determine overseas conditions of employment from time to time. Where this manual is silent on particular conditions of employment, or to the extent of any inconsistency, the *Public Service Act 1999*, DIBP's EA, the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act), *Accountable Authority Instructions* (AAs), *Financial Management Directives*, other applicable legislation and/or regulations, and associated people management instructions and policies will apply.
- 1.1.7 The legal authority for taking decisions on a range of overseas conditions matters in this manual has been delegated by the Secretary to designated office holders in DIBP. Delegates are listed at [Schedule One – Delegations](#) to this manual. Delegates must exercise their powers in a manner that a reasonable person would in the circumstances, including not exercising powers in respect to their own position, conditions and entitlements.

## Who is covered by the OCOS

- 1.1.8 Unless stated otherwise, the conditions in this manual apply to DIBP employees, employed under section 22 of the *Public Service Act 1999* and assigned duties overseas for a period of usually more than 28 days. This includes employees on long term postings and STMs.
- 1.1.9 For all other official travel overseas, please refer to the [Financial Management Directive](#).

## 1.2 Definitions

### Introduction

- 1.2.1 This section contains a list of terms (in alphabetical order) and their definitions that are used throughout the OCOS Manual to assist readers to correctly interpret DIBP's overseas conditions of service.

Terminology	Definition for the purposes of this manual
<b>A</b>	
accompanied employee	An employee who is on a long-term posting, and whose spouse: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lives with the employee at post for at least 12 months or longer and whose primary residence continues to be at post;</li> <li>is not absent from the post for a continuous period of more than 28 calendar days, unless accompanying the employee on a period of recreation leave accruing to the employee as a result of service to the post.</li> </ul>
allowable travel cost	The minimum cost of flexible air travel between two localities if; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the travel is undertaken on an airline which has seats available at the required time and offers a reasonable standard of safety and security.</li> <li>stopovers are avoided wherever practicable, and</li> <li>advantage is taken of concessions and discount (including advance purchase, flexi saver) which would be available from DIBP or post travel service provider with reasonable planning</li> </ul>
approved summer school	A summer school programme determined by DFAT or Austrade and approved by the Secretary.
APS	Australian Public Service
assisted leave fare (ALF)	The return economy class airfare to either a designated regional leave centre or a relief centre.
assisted leave fare to Australia (ALFA)	The return economy class airfare to the location in Australia where the employee lived prior to their posting.
Austrade	The Australian Trade Commission

Terminology	Definition for the purposes of this manual
Australia	For ALF purposes, means the capital city in Australia with the lowest travel cost from post (excluding Perth, Darwin and Hobart)
A-based	Australia based employees
<b>B</b>	
basic school transport cost	The cost of public transport by bus or train to and from a benchmark school.
benchmark school	A school determined by DFAT or Austrade and approved by the Secretary in order to establish the maximum level of education assistance that will be provided at post by DIBP.
<b>C</b>	
child	A natural, adopted, foster, ward or step child of the employee or employee's spouse, who ordinarily resides with them.
close relative	Refers to the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• employee's spouse</li> <li>• a child or parent of the employee or their spouse</li> <li>• another person who stands in a similarly close relationship to that of a parent or child and is, because of special circumstances, approved by the Secretary as a close relative.</li> </ul>
compulsory fees	In relation to a school, means the sum of the annual amounts of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tuition and sports fees levied by a benchmark school</li> <li>• fees levied by the school for travel in a designated school bus</li> <li>• other fees and charges (registrations, waiting lists, etc.) levied by the school in order for a child to attend the school (excluding boarding fees)</li> <li>• any Government taxes levied on the fees.</li> </ul>
commonwealth credit card	DIBP's corporate credit card used to pay for official travel expenses
critically ill	A life threatening illness or injury judged by the treating medical professional to pose a serious risk of death in the short term.
cross-posting	Undertaking a posting immediately following a long-term posting, or finishing a posting early and immediately undertaking a posting in a new location.
<b>D</b>	
de facto relationship	A relationship in which two people, regardless of gender, not being legally married or in a civil partnership or equivalent, have a mutual commitment to living together on a genuine domestic basis.
delegate	An employee of DIBP who has been designated to act on behalf of



Terminology	Definition for the purposes of this manual
	the Secretary of DIBP.
dependant	Spouse, child or other recognised person as described in the 'Family Circumstances' section of this manual.
designated hardship post	Overseas locations with Hardship location rankings of C, D, E or F.
designated refugee camp	A refugee camp recognised by the United Nations or designated by the Secretary.
DFAT	The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DIBP	The Department of Immigration and Border Protection
The Department	The Department of Immigration and Border Protection
dual agency couple	A DIBP employee and their APS employee spouse posted to the same location for work purposes.
<b>E</b>	
early termination	The ending of an employee's time at post, initiated either by the employee or DIBP, before they are scheduled to cease their overseas duties.
eligible person	In reference to the Healthcare section of this manual, an employee or dependant of an employee entitled to assistance with health care costs. Can also be referred to as a 'patient'.
employee	An APS employee of DIBP other than a locally engaged employee.
ECA	Employment Conditions Abroad. The provider contracted by DIBP to provide data in relations to living conditions (post Indices, hardship rankings) overseas. Also referred to as ECA.
employee couple	A DIBP employee and their DIBP spouse/de facto on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a posting to the same location</li> <li>• postings to different locations</li> <li>• one employee posted, one recalled to undertake an STM at the same location.</li> <li>• one employee posted, one recalled to undertake an STM at a different location.</li> </ul>
Enterprise Agreement / (EA)	The current DIBP Enterprise Agreement
expatriate	Person outside his or her home country who has been noted on Comcover's Schedule of Expatriates
<b>F</b>	
family composition /	The number of people making up an employee's household,

Terminology	Definition for the purposes of this manual
household	inclusive of the employee plus all recognised dependants.
<b>G</b>	
gross salary	For the calculation of overseas living allowances, gross salary is the relevant salary point specified in the DIBP Enterprise Agreement applicable to the employee's overseas classification level. Gross salary does not include overtime, shift penalties or allowances but will reflect any higher duties allowance or reduction if the period is to be for a continuous period of three months or longer.
<b>H</b>	
headquarters	<p><b>For long term postings</b> – the post at which the employee lives and ordinarily performs duties.</p> <p><b>For recall to duty</b> – the post at which the employee ordinarily lives.</p> <p><b>If living in Australia</b> – the location at which the employee ordinarily performs, or is required to report for duty.</p>
Head of Mission (HOM) Head of Post (HOP)	The lead at the Embassy, High Commission or Consulate where the employee is performing duties. This is usually a DFAT officer, but may be Austrade where DFAT is not represented at post.
household goods	Personal and household effects, furniture and property used, or intended to be used, in the operation of a home. Household good exclude items such as perishable foodstuff, motorised vehicles, trailers, boats, caravans, pets, hazardous, prohibited or dangerous items and excessively heavy or large items.
<b>I</b>	
in-country travel	Official travel undertaken by an employee on long term posting within the country where the employee resides. These travel arrangements are managed locally at post.
international best fare	Also known as the best fare of the day, this is the best fare in accordance with the <i>Department of Finance Resource Management Guide No. 405</i> See <a href="#">Department of Finance Resource Management Guide No. 405</a> for full details.
<b>L</b>	
long term posting	A period of duty overseas for 12 months or longer, as determined by the Secretary, at either one or multiple posts.
locally engaged employees	Local employed employees who do not have diplomatic status, privileges or immunity. Staff are subject to local labour laws and local labour market conditions.
<b>M</b>	
medical service	Medical treatment provided overseas which, if provided in Australia,

Terminology	Definition for the purposes of this manual
	an eligible person would be entitled to claim under the Medicare benefit scheme.
management initiated termination	The early ending of a posting by DIBP for any reason.
<b>O</b>	
ordinary period of posting	Is three years, or a period determined by the Secretary in respect of a post.
<b>P</b>	
parent	Any person or guardian who is responsible for the care of a child.
patient	In reference to the Healthcare section of this manual an eligible person entitled to assistance with health care costs. Can also be referred to as an 'eligible person'.
Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme (PBS)	Under the PBS, the government subsidises the cost of medicine for most medical conditions. Most of the listed medicines are dispensed by pharmacists, and used by patients at home.  The PBS Schedule lists all of the medicines available to be dispensed to patients at a Government-subsidised price and is managed by the Department of Health and administered by Department of Human Services.
pharmaceutical product	A drug or medicinal preparation supplied on the prescription of a duly qualified medical practitioner and which is scheduled under the Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme.
post	The location overseas to which an employee has been transferred. Host government recognised diplomatic or consular premises, managed by DFAT or Austrade.
post index	The cost of living index that applies to a particular post. This index is derived from the ECA cost of living indices and local exchange rates fluctuations.
post security managers	Appointed staff responsible of security matters at the Post. Externally appointed.
public holiday	The day, or part-day, observed as a public holiday at the Embassy, High Commission or Consulate where an employee is performing duties. Public holidays are determined by the DFAT HOM and usually comprise a combination of local and Australian holidays, and as such may differ from post to post.
public transport	Travel by bus or train.

Terminology	Definition for the purposes of this manual
<b>R</b>	
regional leave centre	For assisted leave fare purposes this refers to Australia, Miami or London, dependent on employee location.
relief leave centre	For assisted leave fare purposes this refers to a leave centre other than Australian, Miami or London and is determined by the employee location.
<b>S</b>	
Schedule of Expatriates	A schedule provided to Comcover on a monthly basis which ensures health cover for A-based officers and their formally recognised family members, as defined in the Comcover Statement of Cover.
Senior Administrative Officer (SAO)	A Senior Administrative Officer (SAO) is a DFAT employee who undertakes a variety of administrative tasks on behalf of the department, such as reimbursement of medical expenses, education assistance at post, etc.
school	<p><b>Pre-schools</b> are educational institutions (excluding child care centres) overseas providing a curriculum directed to preparing a child for primary school.</p> <p><b>Primary school</b> is a school in Australia or a similar educational institution overseas providing a curriculum at the primary level.</p> <p><b>Secondary school</b> is a school in Australia or a similar educational institution overseas providing a curriculum at the secondary level.</p> <p><b>Summer school</b> means a summer school programme approved by DFAT.</p>
short term mission	An unaccompanied period of duty overseas, away from headquarters usually for more than 28 days but not greater than 12 months, as determined by the Secretary.
spouse	A person who is living with the employee and is either married to the employee, or in a de facto relationship which has been recognised by the Secretary for the payment of spouse entitlements.
Statement of Cover	The Statement of Cover refers to the health cover provided by Comcover to officers and their families who are listed on the Schedule of Expatriates.
<b>T</b>	
third country	A country other than Australia or the country where the employee is performing duty.
<b>U</b>	
unaccompanied employee	An employee who is not accompanied by a spouse for the purposes of overseas allowances.

Terminology	Definition for the purposes of this manual
utilities	The provision of drinkable water, gas and electrical services, fuel for household purposes, rubbish removal and sewerage.

## 1.3 Overview of Overseas Posting and Placement Types

### Short Term Mission

- 1.3.1 A Short Term Mission (STM) is a period of duty overseas in a STM designated position, away from headquarters usually for more than 28 days but not greater than 12 months, as determined by the Secretary.

### Airline Liaison Officer (ALO)

- 1.3.2 Employees undertaking an Airline Liaison Officer (ALO) role are considered to be on a short-term mission at a foreign airport. ALO conditions and entitlements are outlined in [Section 2.6](#) of this manual.

### Recall to Duty

- 1.3.3 A recall to duty occurs when an employee is recalled from leave, including leave without pay, for a temporary period of duty overseas. Where this duty occurs at their overseas home location, it is not considered to be away from headquarters or a STM.

### Long Term Posting

- 1.3.4 A long-term posting is a period of duty overseas for 12 months or longer.
- 1.3.5 The ordinary period of posting is three years.

### Whole of Government (WoG) Posting

- 1.3.6 Employees posted as part of WoG programmes remain DIBP employees but are subject to separate conditions laid out in the WoG Overseas Conditions of Service Manual.
- 1.3.7 Further information on WoG arrangements can be provided by the Overseas Conditions team.

## 1.4 Obligations of a posted Employee

### Work Health and Safety

- 1.4.1 The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act) imposes specific responsibilities on workers to ensure the department meets its health and safety obligations. While at work, a worker must:
- take reasonable care for his or her own health and safety
  - take reasonable care that his or her acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons

- comply, so far as the worker is reasonably able, with any reasonable instruction that is given by the person conducting the business or undertaking to allow the person to comply with the WHS Act; and
- co-operate with any reasonable policy or procedure or undertaking relating to health and safety at the workplace that has been notified to workers.

- 1.4.2 Some countries do not require organisations to abide by the same level of work health and safety standards that must be met in Australia. The WHS Act continues to apply to Australian Government operations outside Australia. Therefore it is important for employees on post to remain diligent in respect to safety in DIBP's workplaces and the workplace practices of DIBP staff, including Locally Engaged Employees and contractors.
- 1.4.3 All officers, including those overseas, are required to complete DIBP's e-learning course 'Work Health and Safety Laws' annually. More information about health and safety can be obtained from <sup>s. 47E(d)</sup> [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_@border.gov.au](mailto:_____@border.gov.au)

## APS Values and Code of Conduct

- 1.4.4 All Australian Public Service employees must comply with the APS Values, Employment Principles and the APS Code of Conduct. This includes upholding the good reputation of Australia and the department while on duty overseas.
- 1.4.5 Employees should familiarise themselves with the department's Code of Conduct Guidelines, which apply to all employees, including those working overseas, and Locally Engaged Employees. All employees are required to complete DIBP's Code of Conduct e-learning course every two years.
- 1.4.6 While the department's Code of Conduct Guidelines does not directly extend to cover members of an employee's household, any members accompanying an employee on a posting are expected to uphold Australia's reputation overseas.
- 1.4.7 Posted employees are obliged to take all reasonable steps to ensure that members of their household are aware of local laws, culture and customs. If any member of an employee's household engages in any activity that brings or may bring the department, post or Australia into disrepute, all reasonable steps to ensure that the behaviour ceases must be taken by the employee.
- 1.4.8 If such behaviour continues, the employee must inform their manager, as well as the HOM/HOP of the incidents. Any reputational damage to the department or Australian Government, by an employee or their dependant, may result in the early termination of the employee's posting.
- 1.4.9 The appropriate contact for any queries or reporting of a suspected breach of the Code of Conduct is the Integrity team at <sup>s. 47E(d)</sup> [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_@border.gov.au](mailto:_____@border.gov.au).
- 1.4.10 A breach of the Code of Conduct that involves disciplinary action may result in termination of posting.
- 1.4.11 Further information about the APS Values and Code of Conduct is available from <sup>s. 47E(d)</sup> [\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_@border.gov.au](mailto:_____@border.gov.au)

## Performance Management

- 1.4.12 All employees must participate in DIBP's Performance Management Framework (the framework), including when on a posting or deployment.
- 1.4.13 The framework is designed to foster regular, two-way, fair, objective and consistent, and, wherever possible, face-to-face performance feedback. A key part of the framework is the Performance and Development Agreement (PDA). The PDA cycle runs from 1 July to 30 June each year. A mid-cycle assessment must take place between 1 January and 28 February, and an end-cycle assessment must take place by close of business 30 June.
- 1.4.14 All PDAs should be completed electronically via the ourPeople system. If this is not possible, the PDA and assessment discussions should be recorded in some form.
- 1.4.15 All employees undertaking Long Term Posting must complete an 'End of Post Report'.

## 1.5 Diplomatic status and responsibilities

### Diplomatic status

- 1.5.1 Diplomatic status and privileges are conferred on A-based employees on long-term posting in an accredited position to facilitate the operation of the mission and not for the personal benefit of employees or members of the employee's household. Employees must always act with integrity in relation to any privilege provided (e.g. exemption under international law from the payment of taxes or duties) as a diplomatic representative of Australia. Goods obtained without the payment of duty under privilege are for personal use only and must not be sold or used as payment of any kind to persons that do not have the relevant privilege.
- 1.5.2 Employees shall not use diplomatic privileges in a manner that would undermine the integrity of those privileges. Employees must not seek either to invoke or waive diplomatic immunity, which is a matter for decision by the Minister for Foreign Affairs.
- 1.5.3 Employees and members of their households have no immunity in relation to any professional or commercial activity in which they may engage outside of their official functions. If a member of a household is planning to engage in any private occupation, an employee must advise the Head of Mission or Head of Post who may decide that the department or the host Government be consulted.
- 1.5.4 Employees must take all reasonable steps to ensure that any activities by a member of their household who is undertaking a private gainful occupation or a business do not give rise to a conflict of interest or the perception of a conflict of interest. For example, the mission's address is not to be used as the place of business or the employee's email address used for business-related correspondence.

### Representational responsibilities

- 1.5.5 Representational funds may be provided for overseas Regional Directors, Post Managers and selected departmental employees required to promote, advance or facilitate the interests of the department or Australia through contact with local agencies, business networks, other relevant organisations and officials to achieve operational objectives.



- 1.5.6 Further information on representation responsibilities and accountability of representational funds is available in the [Financial Management Directive](#).

## Spouse employment

- 1.5.7 Employees undertaking an overseas posting should be aware that it may not be possible for spouses/dependants holding diplomatic visas to obtain permission to work outside the embassy/foreign legation environment in certain countries. DFAT has formal and informal bilateral employment arrangements/agreements with a number of countries that allow dependants to access local employment opportunities.
- 1.5.8 Other countries may require spouses or dependants seeking employment locally to relinquish their diplomatic status or waive diplomatic immunity. Decisions concerning waiver of diplomatic immunity or relinquishment of diplomatic status are made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Accordingly, staff must ensure they are aware of local employment conditions and possible restrictions on obtaining working visas prior to applying for a posting.
- 1.5.9 Employees whose spouse/dependants intend to give up their diplomatic status or waive immunity in order to access employment opportunities in countries where there are no formal or informal employment arrangements in place must follow procedures issued by DFAT.
- 1.5.10 If a spouse or family member gives up their diplomatic status they will meet all expenses associated with the change of status, including processing fees and any travel costs associated with possible requirements by the host government to depart the country of posting to change visa type. Costs associated with any resumption of diplomatic status would also be met by the spouse or family member of the posted employee.
- 1.5.11 Employees, spouses and dependants should also be aware that overseas employment may have Australian tax and superannuation implications. Employees may wish to include this when obtaining financial advice prior to posting.

## END OF PART ONE



## 2. Part Two – Short Term Missions

### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 This section applies to employees who undertake designated Short Term Missions (STM).
- 2.1.2 A STM is an unaccompanied period of duty overseas, away from headquarters, usually for more than 28 days but not greater than 12 months, as determined by the Secretary.
- 2.1.3 In-country travel, recall to duty at an overseas home location, or travel from a post to Australia is not considered a STM for the purposes of this Part.

### Allowances Summary

- 2.1.4 The following allowances may apply to employees undertaking a STM.

Allowance	Eligibility
Travel Allowance	Rate that is appropriate to location and classification of the employee.
Equipment Allowance	Entitled to receive allowance once every three years. Officers who have commenced a posting in the last three years are taken to have received the allowance as part of their transfer to post allowance.
Unaccompanied Hardship Allowance	Based on Hardship Rating of Post. A STM must be for 28 days or more for a Hardship Allowance to apply.
Special Location Supplement	For STMs to countries identified in <u>Schedule Two</u>
Refugee Camp Hardship Allowance	Subject to delegate approval.

- 2.1.5 If, for operational reasons, a STM will exceed six months duration the Secretary may approve that the employee receives adjusted conditions of service, based on long-term posting provisions, with the following exceptions:
- there is no entitlement to be accompanied by dependants at official expense unless authorised by the Secretary;
  - there is no entitlement to assistance with education in Australia; and
  - there is no entitlement to flexible travel arrangements.

### Medicals Clearances

- 2.1.6 To be eligible to undertake a STM, employees must attend a medical examination and be certified fit by the department's nominated provider. This includes undertaking any course of vaccinations specified by the provider as being necessary for the country and/or region of the STM.

## Inoculations and Vaccinations

- 2.1.7 The department will meet the cost of inoculations and vaccinations that are recommended by the medical service provider, The Travel Doctor. The cost of inoculations/vaccinations can be charged on the Commonwealth Credit Card to the cost centre funding the travel. Further information on health matters is available from the [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website](#) or [The Travel Doctor website](#).

## Other Clearances

- 2.1.8 Employees are required to hold a Negative Vetting 1 (NV1) or Negative Vetting 2 (NV2) security clearance. The level of security classification will be determined by the position they will be undertaking while overseas.

## 2.2 Travel Arrangements for Short Term Missions

### Introduction

- 2.2.1 DIBP will meet the cost of air travel, accommodation and official transport for an employee undertaking a STM. Travel arrangements for STMs from Australia (fares, visas, passports, travel allowance, etc.) are administered by the Overseas Conditions team. Email: [s. 47E\(d\) @border.gov.au](#)

### Official passports

- 2.2.2 As representatives of DIBP undertaking official government business overseas, all employees on a STM must travel on an official passport. The cost of official passports will be charged to the cost centre funding the travel.

### Visas

- 2.2.3 Official passports carry strict visa requirements which vary for each country. The cost of visas will be charged to the cost centre funding the travel.

### Travel advisories

- 2.2.4 To assist the department in the proper discharge of its duty of care obligations, all employees who travel outside Australia on official business must report their travel prior to departure to the Overseas Security team. All staff posted overseas must also report any travel (both official and personal) that takes them away from their usual location to the Overseas Security team at [s. 47E\(d\) @border.gov.au](#)
- 2.2.5 Employees undertaking STMs must consult the DFAT Travel Advisories prior to undertaking the travel. As a minimum, employees intending to travel on official business are expected to refer to recommendations made in the travel advisories for the countries to be visited. Where travel advisories flag security or personal safety concerns, employees should consult Post Security Managers at the relevant post where they are or will be based and, if appropriate, at posts with consular responsibility for countries to be visited prior to arranging and proceeding with travel plans. Such consultations are mandatory when travel advisories recommend against travel to the location(s) to be visited.

- 2.2.6 Under current DIBP policy, staff travelling to a “High Risk” destination will need to have a Security Risk Assessment undertaken in support of their trip prior to departure. A High Risk destination is one that the DFAT “Smartraveller” website defines as either a “Reconsider your need to travel” or “Do not travel” destination. The Protective Security Section will complete the risk assessment and forward it to the responsible SES officer or Regional Director. While A-based staff are at post DFAT assume responsibility for protective security; however A-based staff who travel away from post for official duty to High Risk destinations come under the DIBP policy.
- 2.2.7 Staff holding a security clearance should notify the Australian Government Security Vetting Agency (AGSVA) of any residence in, or visits to foreign countries.

## Approval of travel

- 2.2.8 Approval to travel on a STM must be obtained prior to travel, in accordance with current requirements and financial delegations. Full details on the approval process for international travel can be found in [Financial Management Directive](#). Overseas Network Management Section will contact the Overseas Conditions team to commence this process.

## Air travel

- 2.2.9 Air travel will be by the International Best Fare (IBF), as set out in the [Department of Finance Resource Management Guide No. 405](#). Value for money is the overarching consideration when booking flights for international travel, taking into consideration the practical business needs of the traveller and overall cost of the trip. It is not intended that employees be required to use an airline where there are reasonable grounds for concerns over safety or security.
- 2.2.10 Employees travelling on a STM are not entitled to access flexible travel arrangements including taking side trips, backtracking or generally deviating from the logical direct route. Australian domestic sectors and in-country sectors used in conjunction with an international itinerary may be at the same standard of travel if a through ticket is purchased.

## Class of air travel

- 2.2.11 An employee is entitled to international air travel in accordance with the following provisions:
- where three classes of travel are provided on the aircraft, the employee travels at the intermediate class, usually business class or its equivalent
  - where there are no intermediate or business classes the ordinary standard of travel is economy class; and
  - where business class or an equivalent option is not available for international travel, the [Secretary](#) may consider approving an alternate (non-direct) route, particularly where the travel is in excess of eight (8) hours.

## Promotions and competitions

- 2.2.12 Employees travelling on official business are not permitted to participate in promotions or competitions conducted by external providers.

## Unused tickets

- 2.2.13 All unused tickets or portions of unused tickets must be returned to the Travel Management Company (TMC) for a refund. Lost or stolen tickets must be reported promptly to the TMC to obtain the maximum refund. Under no circumstances can unused tickets purchased by DIBP be used for personal travel.

## Travel for compassionate reasons

- 2.2.14 If compassionate travel is necessary, the [Secretary](#) may consider whether the compassionate travel provisions applicable for long-term postings apply, or if cessation of the STM is appropriate.

## Travel out of hours

- 2.2.15 Employees undertaking STMs may not access flex time or overtime for periods of travel that fall outside normal working hours.

## Frequent flyer, reward or loyalty points

- 2.2.16 Government employees are not permitted to accrue Frequent Flyer Points or Loyalty Reward Points for official business travel. Bookings through DIBP's travel management company do not earn points.

## Excess baggage

- 2.2.17 The standard baggage limit for business class travellers is 30 kg on international flights and 20 kg on domestic flights. Any personal excess baggage costs incurred *en route* to a STM will not be reimbursed and are at the employee's personal expense.
- 2.2.18 Employees returning from a STM are entitled to:
- a maximum of 15 kg excess baggage on international flights;
  - a maximum of 25 kg excess baggage on the domestic leg of an international flight.
- 2.2.19 The cost for work-related excess baggage associated with STMs must be charged to a Commonwealth Credit Card, unless that card is not accepted by an agent. In these instances if work-related excess baggage costs are paid personally by an employee, they may seek reimbursement via the 'Employee Reimbursements' tab in easySAP. Work-related excess baggage includes training materials, computers, audio visual and other essential business equipment transported with an employee undertaking official travel.

## Accommodation at post

- 2.2.20 DIBP will pay the cost of a reasonable standard of accommodation, arranged by Post. Properties should be selected based on:
- the location in relation to the place of work
  - equivalent to western 4 to 4<sup>1/2</sup> star rating standard for non-SES employees
  - equivalent to western 5 star rating standard for SES employees
  - reputation; and
  - safety standards.

## Commonwealth Credit Card use

- 2.2.21 Employees travelling internationally on official business must hold a Commonwealth Credit Card. All travel-related costs, such as airfares, hotel accommodation, car hire costs, etc. are to be purchased using DIBP's Commonwealth Credit Card or paid by Post.

## Public holidays

- 2.2.22 Employees undertaking STMs observe public holidays on the basis of the overseas location. If there is a public holiday in Australia while overseas, the public holiday is forfeited unless it is also observed at the post.

## 2.3 Rest Periods on Short Term Missions

### Introduction

- 2.3.1 If an employee undertakes a STM with a continuous travelling time of more than 12 hours, the employee will be entitled to a rest period before commencing duty. A rest period is defined as a period of sufficient duration to enable overnight rest, but not longer than 24 hours.
- 2.3.2 If the employee undertakes a STM with a continuous travelling time of more than 24 hours, the employee will be entitled to two rest periods before commencing duty. One rest period may be taken partway through the journey, and the remaining rest period may be taken at the end of the journey, or both rest periods may be taken at the end of the journey. In the latter case, the combined rest periods may not be longer than 48 hours.
- 2.3.3 A rest period is effective from the time the traveller disembarks the aircraft at a scheduled stopover in the journey or at the final destination. The actual length of a rest period may vary slightly from the prescribed rest period entitlement and will depend on airline schedules and time of arrival and departure at the destination.

### Rest period – employee on duty

- 2.3.4 An employee is taken to be on duty during any approved rest period that falls within normal working hours. A rest period taken outside normal working hours does not entitle an employee to remuneration or time off in lieu. Rest periods that fall on a

weekend or a public holiday are rest days if the employee is not required to work on those days.

## Travelling time for purpose of rest periods

- 2.3.5 Travelling time for calculating rest period entitlements is measured from the latest allowable time for check-in at the point of origin to the scheduled arrival time of the aircraft at the final destination. Travelling time does not include pre-departure travel time, rest periods, leave, or stopovers at localities where an employee is not required to perform duty.

## Effect of stopover on a rest period

- 2.3.6 If an employee has an unavoidable stopover during travel to an international destination, they are not entitled to a rest period unless the Secretary is satisfied that the stopover did not constitute the equivalent of a rest period for the employee. An employee cannot nominate a stopover at a location other than the scheduled stopover location in order to utilise a rest period entitlement.

## 2.4 Travel allowance for Short Term Missions

### Introduction

- 2.4.1 DIBP will provide a living away from home allowance for employees undertaking a STM in the form of a travel allowance appropriate to the employee's classification and the destination where the duties are performed.
- 2.4.2 Travel allowance comprises of a payment for meals and incidental expenses. Meal allowance compensates employees for the cost of meals. Incidental allowance covers living and incidental expenses including currency conversion fees, commissions, exchange losses etc.
- 2.4.3 An employee who is on Leave Without Pay (LWOP) and is recalled to duty in their current home location is not considered to be undertaking a STM. In this scenario employees will be entitled to receive travel allowance only if they travel away from their home location overnight during the recall to duty.

### Additional expenses

- 2.4.4 Personal expenses such as bank fees and charges for non-official ATM withdrawals, non-prescription pharmaceuticals, private phone calls, etc. will not be met as an official charge.
- 2.4.5 Other expenses associated with STM travel such as official phone calls, passport and visa fees, departure taxes, vaccination costs, reasonable costs to travel to and from work at the overseas destination, etc. will be met as an official charge. Expense items can be charged to the Commonwealth Credit Card where appropriate, paid directly by the mission on behalf of the STM or the employee may seek reimbursement via the 'Employee Reimbursements' function in easySAP.

## Travel allowance during times of leave

- 2.4.6 Travel allowance will be paid during official travel and while on sick leave, but is not paid during periods of annual leave, or during any weekend or other holiday taken in conjunction with leave.

## Travel allowance during transit

- 2.4.7 If a traveller transits a domestic destination during a major meal time, the meal rate (not including incidentals) for that meal will be paid. The following table can be used as a guide for transit travel allowance entitlements:

Time	Meal Provided
06:00 – 08:00	Breakfast
12:00 – 14:00	Lunch
17:00 – 19:00	Dinner

## Rates of travel allowance

- 2.4.8 If an employee's international travel involves an overnight stay, the employee is entitled to meals and incidental costs applicable to the town or city at the destination in accordance with the global travel allowance rates provided by Employment Conditions Abroad (ECA). ECA provides travel allowance rates each year on 1 July to apply for the following financial year.
- 2.4.9 The applicable travel allowance rates for travel from post are the ECA rates used by DFAT.
- 2.4.10 If no travel allowance rate is specified for the destination, reimbursement of the cost of meals (excluding the cost of alcoholic beverages) and incidental expenses reasonably incurred by the employee is the amount payable. In such cases, an advance of travel allowance may be provided based on a reasonable estimate of the daily meals and incidental costs at the destination.
- 2.4.11 Travel allowance is required to be acquitted on return from the trip and on presentation of all receipts.

## Meals allowance on the day of arrival or departure

- 2.4.12 An employee is entitled to an allowance for meals on the day of arrival and day of departure at their overseas destination. This payment is automatically calculated and included in the travel allowance payment an employee receives prior to undertaking a STM. A proportion of the full meal allowance rate is paid according to the time of arrival at, or departure from, the overseas destination as set out in the table below:

Table – Meals rate for day of arrival or departure		
Time of arrival/departure	Rate on day of arrival	Rate on day of departure
Before 07:00am	100%	Nil
07:00am – 1:00pm	75%	25%
1:01pm – 7:00pm	50%	50%
After 7:00pm	Nil	100%

## Incidental allowance

- 2.4.13 An employee on a STM is entitled to incidental allowance at half the usual rate. If an employee arrives at their destination before 12 noon on the day of arrival, or departs after 12 noon on the day of departure, the employee is entitled to a full day's incidental allowance. In any other case, the employee is entitled to half the full rate of incidental allowance. Employees travelling in-country on official business are entitled to incidental allowance at half the usual rate. This payment is automatically calculated and included in the travel allowance payment an employee receives prior to undertaking a STM.

## Lower rate for incidental allowance in certain circumstances

- 2.4.14 The rate of incidental allowance reduces by 50% after 28 days at any one location.

## Rate for meals in accommodation with cooking facilities

- 2.4.15 If an employee stays for five continuous days or longer in accommodation with cooking facilities sufficient to prepare a cooked meal (i.e. there are adequate cooking utensils, cutlery, crockery, etc.), the employee is entitled to two thirds of the meal allowance that would have been payable had cooking facilities not been available.

## Reduction in meal allowance if meals provided

- 2.4.16 An employee must not be paid the meal component of travel allowance in respect of a meal that is provided. Any meals that are provided must be declared when acquitting travel allowance.

## Excess meals and incidental costs.

- 2.4.17 Employees should not be financially disadvantaged due to unusual circumstances while travelling (e.g. employees travelling with Ministers or Secretaries may incur higher levels of travel expenses).
- 2.4.18 If the Secretary is satisfied that the amount of travel allowance payable to an employee was insufficient and upon receipt of supporting documentation the difference between the travel allowance paid and the actual cost may be reimbursed to the employee. If approved by the delegate, reimbursement can be gained via easySAP.



## Travel allowance if paid by another organisation

- 2.4.19 The amount of travel allowance paid to an employee by DIBP will be reduced by any amount paid to the employee by another organisation for the same period and location.

## Acquittal of travel allowance

- 2.4.20 Employees must acquit their travel allowance advance within 14 days of returning from travel. International travellers from Australia must complete a 'Travel Diary' to record their daily expenses and other miscellaneous costs in order to acquit their trip. If travellers do not acquit their travel allowance within this time frame action may be taken to recover the advance in full. Items such as departure taxes, taxis and public transport costs that could not be paid using the Commonwealth Credit Card are to be claimed in the acquittal process. All claims for items must be supported by receipts.
- 2.4.21 International travellers from post are required to meet post acquittal requirements.
- 2.4.22 If, following acquittal, travel allowance has been overpaid, this money must be repaid to DIBP. Travellers with a departmental debt must finalise this debt through the Collector of Public Monies in National Office or in their State or Territory Office (STO). If travel allowance has been underpaid, the additional funds owing to the traveller will automatically be processed and paid into the employee's bank account following approval of their trip in easySAP.

## 2.5 Other Conditions for Short Term Missions

### Leave while overseas

- 2.5.1 Subject to the Secretary's approval, the amount of annual leave that can be taken while on a STM cannot exceed the amount of leave accrued during the period of duty overseas and cannot be anticipated. All leave requests are subject to operational needs at Post.
- 2.5.2 Employees will be personally liable for any additional costs incurred by DIBP as a result of employees taking leave in association with a STM, such as health and travel insurance, accommodation, visas and personal travel arrangements.
- 2.5.3 Employees on STMs do not accrue additional annual leave at hardship posts as is applicable to long term postings and travel which originates from post.

### Hardship Post Allowance

- 2.5.4 An employee undertaking a STM at a category C, D, E, or F hardship post for a period of 28 days or more is eligible to receive pro rata Hardship Post allowance at the unaccompanied rate from the first day of duty at the post until the last day of duty at post.
- 2.5.5 Hardship Post allowance is paid to compensate for the adverse effects on an employee's lifestyle and welfare from living in different conditions, particularly over an extended period of time. An employee will not receive Hardship Post allowance where the STM is for less than 28 days.

- 2.5.6 An employee cannot receive two Hardship Post allowances for the same period of time.
- 2.5.7 If on continuous duty at more than one hardship post for a combined period of 28 days or more, pro rata Hardship Post Allowance will be paid at the rate applicable to each post over the period the employee was on duty in each location.
- 2.5.8 Where a long-term posted officer at a hardship location is undertaking a STM to another hardship location for a period of 28 days or more, they will receive the pro rata Hardship Post Allowance appropriate to their location, unless the [Secretary](#) determines otherwise.

## Special Location Supplement

- 2.5.9 Special Location Supplement (SLS) provides temporary additional remuneration and compensation to departmental employees required to work at overseas locations where regular security incidents, heightened socio-political tensions, environmental disasters and the like have impacted, or may impact, adversely on the personal security and/or welfare of employees and their families. For more information see: [Special Location Supplement](#).

## Equipment Allowance

- 2.5.10 Equipment Allowance is intended to assist employees with the cost of travel equipment, other items purchased for official travel and the wear and tear on possessions (including luggage) resulting from overseas travel.
- 2.5.11 When travelling from Australia on a STM, an employee will be entitled to receive an Equipment Allowance once every three years. The [Secretary](#) may adjust the amount for Equipment Allowance on 1 July each year. See [Schedule Two](#).
- 2.5.12 Equipment Allowance is not paid:
- more than once in any three year period;
  - if the employee has commenced a long-term posting within three years prior to the STM; or
  - if an employee is accompanying their spouse on a long-term DIBP posting and is recalled to duty to undertake a STM.
- 2.5.13 Equipment Allowance is not assessable income for employees and will be paid in association with travel allowance.

## Medical and dental treatment while overseas

- 2.5.14 An employee on an approved STM is covered under Comcover's Medical Expenses and Medical Emergencies Insurance policy for travel periods of up to 180 days. Employees undertaking international travel in excess of 180 days duration may continue to be covered by Comcover and in these situations advice should be obtained from DIBP's Comcover Manager at: [s. 47E\(d\) @border.gov.au](#)
- 2.5.15 For extended STMs an employee will be covered under Comcover's Travel Outside of Country – Baggage and Personal Effects & Travel Outside of Country – Medical Expenses and Medical Emergencies Insurance policy.

- 2.5.16 DIBP employees requiring medical assistance while travelling on a STM should contact the International SOS (ISOS) for assistance, and follow the directions given by ISOS concerning approved medical practitioners and facilities.
- 2.5.17 Any necessary costs associated with medical assistance obtained during a STM should be insurable expenses, and will be covered by ISOS/Comcover instead of at DIBP expense. If International SOS or Comcover is unable to make payment directly on behalf of the employee in the first instance, a Commonwealth Credit Card may be used to pay for the required services, and an insurance claim must then be submitted to Comcover through the Comcover Manager within the next five days to recover the expenses.
- 2.5.18 If an employee becomes ill or is injured during a STM, DIBP will meet the reasonable costs of any necessary medical or hospital treatment for the illness or injury which are not recoverable under DIBP's Comcover insurance policy.
- 2.5.19 If an employee obtains essential or emergency dental treatment during a STM and the cost of the treatment is not recoverable under DIBP's Comcover insurance policy, the employee will be personally liable for the amount by which the treatment costs exceed the cost of the same treatment in Australia, as listed in the Medibank Private *Average Charges for Ancillary Services* report. If the treatment is not available in Australia, the cost of a similar treatment will be used to determine personal liability.
- 2.5.20 For further information about DIBP's Comcover insurance please see: Comcover Insurance or email <sup>s. 47E(d)</sup> [REDACTED] [@border.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@border.gov.au)

## Insurance of personal effects

- 2.5.21 DIBP's Comcover insurance cover provides employees with overseas travel cover for travel periods of up to 180 days. This insurance policy provides the travelling employee and any approved accompanying person (each defined in the Comcover policy as a 'traveller') with the following cover:
- If the traveller's baggage and personal effects are lost, destroyed, or damaged during the travel, Comcover will repair or replace the items up to the limit of AUD25, 000.
  - If the traveller has money that is lost or stolen during the travel, Comcover will pay for the lost or stolen money.
  - If the traveller's baggage is delayed for more than 8 hours following the arrival of the traveller at the destination, Comcover will pay the reasonable cost of necessities.
- 2.5.22 Employees undertaking international travel in excess of 180 days duration may continue to be covered by Comcover and in these situations advice should be obtained from the DIBP Comcover Manager at: <sup>s. 47E(d)</sup> [REDACTED] [@border.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@border.gov.au)
- 2.5.23 In the event of injury, illness or death to a traveller, Comcover will pay DIBP or the traveller directly (or his or her estate) the limit specified on the relevant Schedule of Cover.
- 2.5.24 Comcover will also pay for medical expenses and the costs of medical emergencies, up to the maximum amount of ten million Australian dollars, including:
- emergency evacuation and/or repatriation under medical supervision

- 24 hour worldwide medical information and assistance service
- sending essential medication or equipment not locally available
- sending a registered health professional where appropriate
- repatriation of mortal remains and any related costs; and
- medical monitoring.

2.5.25 If an employee undertaking a STM dies overseas, the same provisions as those for employees on Long Term Postings will apply.

## 2.6 Airline Liaison Officer

### Introduction

2.6.1 Employees undertaking an Airline Liaison Officer (ALO) role on a STM at an overseas international airport attract the same conditions and entitlements specified under the STM section, with the following variations.

### Hours of Duty

2.6.2 ALOs will work a roster based on the airline operating schedules. ALOs can expect that hours worked will include early mornings and late evenings, weekends and public holidays.

### Pre-assignment Medical Assessment

2.6.3 All ALOs are required to undergo a pre-assignment medical assessment, specifically designed for ALO placements, two months prior to departure. The purpose of the assessment is to identify and help manage any pre-existing medical conditions, and discuss management of these conditions in the ALO environment with the DIBP identified medical practitioner. Employees not rated as fit for assignment are unable to undertake an ALO role.

### Excess Baggage

2.6.4 The standard baggage limit for business class travellers is 30 kg on international flights and 20 kg on domestic flights. Any excess baggage costs incurred *en route* to an ALO placement will not be reimbursed and are at the employee's personal expense.

2.6.5 Employee's returning from ALO placements are entitled to:

- A maximum of 15 kg excess baggage (reimbursed by the ALO Section) on international flights.
- A maximum of 25 kg of excess baggage (reimbursed by the ALO Section) on the domestic leg of an international flight.

## END OF PART TWO

## 3. Part Three – Long-Term Postings – Pre-posting

### 3.1 Family Circumstances

#### Introduction

- 3.1.1 This segment covers the range of family circumstances that may impact on a posted employee's allowances and entitlements. Posted employees are responsible for advising the Overseas Conditions team of their family circumstances, and any change in those circumstances. Further information on whether an employee is able to be accompanied at post by a de facto partner can be obtained from the DFAT and Austrade post profiles.

#### Dependants

- 3.1.2 For the purposes of overseas allowances a dependant, in relation to an employee, can be:

- A spouse, who ordinarily lives with the employee.
- A child under the age of 18, who ordinarily resides with the employee and is financially dependent on them.
- A child who is 18 years or older who ordinarily resides with the employee and is financially dependent on them; who has not married or entered into a de facto relationship and is undertaking full-time secondary education.
- A special needs person over 18 who ordinarily resides with the employee and is financially dependent on them and is determined by the Secretary to be a dependant.
- A child living at post who has completed secondary education and is remaining at post until commencing tertiary studies at the beginning of the next academic year in Australia.
- Any other person who is the employee's relative, or the employee's spouse's relative, and whom the Secretary approves for a period, of no less than 12 months, as the employee's dependant for the purpose of providing fares, rest periods and settling-in and out expenses only.

- 3.1.3 In considering these cases the Secretary must give regard to the following factors:

- the relationship of the person to the employee or employee's spouse
- the extent of the person's dependency on the employee, in particular giving regard to their ordinary place of residence; and
- the likely effect on the person's health and welfare of alternative arrangements that the employee could make for the person's care and maintenance.

- 3.1.4 For Reunion Travel purposes only, a child is considered as a dependant when:
- financially dependent on the employee
  - less than 23 years of age; and
  - undertaking full-time study in an Australian institution, including tertiary.
- 3.1.5 Dependant status will not be approved if a child is in full-time employment.
- 3.1.6 An allowance or other entitlement will not be provided to an employee for a dependant unless the employee is on a long-term posting, and the dependant:
- lives, or intends to live, with the employee at post for at least three quarters of the duration of the posting or 12 months, whichever is the longer (e.g. there is no entitlement if the posting will cease less than 12 months from the date a dependant commences residing with the employee);
  - is entitled to education assistance (See [Assistance with education costs](#)); or
  - marries or is recognised as a de facto spouse while on posting (allowances and entitlements are payable from the date the employee's spouse takes up residence at post following formal recognition).
- 3.1.7 Notwithstanding the above, a dependant residing at post for less than 12 months is entitled to assistance with health services as per the healthcare provisions, unless recognised as a 'limited dependant' only.
- 3.1.8 Persons with different family names to that of the employee being posted may need to produce marriage, custody or birth certificates.

### Limited dependant status

- 3.1.9 Subject to the Secretary's approval 'Limited dependant status' refers to an employee's dependant over 18 years of age who has completed secondary education and:
- remains at post for no longer than 12 months, until they commence full-time tertiary studies in Australia; or while they decide on future plans; or
  - intends to join the employee at post for no longer than 12 months, until they commence full-time tertiary studies in Australia; or while they decide on future plans.
- 3.1.10 Limited dependant status is limited to a maximum of 12 months from the date secondary education was completed and ceases on that date, or once the dependant departs post and returns to Australia.

### Change of circumstances

- 3.1.11 If a change occurs in the circumstances of an approved dependant, that person ceases to be a dependant unless reviewed by the Secretary. Employees are obliged to report any change of circumstances to the Overseas Conditions team as soon as practicable to ensure correct payments are administered.



## 3.2 Recognition of Relationships

### Recognition of a de facto Relationship

- 3.2.1 Subject to the Secretary's approval the guidelines below are taken into account when determining whether to recognise a de facto relationship for the purposes of the OCOS Manual. These are not prescriptive and do not guarantee official recognition. Additional proof may be required. It is also important to note that being separated but still married, or separated but still in a civil partnership (or equivalent), does not preclude recognition of a de facto relationship with another person. Further information can be obtained from the Overseas Conditions team.
- 3.2.2 Once recognised, in all official documentation the de facto partner will be described as 'the partner of', 'the spouse of' or 'a member of the household of' the employee.

### Cohabitation for three years or more

- 3.2.3 Cohabitation for a continuous period of three years or longer is, in most cases, sufficient evidence of a de facto relationship.
- The employee and partner must submit a joint statutory declaration detailing the circumstances and period of the relationship.
  - DIBP may also request additional evidence of the relationship.

### Cohabitation for more than 12 months but less than three years

- 3.2.4 Cohabitation for a continuous period of 12 months or more but less than three years will require:
- The employee and partner to lodge a joint statutory declaration detailing the circumstances and period of the relationship; and
  - Other information in support of the application, such as:
    - Details of any child of the relationship, including a child accepted into the household, whether or not a child of either of the partners.
    - Evidence of joint domestic financial arrangements, for example joint bank accounts, joint insurance, joint ownership of property, the existence of wills made in favour of the partner, etc.
    - Details of any non-financial support and/or commitment to each other.
    - Documentary evidence such as bank statements, statements from persons of repute that attest to the sincerity and public aspects of the relationship, and rental or land ownership agreements must accompany the application for recognition.

### Non-cohabitation or cohabitation for less than 12 months

- 3.2.5 Recognition of a de facto relationship where there is no cohabitation or cohabitation has been for a continuous period of less than 12 months will not normally be considered. Employees should consult with the Secretary if they believe their circumstances are exceptional.

## Civil Unions

- 3.2.6 The ACT Government's *Civil Unions Act 2012* provides for any two adults (regardless of gender) to enter into a civil union if they cannot marry. Alternatively in the ACT, and in the other states and territories, any two adults (regardless of gender) can enter into a civil partnership (variously described) under the respective state and territory legislation. It is DIBP's policy to observe the intent of the ACT *Civil Unions Act 2012*, by affording an employee who is in civil union in the ACT or civil partnership in a state or territory the same overseas conditions that apply to a married couple. See [Civil Unions Act 2012](#)

## 3.3 Employee Couples

### Introduction

- 3.3.1 An employee couple is two DIBP officers in a recognised spouse or de facto relationship in one of the following scenarios:
- both on long-term postings to the same location (postings do not have to be concurrent, they can overlap)
  - both on overlapping or concurrent long-term postings to different locations
  - one employee on a long-term posting and the accompanying spouse recalled to duty at the same location; or
  - one employee on a long-term posting and the accompanying spouse undertakes a short-term mission at a different location.

### Pre-departure Conditions

- 3.3.2 Where long-term postings at the same location are not concurrent but overlap and an employee couple departs for post at the same time, conditions and entitlements are applied at the accompanied rate.
- 3.3.3 Where an employee couple departs separately within a short timeframe of each other, entitlements such as those for uplift and transfer allowance will be applied at the accompanied rate. A case can be submitted to the Secretary for consideration of the provision of some separate entitlements such as a split uplift where departure to post would occur separately and with a reasonable gap between departures. An assessment of such a case would need to ensure that any conditions or entitlement are not doubled.

### Allowances and entitlements

- 3.3.4 Employee couples on joint overseas long-term postings must jointly nominate the person who will be the accompanied employee for receipt of allowances. If the employee couple does not nominate which employee will receive Cost of Posting Allowance (COPA), it will be paid to the employee with the higher gross salary.
- 3.3.5 All allowances and entitlements are subject to the requirement that it is not possible to simultaneously receive an allowance at both the accompanied and unaccompanied rate at the same point in time.



- 3.3.6 If the family composition of any long-term posted officer changes and the change impacts on the rate of an allowance, the posted officer has an obligation to advise the Overseas Conditions team. Allowances will be adjusted and if an overpayment has occurred, arrangements will be made for recovery.
- 3.3.7 As applies to all postees, if an employee or their spouse/dependants are absent from post for more than 28 consecutive days, certain overseas allowances cease. In these situations, the posted officer has an obligation to advise the Overseas Conditions team of the absence, to ensure no overpayments occur. The exception to this is where the posted officer is absent while taking annual leave with allowances accrued at post.
- 3.3.8 The following table outlines each of the allowances and entitlements and their application to employee couples:

Allowance / Entitlement	Employee couple treatment
Transfer allowance	<b>Scenario1: Employee couple posted to same location.</b> Only one employee will receive transfer allowance at the appropriate rate according to family composition.
	<b>Scenario 2: Employee couple posted to different locations.</b> Unaccompanied transfer allowance is paid to each employee.
Outlay advance	Employee couples are entitled to a combined amount of \$15,000. This loan can be requested by one employee or can be shared by the couple.
Settling-In/Out allowances	Only one employee will receive meals supplements at each location. This will be paid for those members of the family unit settling in or out at that time.
Education assistance	One parent must nominate to receive assistance with education costs for a child remaining in full-time primary or secondary education in Australia.
Cost of posting allowance	<b>Scenario 1: Employee couple posted to same location.</b> Only one employee will receive the accompanied rate of COPA.
	<b>Scenario 2: Employee couple posted to different locations.</b> Unaccompanied COPA is paid to each employee.
	<b>Scenario 3: Employee couple where one person is recalled to duty.</b> Where a posted employee is accompanied and the accompanying partner is recalled to duty, either at the same location or to undertake a STM at another location. The posted employee will continue to receive the accompanied rate of COPA as STMs are ineligible for this payment.
Child allowance	Only one employee of an employee couple is entitled to receive child allowance.

Allowance / Entitlement	Employee couple treatment
Hardship dependant allowance	Only one employee of an employee couple is entitled to receive hardship dependant allowance.
Child reunion allowance	Only one employee of an employee couple is entitled to receive child reunion allowance.
Hardship post allowance	Only one employee of an employee couple is entitled to receive hardship post allowance, at the accompanied rate, if at the same post.  Employee couples at different posts are each entitled to the unaccompanied hardship post allowance applicable to their location.
Special location supplement (SLS)	<b>Scenario 1: Employee couple posted to same location.</b> Only one employee will receive the accompanied rate of SLS.
	<b>Scenario 2: Employee couple posted to different locations.</b> Each employee will receive the unaccompanied rate of SLS applicable to their location.
Attraction allowance	Attraction allowance is paid to all employees individually, if applicable to their location.
Additional annual leave	Additional annual leave, if applicable, is accrued individually by each employee, based on their dates at a hardship post.
Assisted leave fares (ALF)	Assisted leave fares accrue per employee and their accompanying dependants based on the period of their posting. An employee couple will together accrue the same number of leave fares as for a single posted officer family unit.
Reunion travel	Employee couples on concurrent/overlapping postings, at different posts, are entitled to two reunion fares (i.e. one each) per reunion year.

## 3.4 Dual-agency couples

### Introduction

- 3.4.1 Dual-agency employee couple means a DIBP employee and their APS-employee spouse employed by another Commonwealth department or agency both deployed to the same post.

## Allowances and Entitlements

3.4.2 If dual-agency employees would both be entitled to overseas conditions of service from their respective department or agency, the employee and their spouse must jointly nominate which employee will be eligible for certain allowances.

3.4.3 Nominees cannot change their status during the period of posting.

Allowances/Entitlements	Payments made to
Cost of Posting Allowance	Paid at the accompanied rate if the DIBP employee is the nominated employee
Hardship Post Allowance	
Cost of Living Adjustment	Paid individually, if applicable
Special Location Supplement	Paid at the accompanied rate if the DIBP employee is the nominated employee
Attraction Allowance	Paid individually, if applicable
Assisted leave fare entitlements	Paid to nominated employee based on the entitlement rate of the nominated agency's entitlements.
Child Allowance	
Child Reunion Allowance	
Hardship dependant Allowance	

3.4.4 For postings involving dual-agency employees, DIBP will negotiate a suitable joint financial arrangement with its counterpart Commonwealth agency to fund some of the following wide-ranging costs associated with a long-term posting for which only one entitlement per family unit will be paid:

- Uplift/removal of household goods (share)
- Worldwide multiple risks insurance cover
- Storage and insurance of household goods in Australia (share)
- Settling-in/settling-out allowance
- Travel costs to/from post (share)
- Travelling allowance/rest periods
- Assisted leave fares
- Reunion fares
- Compassionate travel (individual agency)
- Overseas health assistance (individual agency and agency providing accompanied allowances cater for children)
- Education assistance at post and in Australia
- Residential accommodation and utilities (share)
- Transfer allowance (if DIBP funded, includes financial counselling)
- Outlay advance
- Passports and visa requirements

- Pre-posting medical costs; and
- Other posting-related costs as agreed between each agency.

3.4.5 Where a specific allowance or benefit attracts an Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) liability that is payable by the employer, the Commonwealth agency which has agreed to fund this allowance or benefit under the terms of the dual-agency agreement will be responsible for funding the FBT liability.

## 3.5 Pre-posting preparations

### Pre-posting expenses

3.5.1 DIBP will meet the costs incurred by employees for a range of pre-posting expenses including medical and dental checks, vaccinations, passport and visa photographs and passport and visa application fees.

### Overseas Preparation Programme

- 3.5.2 The purpose of the Overseas Preparation Programme (OPP) is to ensure that employees appointed to roles in DIBP's offshore network have the most up to date information, as well as the skills and experience necessary to meet the demands of an overseas post. Attendance is a requirement of every posting.
- 3.5.3 The programme is a collaborative effort across DIBP and is coordinated by the Strategy and Core Skills section of the Learning and Development Branch.
- 3.5.4 All mandatory training must be completed prior to undertaking a posting.
- 3.5.5 More details on the OPP are available in My Learning on ourPeople by searching Overseas Preparation.

### Language training

3.5.6 DIBP supports language training for overseas posts where English is not widely spoken. For more information please refer to the DIBP [Language Training Policy](#)

### Pre-Posting Support

3.5.7 Employees undertaking a posting will be supported by the Overseas Conditions team email: [s. 47E\(d\)@border.gov.au](#). The team will provide advice and assistance throughout the pre-posting period. The team will contact employees approximately six months prior to departure to organise logistic briefings. These briefings will cover passports, visas, flights to post, relevant status, timing of settling-in etc.

## 3.6 Pre Post Health Assessments

### Use of Commonwealth Credit Card for health services

3.6.1 Employees being posted are required to obtain a Commonwealth Credit Card. Pre-travel medical services such as medical consultations are to be purchased with this credit card, using the post's onshore cost centre.

- 3.6.2 The costs of vaccinations required for a long-term posting are covered as an official expense. The cost of vaccinations for private travel is not covered.
- 3.6.3 The cost for dental consultations and x-rays are covered as an official expense.
- 3.6.4 Any other treatment is not covered.

## Medical and dental assessments

- 3.6.5 To be eligible for assistance with health care costs under Comcover's Statement of Cover while on a long-term posting, employees and their dependants must be declared medically fit by the Department's nominated health provider, The Travel Doctor, and have received a dental clearance from a dentist prior to departure from Australia. This includes any dependant remaining in Australia who is eligible for a reunion visit. The assessment may include blood grouping and testing for tuberculosis.
- 3.6.6 Employees and their dependants must disclose any pre-existing medical conditions to the provider.
- 3.6.7 Employees and their dependants must ensure vaccinations and any other preventative measures as recommended for a particular location are taken and remain current. Medical coverage may be denied if preventative measures are ignored. For example; an employee ignoring a recommendation to take anti-malarial medication who subsequently contracts malaria may be required to meet all costs of treatment.
- 3.6.8 An employee is unable to be certified fit to undertake a long-term posting unless they, and their dependants, have completed all medical requirements including any vaccinations.
- 3.6.9 Employees, and their dependants, can be requested to undertake a medical during a posting to ensure that they are medically fit to continue their posting.
- 3.6.10 It is recommended employees book appointments with DIBP's medical provider, The Travel Doctor, early (but no more than six months prior to posting) to allow time for follow up procedures if required. Employees and any dependants will need to take the Health Assessment Form and Consent for the Release of Medical Records and Reports to appointments, which will be provided by Overseas Workforce Management Section.
- 3.6.11 Employees can be examined by their choice of qualified dentist for dental clearance. All pre-existing dental problems must be brought to the attention of the examining dentist during this dental assessment. It is expected that existing problems will be identified and corrected as part of the dental clearance process.
- 3.6.12 Each person attending a dental clearance will need to take with them a Dental Clearance Form, which will be provided by Overseas Workforce Management Section.

## Outcome of medical assessment

- 3.6.13 As a result of a medical assessment, DIBPs' medical provider may certify an employee as not fit to undertake a posting. In this circumstance, the employee will be required to obtain medical clearance before they can be considered for an overseas posting.

## Treatment of pre-existing conditions or elective treatment

- 3.6.14 Overseas medical arrangements are not intended to provide cover for treatment of pre-existing conditions or forms of elective treatment. Employees contemplating medical procedures that are considered forms of elective treatment in Australia should contact the Overseas Conditions team to establish if official financial support is appropriate.
- 3.6.15 Elective treatment could include, but is not limited to, procedures such as capping of teeth, joint replacements and cosmetic surgery.

## Health insurance

- 3.6.16 For information about insurance, please see 4.19 - Health Care and Medical Insurance.

## 3.7 Outlay Advance

### Summary

- 3.7.1 An outlay advance is an interest-free loan available to employees about to undertake a long-term posting (including a cross-posting). It is designed to assist with the establishment and set-up costs at the post, for example:
- purchasing, registering and insuring a motor vehicle at post
  - purchasing special clothing required because of cultural or climatic conditions, and
  - payment of miscellaneous costs and expenses associated with setting up a new home at the post.
- 3.7.2 Employees may request an outlay advance up to a maximum of \$15,000. A request for an Outlay Advance is to be made on the appropriate form. This includes a declaration that the amount will be used for the sole purpose outlined above. [Outlay Advance Form](#)
- 3.7.3 The [Secretary](#) may adjust the maximum amount prescribed for outlay advance.

### Payment and Repayment

- 3.7.4 The advance can be paid to the employee up to six weeks prior to commencement at post or within the first six months of arrival at post.
- 3.7.5 The advance is recovered from the employee's salary within 12 months of the payment being made, in fortnightly instalments commencing the first payday after receipt of the funds.

### Repayment if posting cancelled

- 3.7.6 The balance of an outlay advance owing by an employee is immediately recoverable in full if an employee's posting does not eventuate, is cancelled, or is terminated by the employee or the Secretary.

## 3.8 Transfer allowance

### Entitlement

3.8.1 Transfer allowance covers a range of unspecified costs that may include:

- disposal of unconsumed food and beverages
- electrical conversion appliances
- travel equipment and suitcases
- cleaning supplies that have to be disposed of
- utilities disconnection/connection
- car valuations
- equipment allowance
- loss on sale of a motor vehicle
- financial counselling assistance; and
- compression stockings.

These costs cannot be charged to the Commonwealth Credit Card.

3.8.2 Transfer allowance will not be paid more than six weeks prior to the date a posting commences.

3.8.3 Employees who receive transfer allowance under this section are not entitled to also receive transfer allowance for the same transfer under the DIBP Enterprise Agreement onshore relocation provisions when commencing a term, or temporary transfer immediately on return to Australia after a posting.

### Eligibility

3.8.4 Transfer allowance is paid to employees when:

- departing for a long-term posting
- returning from a long-term posting
- being cross-posted for a further long-term posting; or
- being moved at departmental expense from one location to another at post (except if the move is within the same residential compound).

3.8.5 Unaccompanied transfer allowance will apply if an employee's spouse does not accompany the employee on travel to a post. An employee may be paid the balance of transfer allowance owing (i.e. the difference between the unaccompanied and accompanied entitlement) if the employee's spouse later joins them at post.

### Transfer allowance rates

3.8.6 An employee is paid transfer allowance in accordance with [Schedule Two](#).

### Annual adjustment tax treatment

3.8.7 The [Secretary](#) may adjust the rates of transfer allowance on 1 July each year to reflect movements in the Consumer Price Index. Transfer allowance is not subject to fringe benefits tax and is treated as assessable income subject to PAYG withholding tax.

## Repayment if posting cancelled

- 3.8.8 If an employee's posting is cancelled or does not eventuate for either personal or operational reasons and the employee's household goods have not been uplifted at the time the posting is cancelled, the employee must repay the full amount of transfer allowance received less any amount determined by the Secretary to have been reasonably expended by the employee.

## 3.9 Uplift and Storage of Household Goods

### Uplift and storage of household goods

- 3.9.1 DIBP will provide employees with one uplift of household goods to and from post (or between posts if cross posted) and one into storage, as part of a long-term posting.
- 3.9.2 If an employee or their dependants have household goods uplifted from Australia or post at different times, and the cost is greater than if all goods had been uplifted at one time, the employee is to pay for the extra costs incurred. In exceptional circumstances the Secretary may decide that it is reasonable for an uplift to be done at more than one time with no employee contribution required.
- 3.9.3 Household goods are personal and household effects; furniture and property used, or intended to be used, in the operation of a home. Household goods exclude items such as perishable foodstuff, motorised vehicles, trailers, boats, caravans, pets, hazardous, prohibited or dangerous items and excessively heavy or large items.
- 3.9.4 Allied Pickfords is DIBP's current service provider for uplift and storage services.

### Storage in Australia

- 3.9.5 DIBP will meet the cost of storing an employee's and their accompanying dependants' household goods that are not removed overseas with Allied Pickfords in Australia for the duration of the employee's posting, plus three months from the last day of duty at post.
- 3.9.6 If the employee wishes to access, remove or add items to the consignment stored for the term of a posting, the employee will need to make their own arrangements with Allied Pickfords and the cost of any handling or access charges will not be covered by DIBP. In exceptional circumstances the Secretary may approve access to stored items with no officer contribution required.

### Volume entitlements to and from post

- 3.9.7 The following table specifies the cubic metre limits by family composition for employees to and from post. Cubic metre volume limits refer to packed amounts. Further advice will be given by the Allied Pickfords consultant at a pre-pack briefing.



- 3.9.8 The external packaging is part of the volume allowance.

Ordinary period of posting and extensions					
Family composition	1	2	3	4	5
Cubic metre volume to Post	12	15	17	19	21
Cubic metre volume on RTA	15	19	21	24	26

*(inclusive of external packaging)*

- 3.9.9 The table below specifies the cubic metre limits by family composition for employees proceeding on cross-postings.

Cross-postings					
Family composition	1	2	3	4	5
Cubic metre volume post to post	15	19	21	24	26
Cubic metre volume on Return to Australia	19	23	27	30	33

*(inclusive of external packaging)*

- 3.9.10 When family size is greater than five persons, volume limits increase by two cubic meters for each additional dependant.
- 3.9.11 Household goods that exceed the allowable volume limit will be uplifted at the employee's expense. Employee contributions towards removal of additional household goods must be paid prior to departure. The [Secretary](#) may vary a volume limit where exceptional circumstances have resulted in an employee exceeding their prescribed volume limit.

## Dispatch arrangements

- 3.9.12 Employees departing Australia, or proceeding on cross-posting, will normally have their household goods sent by air freight. If an employee has an airfreight entitlement and chooses to send their household goods by sea freight, their volume entitlement will remain unchanged and cannot be increased.

## Freight restrictions

- 3.9.13 The dispatch of hazardous, explosive or combustible items is prohibited. It is an employee's responsibility to ensure that they do not transport prohibited or dangerous items. Further details are available on the [Civil Aviation Safety Authority website](#).

- 3.9.14 The Civil Aviation Safety Authority specifies restrictions on what may be transported by aircraft. These include:
- furniture items (including pianos) larger than 1.52mx1.01mx1.62m
  - white goods such as washing machines, dryers and refrigerators
  - boats, canoes and windsurfers
  - trailers
  - heavy gymnasium equipment
  - lawn mowers; and
  - paint, aerosol cans, lighter fuel, etc.

## Employee responsibilities

- 3.9.15 Overseas removals may include alcohol subject to Australian Customs regulations and those of the country of posting. Employees are responsible for any duty payable on alcohol.
- 3.9.16 DIBP will meet the storage costs but will not accept responsibility for the cost of special or extra crating and packaging for valuable art works, wine cellar contents, rare, antique or vintage items and the like that are to be uplifted. Employees are personally responsible for ensuring such items are adequately insured, crated and packaged to minimise loss or damage during uplift and storage.

## Inventories

- 3.9.17 For valuation purposes and the employee's own protection, separate inventories should be prepared for household goods being uplifted overseas and for household goods being stored in Australia.
- 3.9.18 The level of detail on each item listed in the inventory should be sufficient to fully describe the item, its condition and replacement value if compensation is sought due to loss or damage. DIBP does not require a copy of inventories.
- 3.9.19 Copies of inventories must be provided to the removalist organising the uplift, and the insurance company (if a different company) prior to uplift. Employees are responsible for retaining a personal copy of, and regularly updating, their inventories.

## Domestic insurance cover for household goods

- 3.9.20 DIBP will meet reasonable insurance costs for household goods and personal effects in storage in Australia up to a maximum consignment value of AUD100,000.
- 3.9.21 The provider for this service is Allied Pickfords. The Overseas Conditions team can provide the appropriate insurance application forms. Employees are responsible for ensuring these forms are accurately completed and submitted prior to the uplift of the employee's household goods. The effective date for the insurance is the date of uplift.
- 3.9.22 DIBP will continue to meet the costs for insuring the employee's goods stored in Australia for up to three months following the cessation date at post. After this date the employee is responsible for the insurance of their goods.

## Insurance cover for household goods sent to post

- 3.9.23 DIBP will meet costs for the insurance coverage of goods going to post up to a maximum consignment value of AUD100,000.
- 3.9.24 The two companies, Allied Pickfords and Marsh have been identified as companies that provide worldwide insurance cover for goods going to overseas post. Comprehensive information regarding these insurance brokers is provided to employees. Employees are responsible for reading all company information and decide which insurance broker best suits their needs. Employees need to contact the company of their choice to arrange for a policy, and should ensure their policy is kept up to date while at post. The effective date is the date of uplift.
- 3.9.25 Employees must familiarize themselves with their individual policies and the coverage they provide.

## Exceeding Insurance Limits

- 3.9.26 Employees are required to personally pay for any additional insurance that may be required to adequately cover their household goods if the maximum values are exceeded.

## Damage to personal goods

- 3.9.27 If any personal goods are damaged, employees will need to contact the removal company, storage company, or insurance company immediately to make a claim. DIBP will not act on an employee's behalf in these matters.

## Boarding school

- 3.9.28 Employees are personally responsible for arranging appropriate insurance cover for a child's personal effects at boarding school in Australia.

## Leave for packing, uplift and removal

- 3.9.29 Employees on long-term posting are entitled to up to three days Miscellaneous Leave with Pay (Exceptional Circumstances) for packing, uplift and removal of their household goods (including when moving residence at post or cross-posting). This entitlement allows two days for packing and one day for house cleaning. If additional days are required, employees must apply for personal leave or annual leave. This entitlement does not extend to accompanying partners who are APS employees.
- 3.9.30 Miscellaneous Leave with Pay (Exceptional Circumstances) must be entered into easySAP for the time of packing/unpacking household goods. Employees who choose to take annual leave or unpaid leave for this purpose will not have their leave re-credited or receive additional remuneration.

## 3.10 Settling-out in Australia

### Intention

- 3.10.1 The intention of settling-in and settling-out provisions is to assist with the additional costs for meals faced by employees and their eligible dependants.

### Entitlement

- 3.10.2 When an employee moves out of their home (due to uplift of effects, etc.) they will be entitled to one settling-out period of up to three days. The settling-out period in Australia includes:
- an entitlement to temporary accommodation at official expense; and
  - a meals supplement payment.
- 3.10.3 Settling-out entitlements at official expense will be provided only once during each settling-in/out occasion. Where employees opt to travel separately to their dependants and use their settling-in/out entitlement, the dependants will not be eligible for further settling in/out assistance with accommodation. If the employee does not utilise their accommodation entitlement, their dependants will be eligible for settling-in/out accommodation assistance at official expense.
- 3.10.4 The Secretary may extend a settling-out period in exceptional circumstances and determine an appropriate meals supplement for the extended period.

### Temporary Accommodation

- 3.10.5 The standard of temporary accommodation should include cooking facilities (sufficient to prepare a cooked meal) and be appropriate having regard to the composition of the employee's family and the availability of suitable accommodation.
- 3.10.6 Employees electing to stay in private accommodation (i.e. with friends or relatives) during a settling-in/settling-out period will be eligible to receive a private accommodation payment.

### Meals Supplement

- 3.10.7 During a settling out period, the employee and accompanying dependants will be paid a meal allowance equivalent to the daily meals rate for Canberra prescribed in the DIBP Enterprise Agreement. Dependants less than 12 years of age will be entitled to half the daily meals rate for Canberra.

### Incidental allowance is not paid

- 3.10.8 There is no entitlement for employees to receive an incidental allowance during settling-in/settling-out either at post or in Australia under the provisions of this section.

## 3.11 Travel to Post

### Introduction

- 3.11.1 DIBP will pay the travel costs for the posted officer and any eligible dependants. Travel arrangements for travel from Australia to post (fares, visas, passports, etc.) are administered by the Overseas Conditions team.

### Commonwealth Credit Card use

- 3.11.2 Employees travelling internationally on official business must hold a DIBP Commonwealth Credit Card. All travel-related costs, such as hotel accommodation, car hire costs, etc. are to be purchased using the Commonwealth Credit Card.

### Official passports

- 3.11.3 As representatives of DIBP undertaking official government business overseas, all employees on a posting must travel on a diplomatic or official passport. The cost of passports will be charged to the cost centre funding the travel. Passports for posted officers and their dependants are arranged by the Overseas Condition team. Dependent children accompanying an employee to post will travel on endorsed personal passports.

### Visas

- 3.11.4 Travel on diplomatic passports, official passports or dependants' passports containing an observation is governed by different visa requirements to those applying to personal travel. Visas are required for postings to most countries. The cost of visas will be charged to the onshore post cost centre.
- 3.11.5 Visas for employees going on long term postings are arranged by the Overseas Conditions team.

### Travel advisories

- 3.11.6 Employees undertaking international travel also need to consult DFAT Travel Advisories prior to undertaking the travel. As a minimum, employees intending to travel on official business are expected to refer to recommendations made in the travel advisories for the countries to be visited. Where travel advisories flag security or personal safety concerns, employees should consult Post Security Managers at the relevant post where they are, or will be, based and, if appropriate, at posts with consular responsibility for countries to be visited prior to arranging and proceeding with travel plans. Such consultations are mandatory when travel advisories recommend against travel to the locations to be visited.  
See: [www.smarttraveller.gov.au](http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au)

### Approval of travel

- 3.11.7 International travel must be approved in accordance with [Financial Management Directives](#). The Overseas Conditions team will obtain the necessary approval relating to travel to post. The normal method of travel is by air.

## Air Travel

- 3.11.8 Travel to and from post will be by the International Best Fare (IBF), as set out in Department of Finance Resource Management Guide No. 405. Value for money is the overarching consideration when booking flights for international travel, taking into consideration the practical business needs of the traveller and overall cost of the trip. It is not intended that employees be required to use an airline where there are reasonable grounds for concerns over safety or security.
- 3.11.9 Outward air travel bookings from Australia are arranged through by the Overseas Conditions team.

## Class of Air Travel

- 3.11.10 An employee is entitled to international air travel in accordance with the following provisions:
- Where three classes of travel are provided on the aircraft, the employee travels at the intermediate class, usually business class or its equivalent.
  - Where there are no intermediate or business classes the ordinary standard of travel is economy class.
  - Where business class or an equivalent option is not available for international travel, the Secretary may consider approving an alternate (non-direct) route, particularly where the travel is in excess of eight hours.
- 3.11.11 Australian domestic sectors and in-country sectors used in conjunction with an international itinerary may be at the same standard of travel if a through ticket is purchased.
- 3.11.12 If an employee travels at a lower standard of travel than prescribed, no credit is to be provided either in cash or as an offset, against higher expenditure on travel in another sector. Similarly, employees are not able to voluntarily downgrade the class of travel to take account of wider travel options or to purchase additional tickets for non-official travel.

## Train travel

- 3.11.13 If an employee is required to travel by train when undertaking official business, the ordinary standard of travel is intermediate class. The Secretary may approve another class of travel prior to the travel taking place.

## Travel costs of dependants

- 3.11.14 DIBP will pay the travel costs of eligible dependants to the same extent as a posted employee, subject to the following conditions:
- travel by a spouse and dependants will not precede that of the employee's travel to post
  - a spouse and accompanying dependants travelling separately to the employee will be entitled to business class air fares using the IBF, without rest days at official expense; and

- dependants not accompanying an employee or the employee's spouse will be entitled to economy class air fares, without rest days, at official expense.
- 3.11.15 Baby baskets will normally be provided for infants that are new born or not mobile. DIBP will pay for airline seating for infants that are mobile or sitting.
- 3.11.16 All associated costs with the transportation of pets, or the boarding of animals in Australia, will not be covered by DIBP, and are the personal responsibility of the employee.

### Alternate routes

- 3.11.17 Travel to and from a posting must meet the sole purpose of conveying employees and dependants to and from post in a timely manner. If employees choose to travel by other than the IBF:
- employees must meet any travel costs in excess of the business class fare using the IBF
  - rest days and travel allowance will be applicable based on the IBF entitlement
  - any costs incurred additional to those which would be incurred based on the IBF (additional visas, extra travel insurance, etc.) are the personal responsibility of the employee, and must be paid prior to travel; and
  - where Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) is incurred in respect of a deviation from direct travel (including allowed rest days) using the IBF, the FBT liability for the entire trip (not just the deviation) will be at the employee's personal expense unless the Secretary agrees to meet this liability prior to the travel occurring.

### Promotions and competitions

- 3.11.18 Employees travelling on official business are not permitted to participate in promotions or competitions conducted by external providers.

### Unused tickets

- 3.11.19 All unused tickets or portions of unused tickets must be returned to the Travel Management Company (TMC) for a refund. Lost or stolen tickets must be reported promptly to the TMC to obtain the maximum refund. Under no circumstances can unused tickets purchased by DIBP be used for personal travel.

### Travel out of hours

- 3.11.20 Employees undertaking international business travel may not access flex time or overtime for periods of travel that fall outside normal working hours.

### Frequent flyer points

- 3.11.21 Government employees should not accrue Frequent Flyer Points or Loyalty Reward Points for official business travel. Bookings through DIBP's travel management company do not earn points.

## Excess baggage

- 3.11.22 The standard baggage limit for business class travellers is 30kg on international flights and 20kg on domestic flights. Where employees and their eligible dependant's send their personal effects by sea freight to a long-term posting (including a cross-posting), DIBP will meet the cost of:
- an additional 15kg of excess baggage for each person where the airline calculates excess baggage by kilograms; or
  - an additional piece of luggage for each person where the airline charge is based on pieces of luggage.
- 3.11.23 This is to compensate for the cost of carrying surplus luggage on the flight to post. The cost of the excess baggage may be charged to a Commonwealth Credit Card.
- 3.11.24 Any freight, customs, quarantine, delivery, storage or other charges incurred are a personal expense.
- 3.11.25 The excess baggage provisions do not extend to household pets.
- 3.11.26 Employees may convert their 15kg excess baggage entitlement to the equivalent value for unaccompanied air freight. Employees must provide an accurate customs declaration and ensure prohibited goods are not imported.
- 3.11.27 The Secretary may approve additional excess baggage entitlement in exceptional circumstances.

## Travel Insurance

- 3.11.28 International travel insurance for official purposes is provided under DIBP's Comcover Insurance Policy. Employees are responsible for private travel and medical insurance when travelling privately, to meet unforeseen circumstances. This includes any period of annual leave *en route* to post.

## 3.12 Rest Periods to Post

### Introduction

- 3.12.1 Rest periods are intended to provide recuperation after lengthy overseas travel. A rest period is defined as a period of sufficient duration to enable overnight rest, but not longer than 24 hours.

### Entitlement

- 3.12.2 The numbers of rest periods to post are detailed in Schedule Two
- 3.12.3 A rest period is effective from the time the traveller disembarks the aircraft at a scheduled stopover in the journey or at the final destination. The actual length of a rest period may vary slightly from the prescribed rest period entitlement and will depend on airline schedules and time of arrival and departure at the destination.
- 3.12.4 A single rest period entitlement is based on travel time up to twelve hours travel time greater than six hours. Travel time over twelve hours attracts two rest periods. Travel times commence at check-in and cease at disembarkation.



- 3.12.5 Where a rest period taken at the post location ceases outside of normal working hours, the employee should present for work at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 3.12.6 If an employee has one rest period entitlement, it must be taken at the final destination. If the employee has two rest period entitlements, one may be taken *en route* and one day at the final destination, or both days may be taken at the final destination.

### Rest period – employee on duty

- 3.12.7 An employee is taken to be on duty during any approved rest period that falls within normal working hours. A rest period taken outside normal working hours does not entitle an employee to remuneration or time off in lieu. Rest periods that fall on a weekend or a public holiday are rest days if the employee is not required to work on those days.

### Effect of stopover on a rest period

- 3.12.8 If an employee has an unavoidable stopover during international travel, they are not entitled to a rest period unless the Secretary is satisfied that the stopover did not constitute the equivalent of a rest period for the employee. An employee cannot nominate a stopover at a location other than the scheduled stopover location.

### Travel Allowance for Postings

- 3.12.9 In addition to the cost of air travel, accommodation and official transport, an employee travelling to a long-term posting will be paid travel allowance appropriate to their classification and location during travel to post, including any approved rest period or stopover. Travel allowance comprises a payment for the cost of meals and incidental expenses.
- 3.12.10 The Global Travel Allowance rates provided annually by Employment Conditions Abroad (ECA) will apply. Travel allowance rates applicable to domestic travel are available on IMMI<sup>net</sup>: Travel Allowance Rates.
- 3.12.11 If an employee does not travel by the most logical direct route, the travel allowance rates will be those that would have applied had the rest period been taken during travel using the International Best Fare (IBF) on the most logical direct route.
- 3.12.12 When rest days are taken on arrival at the employee's destination, employees are not entitled to receive both travel allowance and settling-in/out allowance for the rest days.

## END OF PART THREE

## 4. Part Four – Long-Term Postings – At post

### 4.1 Introduction

#### Ordinary period of Long Term Posting

- 4.1.1 The ordinary period of posting is three years or a period set by the Secretary in respect of a post.

#### Employee decision to return from a hardship posting after two years

- 4.1.2 Should an employee posted to a location with a hardship rating of category D, E or F, decide during the first year of their posting that they wish to complete only two years instead of three for professional or personal reasons, they can apply for an early return. The employee should advise the Overseas Network Management Section, through the Regional Director, of their request by the end of their first year at post. Early return will occur without prejudice unless a Regional Director supports the early return in the employee's performance appraisal (either PDA or End of Post Report) as a result of unsatisfactory performance.

#### Unforeseen changes to posting

- 4.1.3 Employees undertaking long-term postings should understand that while a period is prescribed for each posting, circumstances (operational or personal) may arise that could result in a change to the ordinary period of posting.

## 4.2 Settling-in at post

### Introduction

- 4.2.1 The purpose of the settling-in provisions at post is to assist with the additional costs for meals faced by employees and their eligible dependants (if any) who are obliged to temporarily reside in a hotel or other commercial accommodation, during a posting.

#### Settling-in period at post

- 4.2.2 An employee's settling-in period at post begins on the first day of the employee's period of posting and ends on whichever is the earlier of:
- the day suitable permanent residential accommodation becomes available at the post, with access to goods or settling in kit; or
  - six weeks after the day the employee's period of posting begins.
- 4.2.3 If an employee is unable to obtain suitable permanent residential accommodation within the settling-in period, the Secretary may extend the settling-in period to allow the employee more time to obtain suitable accommodation.

## Accommodation

- 4.2.4 The period of settling-in should be kept to a minimum and, where possible, the standard of accommodation should include cooking facilities (sufficient to prepare a cooked meal) and be appropriate having regard to the composition of the employee's family and the availability of suitable accommodation.

## Amount of meal allowance paid overseas

- 4.2.5 If an employee and their dependants are authorised to live in a hotel or other accommodation without cooking facilities during a settling-in period at post, for each full day the employee is entitled to:
- two-thirds of the meal allowance specified for the post for the employee and any dependant 12 years of age or older; and
  - for each dependant who is less than 12 years of age, two-thirds of the amount specified above for employees and dependants 12 years or older.

## Part-day of meals supplement paid overseas

- 4.2.6 On the first and last days of a settling-in or settling-out period at a post, the employee's and their dependant's meal allowance is set out in the following table.

Table – Meal rate for day of arrival or departure		
Time of arrival or departure	% of rate for day of arrival	% of rate for day of departure
Before 07:00	100	Nil
07:00 – 13:00	75	25
13:01 – 19:00	50	50
After 19:00	Nil	100

## Meals supplement not payable overseas in certain circumstances

- 4.2.7 An employee and dependants are not entitled to a meals supplement in the following cases:
- If meals are provided to the employee and/or a dependant, or are otherwise paid for by the Australian Government (e.g. receiving travel allowance).
  - During a period of recreation leave taken by the employee, including on weekends and public holidays adjacent to that recreation leave.
  - While the employee occupies accommodation with facilities and utensils sufficient to allow the employee to prepare a cooked meal (e.g. serviced apartment).

## Settling-in provisions other than on arrival at post

- 4.2.8 If an employee's permanent accommodation becomes unavailable or unfit for occupation during their posting, or the employee is directed to live in temporary

accommodation without adequate cooking facilities, the employee is entitled to a meals supplement as if the employee began settling-in on the day on which they depart their permanent accommodation.

### Incidental allowance is not paid

- 4.2.9 There is no entitlement for employees to receive an incidental allowance during settling-in at post under the provisions of this section.

## 4.3 Residential accommodation

### Introduction

- 4.3.1 This section sets out the policy and conditions relating to the provision of residential accommodation at overseas locations for employees and their dependants on long-term posting. Allowances and other conditions provided to employees on long-term posting are based on housing and utilities being provided to A-based employees at departmental expense. Information relating to overseas accommodation, standards, rental properties and furnishings are available from the leasing team, in the Property Section; <sup>s. 47E(d)</sup> [REDACTED] @border.gov.au.

### Provision of residential accommodation

- 4.3.2 DIBP will arrange to make available to an employee on a long-term posting a furnished house or other dwelling in reasonable proximity to the employee's workplace, that is suitable as a residence for the employee and any dependants.
- 4.3.3 If the former postee's accommodation is not suitable due to family composition, more suitable accommodation will be sourced.
- 4.3.4 Should an employee wish to change accommodation during the posting a business case will need to be prepared and forwarded via the Regional Director to the Leasing Team in Property for consideration and approval.

### Pets

- 4.3.5 If an employee wishes to take a pet on posting, formal approval must be obtained from the Director of Property in conjunction with DFAT at Post. The employee will be required to complete an undertaking that any costs/damage associated with transporting and accommodating the pet for the duration of the posting, will be borne by the employee. The Leasing Team will seek approval from the Lessor of the proposed accommodation to allow the employee to keep the pet at the residence and this will need to be incorporated into the lease document.

### Leases on behalf of the Australian Government

- 4.3.6 If an employee is directed to seek residential accommodation that is suitable for leasing on behalf of the Australian Government, the Secretary may authorise reimbursement of reasonable costs incurred by the employee in searching for, securing and retaining the accommodation.

## Costs incurred under terms of occupancy

- 4.3.7 If an employee is required to pay property taxes or make other payments because of the agreement entered into by the Australian Government for a dwelling occupied by the employee, they are entitled to be reimbursed for the costs equal to the amount expended by the employee.

## Moving residence at post

- 4.3.8 If an employee is required to move from one residence to another at post as a result of departmental requirements, the employee is entitled to have their possessions moved at departmental expense. The employee is also entitled to receive Transfer allowance for moving residence at post. If a move is self-initiated, the removal costs will be a personal expense and no Transfer allowance will be provided.

## Utilities

- 4.3.9 Employees on long-term posting overseas who are living in accommodation provided by DIBP and who incur costs for utilities, are entitled to be reimbursed for the cost of those utilities.
- 4.3.10 If an employee fails to exercise due care and economy in the use of utilities and as a result additional costs are incurred, the Secretary may reduce the amount the employee is entitled to be reimbursed, or require the employee to make a contribution towards the cost of utilities.

## Telephones in private residences

- 4.3.11 DIBP A-based staff on long-term posting are entitled to a semi-official phone (i.e. an official phone in their private residence), except where they have been issued with a mobile phone for work purposes. DIBP will meet the following costs for a semi-official telephone:
- telephone service connection and installation costs
  - rental costs on one handset
  - business/official call costs; and
  - a proportion of local personal/private calls (particularly where local calls are timed).
- 4.3.12 DIBP A-based employees must contribute towards the cost of private and personal local calls plus pay for any private international and long distance calls made from their semi-official telephone.
- 4.3.13 The rebate levels for local calls must be established locally having regard to local post practice. Rebate levels would normally be determined by a Regional Director or Post Manager having regard to DFAT's local practices and what is considered fair and reasonable for the particular locality.

## Mobile phones

- 4.3.14 DIBP A-based staff issued with a mobile phone for work purposes must contribute towards the cost all personal use made from the mobile phone, including calls, texts and data usage.

## Drinking Water

- 4.3.15 In determining the quality of the drinking water supply at post, advice will be obtained from DFAT or Austrade at Post. When the water is determined 'not potable' procedures to assist with providing potable drinking water will be subject to post arrangements and adjustments.

## Maintaining a garden or swimming pool

- 4.3.16 When employees are required to maintain a garden or swimming pool as part of a lease, reasonable costs as determined by the relevant Regional Director will be reimbursed from post or regional budgets. Any approval of expenditure at post in relation to garden or swimming pool maintenance, is to be charged to the 'Operating Costs' Cost Centre of the post and not the Property Cost Centre.
- 4.3.17 An employee is not entitled to be reimbursed for costs incurred for swimming pool heating.

## Post-specific assistance

- 4.3.18 Other post specific assistance reimbursements may be considered by the [Secretary](#) on a case by case basis. These will usually be notified as part of a DFAT post-specific policy and will be funded from the post budget.
- 4.3.19 This does not include Household Maintenance and Assistance, consideration of which has been incorporated in the Cost of Post Allowance under DIBP's OCOS Manual.

## 4.4 Attendance

### Hours of duty

- 4.4.1 The hours of duty for employees on long term posting are determined by a Regional Director or Post Manager and will generally coincide with the hours of duty for the overseas mission as determined by a Head of Mission or Head of Post.

### Limited access to certain leave

- 4.4.2 Periods of long or extended leave such as miscellaneous leave without pay, long service leave, leave at half pay, etc. will be determined according to post operating requirements.

### Leave for unpacking

- 4.4.3 Employees are entitled to two days Miscellaneous Leave with Pay (Exceptional Circumstances) at their destination for unpacking their household goods. If additional days are required, employees must apply for personal leave or annual leave.
- 4.4.4 Miscellaneous Leave with Pay (Exceptional Circumstances) must be used at the time of packing/unpacking household goods. Employees who choose to take annual leave or unpaid leave for this purpose will not have their leave re-credited or receive additional remuneration

## Flextime and working hours

- 4.4.5 Flextime, travel out of hours, home-based work and variable working hours provisions specified in the DIBP Enterprise Agreement are not available to employees on long-term posting.

## Public holidays

- 4.4.6 For employees on long-term posting, a public holiday is a day or part of a day observed as a public holiday at the Embassy, High Commission or Consulate where the employee is posted. Public holidays usually comprise a combination of local and Australian holidays and are determined by the relevant Head of Mission/Head of Post.

## Time off in lieu (TOIL)

- 4.4.7 Employees on long-term posting may, at the discretion of a Regional Director or Post Manager, access TOIL having regard to operational requirements and the additional or excessive hours worked by the employee over a sustained period. Employees will not be recompensed for excessive hours worked on a one-for-one basis. Employees on TOIL are considered to be on leave and applications for TOIL should be entered into and approved in easySAP.

## Studies assistance and study leave

- 4.4.8 The studies assistance and study leave provisions of the DIBP Enterprise Agreement are not available to employees while on a long-term posting or on leave without pay to accompany an employee on a long-term posting.

## 4.5 Vehicle allowance and employee contributions

### Vehicle allowance

- 4.5.1 If the Secretary authorises an employee to use a motor vehicle owned or hired by the employee for official purposes, the employee is entitled to Vehicle Allowance for a journey that the employee makes under that authority. Travel between an employee's residence and headquarters is not included in any authorised journey.
- 4.5.2 For each kilometre (km) of an authorised journey, an employee is entitled to an amount calculated in accordance with the formula  $A \times B \times (C/100)$ , where:
- A = the Motor Vehicle Allowance (MVA) rate specified in the DIBP Enterprise Agreement,
  - B = the period exchange rate; and
  - C = the Employment Conditions Abroad (ECA) Cost of Living (COL) post index.

**Note:** The ECA Post Index is the index used for the payday prior to the commencement of travel. If the ECA Post Index is less than 100.0 then an index of 100.0 is used.

- 4.5.3 An employee who is entitled to vehicle allowance is entitled to be reimbursed for the reasonable cost of ferries, tolls and garage accommodation that the employee incurs during an authorised journey.

### Allowance reduced in certain circumstances

- 4.5.4 The amount of allowances payable for an authorised journey is the lesser of:
- The sum of the vehicle allowance and travelling allowance payable to the employee for the journey, or
  - The sum of the cost of the employee's fares by means of commercial transport that the Secretary would ordinarily authorise for the journey and the amount of travelling allowance payable to the employee if the journey were by that means of transport.

### Hire of official vehicles for casual short-term private use

- 4.5.5 The Secretary may authorise the private use of an official vehicle subject to conditions and guidelines imposed by post administration on the use of official vehicles for private use. Home garaging of an official vehicle is considered to be private use.
- 4.5.6 If an employee hires an official vehicle at post for private use, they will be responsible for paying DIBP an amount per kilometre travelled calculated in accordance with the formula  $A \times B \times (C/100)$ , where:
- A = the MVA rate specified in the DIBP Enterprise Agreement;
  - B = the period exchange rate; and
  - C = the ECA COL post index.
- Note:** The ECA Post Index is the index used for the payday prior to the commencement of travel. If the ECA Post Index is less than 100.0 then an index of 100.0 is used.
- 4.5.7 If an official vehicle is hired with a driver, the employee must pay to DIBP the cost of any overtime or additional salary that is payable to the driver arising from the vehicle hire. This condition does not apply if the Secretary is satisfied that an employee or dependant were prevented from driving the vehicle during the period of hire by religious custom or law or, that such driving would be an unacceptable risk to the personal safety of the employee or dependant.

### Excess commuting costs (private vehicle)

- 4.5.8 An employee who uses a motor vehicle owned or hired by the employee to travel between their residence and place of employment is entitled to be paid vehicle allowance (calculated by the same method outlined in this manual) for travel that exceeds 30kms per day.
- 4.5.9 Where an employee travels between their residence and place of employment, partly by public transport and partly by private motor vehicle, the employee is taken to have travelled the entire journey by public transport.
- 4.5.10 An employee is entitled to be reimbursed or paid an allowance only for travel by the most direct available route.



- 4.5.11 An employee is not entitled to be reimbursed or paid an allowance if they choose to live in a suitable residence that is more than 30 kms away and a residence within 30 kms is available.

### Continuous full-time private use of official vehicles

- 4.5.12 The Secretary may authorise the hire of an official vehicle for continuous full time private use for periods of 28 days or more subject to any conditions and guidelines imposed by post administration on the private use of official vehicles.
- 4.5.13 If an employee hires an official vehicle at post for continuous private use, they will be responsible for paying DIBP an amount for each kilometre travelled by the vehicle during the period of hire calculated in accordance with the formula  $A \times B \times (C/365)$ , where:
- A = the rate of vehicle allowance calculated in accordance with paragraph 4.5.2.
  - B = average annual kilometres travelled, and
  - C = number of days in the period for which the vehicle was allocated.
- 4.5.14 For continuous private use of an official vehicle for 28 days or more, an employee will pay DIBP the taxable value of the car fringe benefit that accrues from the day the private use commenced.
- 4.5.15 If the period of authorised continuous full-time private use of an official vehicle is less than 28 days, the employee's personal contribution will be calculated in accordance with the formula used in clause 4.5.13 above. In such cases, any car fringe benefit tax incurred will not be recovered from an employee.

### SES employees and official vehicles

- 4.5.16 The provisions set out in clause 4.5.12 apply to SES employees on long-term posting who have cashed out their Executive Vehicle Scheme (EVS) entitlement unless alternative provisions are specified in the SES employee's work place agreement.

## 4.6 Allowances – General

### Allowances Summary

- 4.6.1 The following allowances may apply to employees on a long-term posting. Employees on a dual posting should refer to [Employee Couples](#) for further details on how payment of these allowances will be determined. Further information for allowances and entitlements for hardship postings can be found at [Hardship Post Allowances](#).

Allowance	Eligibility
<b>Overseas Living Allowances</b>	
Cost of Posting Allowance (COPA)	Employees on long-term posting. Employees on short-term missions more than 6 months may be eligible.
Cost of Living Allowance (COLA)	Paid to employees on long term posting where the Employment Conditions Abroad (ECA) index indicates that the cost of living at post is higher than in Canberra.
<b>Dependant and Family Allowances (non-Hardship)</b>	
Child Allowance	Paid to employees with a recognised dependent child at post
Child Reunion Allowance	Paid to employees with a recognised dependent child in Australia
Unaccompanied Parent Allowance	Paid to an unaccompanied parent with a recognised dependent child, up to the age of 18, at post
<b>Role Specific Allowances</b>	
Principal Migration Officer Liaison Allowance	Employees on long-term posting in Principal Migration Officer (Airline Liaison) roles at specific locations.

### Advice of changed circumstances

- 4.6.2 If an employee's personal/family circumstances change for any reason (e.g. changed marital status, spouse departs post, education status of dependants, dependants no longer dependent, etc.) that might affect the level of overseas allowances or entitlements during the employee's long term posting, written advice must be provided to the Overseas Conditions mailbox within 14 days of the change in circumstances occurring, to ensure correct payment of allowances.

## 4.7 Overseas Living Allowances

### Overseas Living Allowances

- 4.7.1 An employee is entitled to Cost of Posting Allowance (COPA) and Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) from the day they start duty at post until the last day of duty at post, except when:
- not entitled to salary
  - on Long Service Leave
  - absent from post, unless:
    - on Annual Leave that was accrued during the current period of posting
    - on paid leave (other than Annual Leave) for less than 28 days
    - absent from post for less than 28 days
    - dependants continue to live at the post, or
    - the absence is the result of an emergency evacuation directed by the Minister.
- 4.7.2 There may be exceptional circumstances where, at the Secretary's discretion, continuing payment of overseas living allowances may not be affected. Such a situation could occur where workload is moved from one overseas location to another and employees must accompany the workload and continue processing at the new overseas location.
- 4.7.3 Annual Leave utilised at post which is in excess of the annual leave accrual at post will result in an adjustment to the employee's overseas living allowances.

### Cost of Posting Allowance (COPA)

- 4.7.4 COPA compensates employees for the wider range of impacts a posting has on their lives. It serves as an incentive for overseas service and provides a buffer to even out the effects of costs which may not be picked up by COLA. The amount of COPA is based on a percentage of gross salary and will vary depending on whether an employee is unaccompanied or accompanied.
- 4.7.5 COPA is calculated as a percentage of an employee's gross salary, and varies depending on whether the employee is accompanied or unaccompanied. The formula for calculating COPA is subject to a cap, after which the percentage applied to the gross salary is halved for each dollar above the ceiling. See Schedule Two for calculations.
- 4.7.6 Accompanied rates of COPA are payable to an employee whose spouse resides continuously with the employee and makes the post location his/her principal place of residence.
- 4.7.7 Accompanied rates of COPA are not payable to an employee whose spouse is absent from the locality of posting for a continuous period of more than 28 days, unless accompanying the employee on a period of recreation leave. Where a spouse is or will be absent for more than 28 days the employee must advise the Overseas Conditions team to allow for the adjustment to their allowances. The employee will receive unaccompanied rates from day 29 until the day their spouse returns to post.

## Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)

- 4.7.8 COLA is an overseas living allowance that compensates employees for the additional cost of purchasing goods and services at post. COLA represents the amount by which the cost of living in a post is greater than the cost of living in Canberra.
- 4.7.9 COLA is calculated based on an employee's disposable salary and the Employment Conditions Abroad (ECA) Post Index and fortnightly exchange rates. An employee who does not have ongoing access to privileged (diplomatic) prices overseas will be paid a five percent loading on COLA. See [Schedule Two](#) for all COLA calculations.
- 4.7.10 Disposable salary for the purpose of calculating COLA comprises gross salary while on posting less:
- the applicable standard rate of PAYG tax
  - the Medicare levy; and
  - an average superannuation contribution of 5% of gross salary.

## 4.8 Dependant and family allowances

### Child allowance

- 4.8.1 Child allowance provides supplementation for the additional costs borne by an employee on posting who has a dependent child residing with them at post. The allowance takes account of the additional costs of raising children overseas in an unfamiliar environment.
- 4.8.2 Child allowance is calculated based on an employee's gross salary, the ECA Post Index and fortnightly exchange rates. The allowance increases for eligible children 12 years of age or above. See [Schedule Two](#) for calculations.
- 4.8.3 The [Secretary](#) may adjust the age factor fixed amounts by the annual percentage movement in DIBP's salaries.

### Eligibility for Child Allowance

- 4.8.4 An employee who has a child living with them at post is entitled to receive child allowance for the period that:
- begins on the day on which the child arrives and takes up residence at the employee's post or the employee's posting begins, whichever is the later; and
  - ends 28 days from the day on which the employee's posting ends or the day the child ceases to live at the post or the day on which the employee becomes eligible for child reunion allowance, whichever is the earlier.
- 4.8.5 A child who has reached the age of 18 years must be approved by the [Secretary](#) as a dependant before an employee can receive child allowance in respect of that child.
- 4.8.6 An employee is not eligible concurrently for child allowance and child reunion allowance for the same child. An employee may receive child allowance and hardship dependant allowance in respect to the same child.

## Child Reunion Allowance

- 4.8.7 Child reunion allowance supplements employees for the additional costs of maintaining a dependent child in full-time primary, secondary or tertiary education in Australia while they are on posting. The allowance is only paid where an entitlement to a reunion visit exists.
- 4.8.8 The child reunion allowance rate is 75% of the child allowance rate that would be payable if the employee was eligible for child allowance for the particular child. See [Schedule Two](#) for calculations.

## Eligibility for Child Reunion Allowance

- 4.8.9 An employee is entitled to child reunion allowance for the period of posting, for each dependent child who:
- is eligible for a reunion visit during each year of the employee's period of posting; and
  - does not live at the employee's post.
- 4.8.10 An employee is not eligible concurrently for child reunion allowance and unaccompanied parent allowance.

## Unaccompanied Parent Allowance

- 4.8.11 Unaccompanied parent allowance compensates an employee, who is an unaccompanied parent with a dependant who is a child living with the employee at the post, for the lack of flexibility they may encounter in managing child-care arrangements in conjunction with work commitments. See [Schedule Two](#) for current allowance.
- 4.8.12 The [Secretary](#) may adjust the amount of unaccompanied parent allowance to reflect annual percentage movements in DIBP's salaries.

## Eligibility for unaccompanied parent allowance

- 4.8.13 An unaccompanied employee who has a dependent child, under 18 years of age, accompanying them is entitled to unaccompanied parent allowance for the period that:
- begins on the day on which the child arrives and takes up residence at the employee's post or the employee's posting begins, whichever is the later; and
  - ends on the day the employee's posting ends or the day the child ceases to live at the post, whichever is the earlier.
- 4.8.14 An employee is not eligible concurrently for unaccompanied parent allowance and child reunion allowance for the same child. An employee may receive unaccompanied parent allowance, child allowance and hardship dependant allowance in respect to the same child.
- 4.8.15 Unaccompanied parent allowance may not be split and paid to more than one employee/parent of a child.

## 4.9 Role Specific Allowances

### Principal Migration Officer Liaison Allowance

- 4.9.1 Principal Migration Officer Liaison (PMOL) duties include maintaining a visible presence at international airports at their post location, performing duties similar to Airline Liaison Officers (ALO). The PMOL allowance compensates PMOLs whose duties necessitate abnormal rostering.

### Eligibility for PMOL Allowance

- 4.9.2 Employees on long-term posting as PMOL will be eligible to receive a PMOL allowance while performing these duties.
- 4.9.3 The Secretary will determine the rate for a PMOL allowance to apply at a particular locality, taking into consideration any changes such as varied work patterns for that particular location. See Schedule Two for current rates.

## 4.10 Allowances – Hardship

### Introduction

- 4.10.1 This part explains DIBP's hardship ranking system and describes the additional conditions that apply to employees at hardship post locations.
- 4.10.2 The DIBP hardship post package compensates employees for the difficulties associated with working and living in designated hardship locations.
- 4.10.3 The following table outlines the allowances and entitlements that comprise this package. This is in addition to those allowances outlined in the part entitled 'Allowances – General'. For STMs please see STM Hardship Post Allowance.

Allowance/Entitlement	Eligibility
Hardship Allowances	
Hardship Allowance	Paid to employees at designated C, D, E or F hardship posts.
Hardship Dependant Allowance	Employees at designated C, D, E or F hardship posts with a dependent child residing at post.
Hardship Attraction Allowance	Paid to employees at Hardship post locations as determined by the Secretary
Special Location Supplement	For postings to countries identified in <u>Schedule Two</u>
Refugee Camp Hardship Allowance	Subject to delegate approval.

Allowance/Entitlement	Eligibility
Hardship Entitlements	
Additional Annual Leave	Accrues for employees at a designated hardship post in addition to their normal leave credits. See <a href="#">Schedule Three</a>
Assisted Leave Fares	An employee on a long-term posting at a category C,D,E or F hardship post who undertakes return travel to a designated leave centre in conjunction with approved leave of at least one week. See <a href="#">Schedule Three</a>

## Post hardship elements

4.10.4 The standard post rankings developed by Employment Conditions Abroad (ECA) form the basis for determining the relative hardship of DIBP's overseas post locations. The main factors considered by ECA to advise on post ratings are:

- personal security and socio-political tensions
- health services
- housing, utilities and education
- language and culture
- availability of goods and services
- isolation
- social network and leisure; and
- climate.

## Post hardship categories

4.10.5 ECA classifies locations within six categories ranging from category A (least difficult) to category F (most difficult). DIBP use the hardship categories determined by ECA on a general Australia and New Zealand region base. ECA also rank posts on an Australia (Sydney), Australia (Canberra) and Australia (Melbourne) base. ECA rankings can vary depending on the base used.

4.10.6 An employee on a long-term posting at a designated category C, D, E or F hardship post is considered to be at a designated Hardship Post, and will receive Hardship Post allowances, based on their location and family situation.

## Review and adjustment of post hardship categories

4.10.7 Post location rankings are reviewed by ECA annually in March (the Adapt Location Ranking Survey) and the revised post hardship categories come into effect from September. DFAT post administration organise expatriate participation in the Adapt Location Ranking Survey on behalf of DIBP.

- 4.10.8 The Secretary will determine the rankings for each post based on the ECA rankings. In determining the hardship ranking to apply for DIBP employees, the following will be taken into consideration:
- whether the ECA ranking indicates a post sits on the borderline of two hardship rankings
  - any variation in ECA rankings between their Australia and New Zealand region base and the Canberra based ranking; and
  - any post specific information, including advice from DFAT.
- 4.10.9 In addition to the ECA annual review of post hardship rankings, the Secretary may temporarily adjust a post hardship category to meet a short-term deterioration in one or more of the elements that determine post hardship rankings.
- 4.10.10 Employees should be aware that adjustment to post hardship rankings may occur during the course of a posting as a result of the ECA location ranking review and the changes may affect the level of hardship post conditions and entitlements applicable to employees.

## 4.11 Hardship Post Allowance

### Hardship Post Allowance

- 4.11.1 Hardship post allowance is paid to compensate for the adverse effects on employee's lifestyle and welfare from living in different conditions to those in Australia, particularly over an extended period of time. It provides additional remuneration to enable employees to fund alternate means of relief from the difficult environment. The allowance is paid on a sliding scale according to the post's hardship ranking.
- 4.11.2 Eligible employees are entitled to receive hardship post allowance from the day they start duty at post until the last day of leave with allowances is taken.
- 4.11.3 Hardship post allowance is calculated as a percentage of the average overseas salary, based on the hardship ranking of the post and whether the employee is accompanied by a spouse or not. See Schedule Three for calculations and current amounts.

### Eligibility for Hardship Post Allowance

- 4.11.4 Employees are entitled to Hardship Post Allowance for the same periods of service at, and absence from, the designated hardship post as for COPA and COLA. Hardship Post allowance is not payable for a recall to duty while on paid leave unless the employee is recalled to duty at a designated hardship post and their partner is not receiving a hardship accompanied allowance.
- 4.11.5 Accompanied rates of Hardship Post Allowance are payable to an employee whose spouse resides continuously with the employee and makes the post location his/her principal place of residence. The accompanied rate of Hardship Post Allowance is payable to an employee for the same period of time they are eligible to receive COPA at the accompanied rate.



- 4.11.6 If a post hardship rating changes, an employee's hardship post allowance will be adjusted on the first pay day in January following receipt of advice from ECA; unless determined otherwise by the Secretary.

### Average Salary for Hardship Post Allowance

- 4.11.7 The average salary for hardship purposes is based on the average of the top salary increment of APS6 to EL2 positions in the overseas network. A review of the average salary and methodology will be conducted based on the overseas staffing profile at 31 March each year and updated with effect from the first payday in July each year. See Schedule Three for more information.

### Hardship Dependant Allowance

- 4.11.8 Hardship dependant allowance recognises the increased difficulties and additional costs faced by employees whose dependent children accompany them to a designated hardship post.
- 4.11.9 The hardship dependant allowance is paid as an annual amount per dependent child residing at post. See Schedule Two for current rates.

### Eligibility for Hardship Dependant Allowance

- 4.11.10 An employee who has a dependent child living with them at a designated hardship post is entitled to hardship dependant allowance for the period that:
- begins on the day on which the child arrives and takes up residence at the employee's post or the employee's posting begins, whichever is the later; and
  - ends the day after the employee's posting ends or the day the child ceases to live at the post, whichever is the earlier.
- 4.11.11 An employee will not be eligible for hardship dependant allowance unless they are also eligible for child allowance for the same child. An employee is not eligible concurrently for hardship dependant allowance and child reunion allowance for the same child.

### Hardship Post Attraction Allowance

- 4.11.12 Hardship Attraction Allowance is provided in order to attract suitable employees to work at certain hardship posts where DIBP experiences difficulty in recruiting postees.

### Eligibility for Hardship Post Attraction Allowance

- 4.11.13 The need to provide attraction allowance will be considered during the recruitment process and will be part of the letter of posting offer. Attraction allowance is attached to individual employees and is provided only when there is specific difficulty identified in attracting interest to a post location. The Secretary may determine the duration and add or delete localities to which Attraction Allowance will apply.
- 4.11.14 Attraction allowance is payable per annum for the length of the posting and cannot be applied retrospectively to a posting.
- 4.11.15 Employees are entitled to hardship post attraction allowance for the same periods of service and absence from the designated post as for COPA.

- 4.11.16 Attraction allowance is only payable to employees undertaking long term postings.

## Hardship Post Special Location Supplement

- 4.11.17 Special Location Supplement (SLS) provides temporary additional remuneration and compensation to departmental employees required to work at overseas locations where regular security incidents, heightened socio-political tensions, environmental disasters and the like have impacted, or may impact, adversely on the personal security and/or welfare of employees and their families.
- 4.11.18 The rate of SLS is set as a percentage of the category F hardship post allowance, and varies for different locations based on local environments. See [Schedule Three](#) for current locations and rates.
- 4.11.19 When circumstances warrant, the [Secretary](#) will determine the rate and duration for a SLS to apply at a particular locality. The Secretary will review the rate and duration of payment of SLS at least annually and add or delete locations that will be subject to the allowance.

## Eligibility for Special Location Supplement

- 4.11.20 Employees on long-term posting at overseas localities to which a SLS applies will be eligible to receive SLS.
- 4.11.21 Employees are entitled to SLS for the same periods of service and absence from the post as for COPA. The allowance is not payable for a recall to duty while on paid leave unless the employee is recalled to duty at a post where SLS applies.
- 4.11.22 Employees who are accompanied by a spouse who lives with them continuously at post will receive the accompanied rate of SLS. If an employee's spouse is absent from the post for more than 28 days, they will be deemed to be an unaccompanied employee and the unaccompanied rate of SLS will apply.
- 4.11.23 Employees will also be eligible to receive SLS if they are on long-term posting and are required to visit, either on a business trip as part of their duties or for a STM, a country that has been determined to attract SLS for such a purpose.
- 4.11.24 An employee who is eligible for SLS on a business trip from post or STM will receive pro rata SLS for each day at that location, provided the trip is more than 24 hours duration. The unaccompanied rate only will apply for employees who are required to travel to locations that attract SLS for short term business trips from post or STMs.

## Refugee Camp Hardship Allowance

- 4.11.25 A 'designated refugee camp' is a recognised United Nations refugee camp or a refugee camp that is designated by the [Secretary](#).
- 4.11.26 If the Secretary is satisfied that it will cause hardship, an employee (on a short-term mission or a long-term posting) who performs duty at a designated refugee camp may receive a Refugee Camp Hardship Allowance (RCHA) for each day of duty in that camp.
- 4.11.27 The RCHA is payable at 32% of the minimum APS6 salary level specified in the DIBP Enterprise Agreement. See [Schedule Two](#) for calculations.

## 4.12 Hardship Post Entitlements

### Introduction

- 4.12.1 Additional annual leave and Assisted leave fares (ALFs) are intended to assist employees and their dependants on long-term posting to category C, D, E and F hardship posts to have sufficient breaks from their hardship environment to:
- regularly leave the post locality during a period of annual leave;
  - obtain relief from a difficult environment;
  - access suitable medical, hospital and dental facilities; and
  - access facilities for buying household and personal items which are unavailable at post.
- 4.12.2 Managers should consider the use of an ALF when considering travel requests for non-urgent matters such as medical check-ups.

### Additional Annual Leave

- 4.12.3 Each long-term posted employee at a designated hardship post is entitled to additional annual leave days, in addition to their normal annual leave credits, see Schedule Three

### Period of entitlement

- 4.12.4 Additional annual leave accrues from the day the employee arrives to commence duty at the post on a long-term posting and ends on the day the employee's posting ends. If employees proceed on leave immediately on arrival at post, they are taken to commence duty on the first working day after the annual leave ends.

### Accrual of annual leave

- 4.12.5 Normal annual leave credits accrue to employees as provided in the DIBP Enterprise Agreement. Annual leave credits, including any additional annual leave days specified in this part, accrue daily and are credited after each month of service at post.
- 4.12.6 Employees who have more than two years of annual leave credits (including additional annual leave days) accrued as at 1 January each year will be subject to any DIBP Enterprise Agreement provisions for utilising annual leave that may exist.
- 4.12.7 Employees are expected to manage leave prior to posting so as not to travel to post with excess leave.

### Entitlement when a hardship ranking changes

- 4.12.8 If a post hardship ranking changes resulting in a change to the number of days additional annual leave entitlement, adjustment to an employee's annual leave accruals will take effect from 1 January in the subsequent year, unless determined otherwise by the Secretary.

## 4.13 Hardship Post Assisted Leave Fares

### Entitlement

- 4.13.1 Assisted Leave Fares (ALF) provides a return economy airfare from the post to the designated Regional or Relief Leave Centre. A list of designated leave centres and the frequency of assisted leave fare entitlements applicable to individual posts are listed in Schedule Three.
- 4.13.2 The maximum amount that DIBP will pay is the allowable travel costs for economy-class return air travel between the post and the designated leave centre for employees and any dependants living at post. Dependants that do not normally live at post with the employee are not eligible for assisted leave fares.
- 4.13.3 The entitlement is to be used to assist with the purchase of return economy class airfares only. The department is unable to purchase business class fares for this entitlement, however an employee is able to purchase business class airfares personally and then seek reimbursement, up to the amount of the economy airfare. Appropriate quotes must be obtained which clearly demonstrate the economy class costs.
- 4.13.4 Assisted leave fare entitlements must be taken individually and cannot be combined or blocked together to obtain a higher value from the entitlement.

### Substitute leave centres

- 4.13.5 When a designated leave centre is affected by war, civil disorder, natural disaster or other similar event, the Secretary may substitute the designated leave centre, having regard to reasonable economic conditions and facilities at the substituted leave centre, with another leave centre.

### Entitlement if a hardship rating changes

- 4.13.6 Post hardship ratings are reviewed annually based on ranking advice received from Employment Conditions Aboard. If a hardship rating change results in the loss of an ALF entitlement for a post:
- Employees working at post prior to 1 January will not lose any ALF entitlements and will have until the end of their current period of posting to utilise their original ALF entitlements.
  - Employees who have commenced at post from 1 January on will be subject to the assisted leave fares applicable to the new hardship rating for the post.
- 4.13.7 If a hardship rating change results in additional ALF entitlements for a post, employees at post who have at least 6 months remaining until their current posting ceases will be eligible for the additional assisted leave fare entitlements.

## Eligibility for Assisted Leave Fare

- 4.13.8 An employee on long-term posting at a category C, D, E or F hardship post who undertakes return travel to a designated leave centre in conjunction with approved leave of at least one week, is eligible for assisted leave fares specified for the employee's locality of posting.
- 4.13.9 There is no eligibility for assisted leave fares in the following circumstances:
- before an employee's long-term posting commences
  - after an employee's period of posting ends
  - for return travel to an in-country destination unless the destination is a designated regional or relief leave centre
  - for travel by the employee or dependants to a destination that does not meet the purpose for which assisted leave fares are intended
  - for travel by the employee or dependants to a destination where travel advisories recommend 'do not travel'
  - for travel when the employee and dependants will not be returning to the post location
  - for return travel by an employee that is not taken in conjunction with at least five days approved leave; and
  - for return travel taken by the employee and dependants within three months of the employee commencing or ceasing duty at post.

## Accompanied employees

- 4.13.10 In this section an employee's eligible dependants are not required to travel with the employee or travel in conjunction with a period of annual leave taken by the employee.

## Alternative destinations

- 4.13.11 An employee on long-term posting at a category C, D, E or F hardship post who is taking approved leave of not less than five days duration may utilise the value of their assisted leave fare entitlement to travel to a location other than a designated leave centre in conjunction with that leave.

## Determining a value for an ALF entitlement

- 4.13.12 The value of an assisted leave fare entitlement is an amount equal to whichever is the lesser of:
- the allowable travel cost for return economy class air travel to a location other than a designated leave centre; or
  - the allowable travel cost for return economy class air travel to a designated leave centre.

## Excess baggage in association with assisted leave fares

- 4.13.13 An employee may claim reimbursement for the cost of up to 12 kilograms of excess baggage carried by the employee and each dependant for one return sector from a designated leave centre during the ordinary period of posting. If travel is to a destination other than a designated leave centre, excess baggage costs for the return journey are met as if the travel had been from the designated leave centre.

## Accessing leave fare entitlements

- 4.13.14 An overseas Regional Director or a DIBP A-based employee in charge of a post (Post Manager) may authorise payment of assisted leave fare entitlements. Authorised employees may not approve the payment of their own assisted leave fare entitlements. Overseas Regional Directors' leave fare entitlements may be authorised by the First Assistant Secretary, International Division.
- 4.13.15 Approval requests for assisted leave fares are to be submitted to the relevant Regional Director or other manager for approval. Full details on the process of approval for international travel can be found in the Financial Management Directive.
- 4.13.16 When accessing an assisted leave fare entitlement, employees are encouraged to plan ahead and book early to obtain the most cost effective fares for their proposed travel. Quotes should be obtained from at least three carriers where possible in order to establish a minimum cost for the proposed return travel. Alternatively, notional leave fares may be obtained from post administration, or the post's travel service provider.
- 4.13.17 If, due to work-related priorities or other operational factors an employee suffers financial detriment because their planned leave and associated travel arrangements have to be cancelled or deferred, DIBP will reimburse the employee up to the value of an extra leave fare entitlement plus other miscellaneous costs incurred as a direct result of the cancellation or deferral.
- 4.13.18 Employees may choose how they access and utilise their leave fare entitlements. However, access to the entitlement will be dependent on the employee obtaining appropriate leave approval. Assisted leave fares should be utilised at regular intervals over the posting period to obtain maximum benefit from the entitlement.

## Claiming an entitlement

- 4.13.19 Procedures for claiming an assisted leave fare entitlement will be governed by local Post Administration processes and guidelines. If an assisted leave fare entitlement is advanced, the advance must be acquitted by providing evidence of the travel and costs incurred. If reimbursed, evidence of the travel and expenditure (e.g. used tickets) must be provided to support the claim. Payment should not be made for more than one leave fare entitlement at any one time.
- 4.13.20 For the purpose of determining eligibility for and administering assisted leave fares, a year commences on the day on which the employee arrives at post and ends on the day before the anniversary of that date.
- 4.13.21 Assisted leave fare entitlements are only payable if the employee leaves the post location on leave for a period of at least five consecutive days. There is no eligibility for assisted leave fares for in-country travel associated with a period of leave unless the in-country destination is a designated leave centre. Authorised employees should

satisfy themselves (by sighting passports, travel tickets, itineraries, etc.) that an employee has departed, or will depart, the post for at least five consecutive days.

### Assisted Leave Fares for a shortened or extended posting period

- 4.13.22 If an employee's total period of posting is either shorter or longer than the ordinary three year period of posting, then the number of leave fares will be adjusted accordingly. The formula for these adjustments is at Schedule Three.
- 4.13.23 When a posting period is shortened to a total period of less than 12 months, adjusted leave fare entitlements will not include travel to a regional leave centre. When a posting period is shortened, so that the total posting period is 12 months or more, adjusted leave fare entitlements will include travel to only one regional leave centre with the balance of entitlements (if any) being for travel to relief leave centres.
- 4.13.24 At the time of notification of a reduction in a posting period an employee's leave fare entitlements would be reduced accordingly. If the adjusted leave fare entitlement has already been exceeded by the employee, no recovery will be made.
- 4.13.25 If the Secretary believes it is unreasonable to do so an employee's entitlement to Assisted Leave Fares may be maintained on termination of an employee's posting, taking into consideration any exceptional circumstances.
- 4.13.26 If an employee is entitled to additional leave fares the first leave fare will be to the designated Regional Centre, with any subsequent additional leave fare to the designated Relief Centre.

### Assisted leave fare to Australia

- 4.13.27 If an employee's period of posting at a designated hardship post is extended for 12 months or longer than the ordinary period of posting, the employee is entitled to reimbursement for the cost of return economy class air travel on the most direct route between their post locality and the location in Australia where the employee lived prior to commencing their posting.
- 4.13.28 The ALFA entitlement applies only to one extension of 12 months or longer at the same post. If employees extend their posting period more than once, no additional ALFA entitlement will accrue for the additional extensions.
- 4.13.29 An ALFA entitlement must be used to travel to a location in Australia and cannot be converted for travel to another overseas destination. There are no official rest periods, excess baggage or land fare (train or bus) entitlements provided when travelling under ALFA provisions.
- 4.13.30 The ALFA entitlement must be taken in lieu of a regional leave centre assisted leave fare travel entitlement and the travel must be undertaken in conjunction with a period of annual leave. Dependants with an ALFA entitlement are not required to travel with the employee or in conjunction with a period of annual leave taken by the employee.

## 4.14 Travel during Long-Term Posting

### Arranging travel bookings at Post

- 4.14.1 In managing travel at post the following principle requirements apply:
- All travel must be approved by the appropriate Delegate prior to travel.
  - There must be a demonstrated business need to travel.
- 4.14.2 Full details on the process of approval for international travel can be found in [Financial Management Directive](#).
- 4.14.3 Travel bookings from or at post should be managed locally via post administration. Travel arrangements must:
- represent efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public money and achieve value for money
  - comply with relevant policies of the Commonwealth, including the [Department of Finance Resource Management Guide No. 405](#).
  - minimize overall costs and obtain maximum benefit for DIBP
  - be publicly defensible and able to withstand internal and external scrutiny; and
  - ensure the safety of employees.

### International travel

- 4.14.4 In exceptional circumstances, such as urgent medical or compassionate travel, where the approval cannot be documented prior to the trip, verbal approval from the Regional Director must be obtained and the trip approval documented as soon as possible.

### Class of air travel (in-country)

- 4.14.5 The standard class of air travel for in-country travel at an overseas post for non-SES is economy class. Where the standard of economy class air travel within a country is determined to be substantially below Western standards, the [Secretary](#) may determine a different standard for air travel within that country, excluding First class. The standard class of air for in-country travel at an overseas post for SES is business class.

### Class of air travel (international)

- 4.14.6 The standard class of air travel for an international business trip is business-class for all employees. Where an intermediate or business class is not available, travel is by economy class.
- 4.14.7 The standard class of air travel for other types of trips, including for Assisted Leave Fares, Reunion and Compassionate travel is economy unless otherwise specified.



## Frequent flyer, reward or loyalty points

- 4.14.8 Government employees are not permitted to accrue Frequent Flyer Points or Loyalty Reward Points for official business travel.

## Promotions and Competitions

- 4.14.9 Employees travelling on official business are not permitted to participate in promotions or competitions conducted by external providers.

## Train travel

- 4.14.10 If an employee is required to travel by train when undertaking official business, the class of travel will normally be at intermediate class. Another class may be used as determined by the Secretary prior to travel.

## Travel advisories

- 4.14.11 To assist DIBP in the proper discharge of its duty of care obligations, all employees posted overseas must report any travel (both official and personal) that takes them away from their usual location to the Overseas Security team at <sup>s. 47E(d)</sup> [REDACTED]@border.gov.au
- 4.14.12 Employees holding a security clearance should notify the Australian Government Security Vetting Agency (AGSVA) of any residence in, or visits to foreign countries.
- 4.14.13 Employees need to consult the DFAT Travel Advisories prior to undertaking the travel. As a minimum, employees intending to travel on official business are expected to refer to recommendations made in the travel advisories for the countries to be visited. Where travel advisories flag security or personal safety concerns, employees should consult Post Security Managers at the relevant post where they are, or will be, based and, if appropriate, at posts with consular responsibility for countries to be visited prior to arranging and proceeding with travel plans. Such consultations are mandatory when travel advisories recommend against travel to the locations to be visited.
- 4.14.14 Under current DIBP policy, employees travelling to a "High Risk" destination will need to have a Security Risk Assessment undertaken in support of their trip prior to departure. A High Risk destination is one that the DFAT Smartraveller website defines as either a "Reconsider your need to Travel" or "Do not Travel" destination. The Protective Security Section will complete the risk assessment and a copy will be sent to the person travelling for review and action where required. A copy will also be forwarded to the responsible Regional Director. While A-Based officers are at post, DFAT assume responsibility for protective security however A-based officers who travel away from post for official duty to High Risk destinations come under the DIBP policy.

## 4.15 Reunion Travel

### Introduction

- 4.15.1 Reunion travel provides employees on a long-term posting the opportunity to reunite with recognised dependants who remain in Australia and intend to do so for the duration of the employee's posting.
- 4.15.2 The entitlement is to be used to assist with the purchase of return economy class airfares only and cannot be used for any other purpose.

### Maximum entitlement

- 4.15.3 The maximum entitlement of an employee for a reunion visit is the least of:
- the actual cost incurred for return travel by a dependant
  - the allowable travel cost for the travel of a dependant between Australia and the post; or
  - the allowable travel cost for return travel by the dependant to another location, which has been pre-approved by the Secretary.

### Transport costs

- 4.15.4 It is the employee's responsibility to meet the cost of transportation (taxis, etc.) for dependants during a reunion visit including to and from airports both in Australia and at the locality of posting.

### Restrictions on reunion travel

- 4.15.5 Reunion travel will not be approved when:
- the period of a reunion visit is less than seven days; and
  - there is less than three months remaining of an employee's long-term posting.

### Reunion travel by another person

- 4.15.6 An employee may have an entitlement to reunion travel for a third person, who is not a dependant, if the Secretary considers that person should be reunited with the employee or a dependant residing at post.

### Arranging reunion travel

- 4.15.7 Reunion travel must be arranged by the Overseas Workforce Management Section and can be requested by emailing <sup>s. 47E(d)</sup> [redacted]@border.gov.au. Reunion travel is not a flexible fare entitlement and the Department is unable to arrange for alternative routes or non-essential stopovers.
- 4.15.8 The Department is unable to reimburse the costs of reunion travel arrangements made independently by employees or family members except where an employee has utilised reverse reunion travel.

- 4.15.9 If the value of a ticket provided is greater than the amount that the employee is entitled to for reunion travel, the employee must pay the extra cost to the Department. Employees cannot utilise frequent flyer points that have been accrued from department-funded travel for private purposes or to provide reunion fares, seating upgrades, etc.

### Frequency of reunion visits

- 4.15.10 The Secretary may approve reunion travel to the post for a dependant or spouse, based on the following frequencies. The Secretary will decide the frequency, if any, of reunion entitlements not covered in the below table.

Location of child or spouse	Frequency
Child in Australia with both parents or sole-parent at post.	One reunion fare at the end of each school term to a maximum of four terms per year. If the school has less than four terms, the fourth reunion is to be taken at a reasonable interval.
Child in Australia with one parent at post.	Two reunion fares per reunion year.
Child at post with one parent (who is not the employee's spouse) in Australia.	No entitlement to reunion travel.
Child in Australia with parents on separate postings.	Four reunion fares per reunion year to either post as agreed by the parents.
Child under 18 years studying full-time in a third country location.	No entitlement to reunion travel.
Full-time tertiary student under 23years in Australia.	One reunion fare per reunion year.
Full-time tertiary student under 23years in Australia with parents on separate postings.	One reunion fare per reunion year to each parent.
Full-time tertiary student under 23years studying full-time in a third country.	No entitlement to reunion travel.
Spouse who remains in Australia and intends to do so for the duration of the employee's posting.	One reunion fare per reunion year.
Spouse living in a third country location.	No entitlement to reunion travel.
Spouse and employee on concurrent separate postings.	Two reunion fares per couple per reunion year.
Child living at an overseas location other than the employee's post and receiving education assistance under the	One reunion fare at the end of each school term. If the school has less than four school terms, the fourth reunion is to be

Location of child or spouse	Frequency
provisions of this manual.	taken at a reasonable interval.
Child at the employee's post who's other APS employee parent is on long-term posting to another post.	Two reunion fares per reunion year to the employee parent's post.

(A reunion year begins on the first day of a posting and anniversaries of that date.)

## Entitlements for tertiary students

- 4.15.11 All entitlements to reunion allowance will cease when a dependant turns 23 years of age, with the exception below.
- 4.15.12 To allow maximum flexibility, eligible tertiary students may use their final reunion entitlement with travel to be commenced by 31 December in the relevant year, and completed prior to commencement of the following academic year, in the following circumstances:
- after completion of final exams for that academic year; or
  - in the year in which the student turns 23 years of age.
- 4.15.13 An eligible tertiary student must provide satisfactory documentation of undertaking full time tertiary study at the time of requesting a reunion, during each year that they claim entitlement.

## Reduction of entitlement in certain circumstances

- 4.15.14 The Secretary may reconsider and revoke the authorisation of additional reunion visits not yet taken in any year, if, while travelling in the course of official duty or assisted leave travel, an employee or the employee's spouse:
- travels to the country in which the dependant lives; or
  - takes one week or more of leave (other than sick leave) in the country in which the dependant lives.

## Reverse reunion visits

- 4.15.15 An employee may choose to be reimbursed for reunion travel undertaken by the employee or the employee's spouse (but not both) once per reunion year to visit a dependant instead of being reimbursed for a reunion visit by that dependant.
- 4.15.16 The number of reunion visits in the year in which the employee or spouse travels is to be reduced by one for each dependant who lives at the location to which the employee and/or spouse travels.
- 4.15.17 The cost of a reverse reunion visit shall not exceed the combined cost of a reunion visit by each dependant to travel to the post at which the employee/spouse lives.
- 4.15.18 Reunion travel is calculated on a return journey from the post to the location at which the dependant lives, regardless of the location at which the employee or spouse and the dependant reunite.

## Insurance of personal effects

- 4.15.19 DIBP's insurance provider (Comcover) does not cover loss or damage to personal effects for dependants undertaking reunion travel. Employees should arrange appropriate travel insurance for reunion travel.

## Assistance with health care

- 4.15.20 A dependant or spouse on reunion travel and for the period of the reunion visit will be covered by Comcover's Statement of Cover so long as the dependant or spouse is listed on the Department's Schedule of Expatriates.
- 4.15.21 To be eligible for assistance with health care, a medical and dental clearance must be obtained during the pre-posting period or before the first reunion visit. If a clearance is not obtained, the dependant will not be covered by Comcover's Statement of Cover or the Department.
- 4.15.22 A dependant or spouse is covered for the period spent outside Australia for medical costs only.

## 4.16 Compassionate travel

### Introduction

- 4.16.1 Compassionate travel is provided to an employee or their accompanying spouse (but not both) when a close relative in Australia is critically ill or dies. Where there is a serious family crisis involving the welfare of a close relative in Australia, special travel may be approved under this section. A close relative refers to:
- the employee's spouse
  - a child or parent of the employee or employee's spouse
  - another person who stands in a similarly close relationship to that of a parent or child and is, because of special circumstances, approved by the Secretary as a close relative.
- 4.16.2 This section applies to an employee and accompanying spouse on a long-term posting from the day of arrival at post and ends on the day of departure from post. There is no entitlement to access travel in respect of the same relative more than once during a posting.

### Fare liability

- 4.16.3 The Secretary may approve reimbursement of compassionate travel at the allowable travel cost, as follows:
- for the employee or their spouse to travel to the location in Australia where the close relative is critically ill or lived prior to death, or the location in Australia at which the funeral is held; or
  - for a close relative to travel to post if the employee or their spouse becomes critically ill.
- 4.16.4 In the case of the death of an employee's or accompanying spouse's child in Australia, the allowable travel cost for both parents to travel to Australia will be met by DIBP.

- 4.16.5 The Secretary may authorise a child to accompany the person travelling at departmental expense, if:
- the person travelling under this section is the parent or guardian of the child, and
  - the Secretary is satisfied that it is impractical to make other appropriate arrangements for the care of the child, having regard to:
    - the age of the child
    - any arrangements the person could make for the care of the child in the circumstances; and
    - the circumstances in which the person is to travel.

### Fare liability (travel to a third country)

- 4.16.6 If travel is to a location other than Australia, the reimbursement of the cost of fares to the employee or accompanying spouse is reduced by the allowable travel cost of travel from the capital city in Australia where the employee normally resides, to the third location. DIBP's liability is therefore the excess travel cost over what it would have cost the employee or spouse had they been living in Australia.
- 4.16.7 This provision ensures employees overseas are not disadvantaged but meet the same costs as staff in Australia who need to personally meet the cost of their compassionate travel to locations overseas.

### Medical certificate required in case of illness

- 4.16.8 A medical certificate must be provided for the employee to be reimbursed for compassionate travel in cases of critical illness. The medical certificate must be issued by the medical practitioner who has been treating the relevant illness and must certify that the employee, or spouse or close relative of the employee was critically ill during the period specified.

### Eligibility of close relatives

- 4.16.9 If more than one close relative of an employee is available to travel, or travels, under this section to visit an employee or spouse, reimbursement will be made in respect to only one close relative whom the Secretary considers most appropriate.

### Limitation on entitlement

- 4.16.10 An employee, spouse or close relative is not entitled to be reimbursed for travel more than once during a posting for the illness or death of the same person unless the Secretary is satisfied, having regard to any relevant factors, that there are special circumstances making additional travel essential.

### Access to leave during compassionate travel

- 4.16.11 Employees travelling under this section must apply for leave for the duration of their absence, including travel time. Employees should apply for leave in accordance with the provisions of DIBP's Enterprise Agreement.

## 4.17 Comcare in the workplace

### Work Health and Safety

- 4.17.1 Under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act) and *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011*, the same Work Health and Safety (WHS) obligations apply to DIBP's overseas staff as would apply to onshore staff.
- 4.17.2 As such, it is important that DIBP consider, take reasonably practicable steps, and document those steps to address the health and safety risks and do what is reasonably practicable to ensure a worker's health and safety.
- 4.17.3 Some countries do not have the same WHS standards as Australia. Therefore it is important for overseas staff to continue to enforce Australian WHS standards and due diligence.
- 4.17.4 Under the WHS Act, particular incident types (those more serious in impact/nature) must also be notified to Comcare. It is legislatively required that the following incident types be notified to Comcare:
- Death
  - A serious injury or illness that requires a worker to receive:
    - medical treatment within 48 hours of exposure to a substance
    - immediate treatment as an in-patient in a hospital; or
    - immediate treatment for a serious injury or illness.
  - A dangerous incident in a workplace that exposes a worker or any other person to a serious risk to their health and safety emanating from an immediate or imminent exposure to a risk(s).
- 4.17.5 If unsure of whether an incident meets the criteria for a notifiable incident, employees are advised to err on the side of caution and report it. There are no penalties for over-reporting, but there are penalties for not reporting it.
- 4.17.6 Where DIBP shares a workplace with other agencies at overseas posts, an incident can be reported by one or both agencies – it doesn't matter if the same incident is reported more than once..

## 4.18 Personal Effects Insurance

### Comcover for personal effects

- 4.18.1 During a long term posting and in-country business travel at post, employees are covered under Comcover's *Personal Effects and Travel Inside Country* insurance policy.
- 4.18.2 Comcover's definition of *personal effects* in this policy does not include money.
- 4.18.3 If an employee's *personal effects* are lost, destroyed or damaged, and this occurs in the approved workplace of an employee, or while on approved business travel within the employee's country of assignment during a long term posting, Comcover will pay replacement costs up to the limit of AUD25, 000.



- 4.18.4 Employees should remember that they may have additional or overlapping cover for their personal belongings under the worldwide multiple risk insurance policy taken out with Marsh or Allied Pickfords prior to the commencement of the long term posting. For details of cover under these alternate insurance policies, please refer to the relevant product disclosure statement.

### Loss or damage through war etc.

- 4.18.5 Where an employee suffers loss or damage to their possessions due to war, civil disorder or similar occurrences, the Secretary may indemnify the employee for the losses where the employee has been unable to claim against their worldwide multiple risk insurance (after reasonable endeavours), Comcover insurance, or other appropriate insurance for the loss or damage suffered. In considering the amount payable, the Secretary should have regard to:
- The nature and extent of the possessions lost or damaged.
  - The amount that an insurer would pay to the employee for the loss or damage.
  - Any competent valuation for the loss or damage.
  - The estimated residual value of the possessions, taking into account their cost and subsequent depreciated value.
  - Personal possessions covered under this part include:
    - household goods that were removed to post at departmental expense
    - food, beverages and other household consumables; and
    - a private motor vehicle.
- 4.18.6 Employees lodging a claim will need to satisfy the Secretary that they took reasonable precautions to avoid loss or damage.
- 4.18.7 If an employee did not arrange for their possessions to be adequately insured and the Secretary considers it reasonable that an employee should have insured their possessions against the event that caused loss or damage to the possessions, the amount paid to the employee must be reduced by the amount that the employee could reasonably expect to have received under a contract of insurance, if the employee had arranged for the possessions to be adequately insured and had been successful in recovering the loss or damage from the insurer.

### Comcover during approved international business travel from post

- 4.18.8 If an employee travels on an approved business trip from post outside their overseas posting country (i.e. internationally) for up to 180 consecutive days, they and any approved accompanying persons will be covered under Comcover's *Travel Outside of Country – Baggage and Personal Effects & Travel Outside of Country – Medical Expenses and Medical Emergencies Insurance* policy. See Comcover Statement of Cover.



- 4.18.9 This insurance policy provides the travelling employee and any approved accompanying person (each defined in the Comcover policy as a '*traveller*') with the following cover:
- If the *traveller's* baggage and personal effects are lost, destroyed, or damaged during the travel, Comcover will repair or replace the items up to the limit of AUD25, 000.
  - If the *traveller* has money that is lost or stolen during the travel, Comcover will pay for the lost or stolen money.
  - If the *traveller's* baggage is delayed for more than 8 hours following the arrival of the traveller at the destination, Comcover will pay the reasonable cost of necessities.
- 4.18.10 As this policy only provides cover for international travel from post with a maximum duration of up to 180 consecutive days, employees must contact the DIBP Comcover Manager to request an extension of cover if the international travel will exceed 180 days. The Comcover Manager can be contacted at the following e-mail address: <sup>s. 47E(d)</sup> [REDACTED]@border.gov.au

## Insurance coverage for reunion visits

- 4.18.11 Comcover does not cover loss of, or damage to personal effects for dependants undertaking reunion travel. Therefore, it is strongly recommended to arrange private insurance for dependants undertaking reunion travel.

## Private Car insurance

- 4.18.12 If employees intend to purchase a car for personal use at post, it is recommended that they obtain a letter from their insurance company prior to departure from Australia confirming any 'no-claim bonus' if applicable. This will assist when arranging private car insurance overseas.

## Further information

- 4.18.13 For further information about DIBP's Comcover insurance policy please see Comcover Insurance or email the Comcover Manager at: <sup>s. 47E(d)</sup> [REDACTED]@border.gov.au
- 4.18.14 All employees on a long term posting are able to obtain a Comcover endorsed card from the Comcover Manager, providing worldwide contact and reference details for ISOS.

# 4.19 Health Care and Medical Insurance

## Intention

- 4.19.1 The intention of the Department's overseas health care provisions is to provide employees and eligible dependants with the same standard of health care overseas as if they were a public (Medicare) patient in Australia. The Department's health care provisions cover the treatment of day-to-day health matters and illnesses or injuries that arise during, or as a result of, a posting.

- 4.19.2 These provisions do not cover or provide treatment of pre-existing conditions, or forms of elective or cosmetic procedures (e.g. capping of teeth, laser eye surgery, or cosmetic surgery), joint replacements and reconstructions, or fertility related procedures.
- 4.19.3 It is recommended that employees consider maintaining current Australian private health insurance as any medical costs incurred in Australia will not be covered by provisions in the OCOS Manual.

## Medical Cover

- 4.19.4 Employees undertaking a long term posting (for Comcover insurance purposes a posting of more than 180 consecutive days) and all of their officially recognised dependants are listed on Comcover's Schedule of Expatriates.
- 4.19.5 The Department is responsible for adding employees and their accompanying dependants to the Comcover Schedule of Expatriates prior to their posting. Once added to this schedule, employees will be provided with health cover as defined in the Comcover Statement of Cover 2014-2015 (refer to section 17 'Expatriate').
- 4.19.6 Employees should familiarise themselves with the Statement of Cover prior to posting as it is this document which identifies what will and will not be covered in terms of health care costs.
- 4.19.7 If employees have a change in posting dates, or in family composition while on posting, they must advise the Overseas Conditions mailbox as soon as possible to ensure the Comcover Schedule of Expatriates can be kept up to date.

## Eligibility

- 4.19.8 Employees and their dependants must pass medical and dental fitness examinations prior to deployment to be eligible for medical coverage under the Statement of Cover.

## Pre-existing medical conditions

- 4.19.9 Pre-existing medical conditions are excluded from the Statement of Cover unless agreed by Comcover prior to posting. To seek approval for coverage employees and their dependants will need to submit a pre-existing conditions application form, supported by a prognosis by the Department's medical service provider to Comcover. Comcover will then confirm whether the request has been approved or declined. Pregnancy or childbirth is considered pre-existing condition if known about before posting commencement date.
- 4.19.10 In exceptional circumstances the Secretary can approve cover for a pre-existing medical condition that Comcover declines coverage for; however coverage of routine pre-existing conditions should not be expected. In considering the level of cover, if any, the delegate will consider the following:
- The nature and extent of the pre-existing condition;
  - The amount Medicare would have covered in Australia;
  - The amount a private medical insurer would have covered in Australia;
  - The ongoing maintenance costs to the Department; and.

- The location of posting;

Agreed cover will be provided on a case-by-case basis. All expenses relating to pre-existing conditions that are approved for cover will be borne by the appropriate onshore post cost centre.

## Coverage

- 4.19.11 As identified in Section 17 (1) of Comcover's Statement of Cover, Comcover will pay all reasonable and necessary medical expenses incurred outside Australia by an expatriate during their period of deployment up to a maximum of 12 months per loss or claim from date of first treatment.
- 4.19.12 Comcover will not pay for:
- expenses resulting from any deliberately self-inflicted injury, suicide or attempt thereat
  - expenses resulting from engaging in, or taking part in, or training for any professional sports of any kind
  - expenses resulting from any elective and/or cosmetic procedure, treatment or surgery unless essential to recovery
  - expenses for which a Medicare benefit is payable or which we are prohibited by law from paying
  - any loss or claim by any expatriate who has not undergone pre-deployment medical and dental examinations
  - any loss or claim by any expatriate who has not been declared medically and dentally fit to be deployed to their country of posting
  - expenses resulting from any pre-existing condition not reviewed and agreed to by Comcover prior to deployment .

## Excess

- 4.19.13 When employees are making a claim, a \$50 excess fee will apply (per medical condition) under the Statement of Cover.

## Personal Travel/ Recreation Leave

- 4.19.14 Employees and their accompanying dependants are covered for medical expenses incurred outside Australia by an expatriate during their period of posting, subject to the terms and conditions of the Statement of Cover.
- 4.19.15 Employees are still encouraged to take out separate travel insurance for themselves and their dependants when departing the posting location on recreation leave. Employees are also advised to take out private travel insurance where travel is to a location categorised as 'do not travel' on the DFAT travel advice page ([www.dfat.gov.au](http://www.dfat.gov.au)).
- 4.19.16 Neither the Department nor Comcover provide cover for loss of flights, hotel bookings, stolen or lost personal items, including money while on personal travel/recreation leave.

## Vaccinations

- 4.19.17 For vaccinations required during a posting period the following costs will be covered at official expense; preventative vaccinations, anti-malarial drugs, annual flu vaccination; and Gardasil vaccinations for dependants aged 12 and 13 years old.
- 4.19.18 Vaccinations for any privately funded travel are not covered under these health care provisions and are a personal cost to the employee.
- 4.19.19 Employees may use the Diplomatic Bag to receive non-liquid supplies at post.

## International SOS

- 4.19.20 International SOS is engaged by Comcover to assist expatriates, their dependants and travellers with access to medical advice and referrals for medical assistance while on long term posting. In extreme cases International SOS will also facilitate evacuations for expatriates, their dependants and travellers.
- 4.19.21 This cover provides expatriates with access to administrative support on a 24/7 basis for medical, dental, travel and security assistance. Their contact details are as follows:
- Online at [www.internationalsos.com](http://www.internationalsos.com)
  - [membership number: 12ACMA000001]
  - Via Phone: +61 2 9273 2785
- 4.19.22 During a long term posting, expatriates may contact ISOS for the provision of routine medical and dental information and pre-travel advice. If routine medical treatment is obtained at post as a result of International SOS advice, the employee should be reimbursed in accordance with Comcover Statement of Cover 2014-2015 (refer to section 17 'Expatriate').
- 4.19.23 Expatriates may also contact International SOS for assistance with medical emergencies and other emergency situations affecting them overseas. In such cases, International SOS is able to make arrangements on behalf of the posted expatriates including emergency medical appointments, hospital admittance, and any necessary transport or accommodation arrangements.
- 4.19.24 Employees should follow the directions given by International SOS concerning approved medical practitioners and facilities at each overseas location. If routine medical services are obtained overseas following discussions with International SOS, any medical costs incurred are to be paid by the employee at the time of service as a personal expense. Receipts must be retained to support a claim for reimbursement under the provisions of this section.

## Direct payment of health costs

- 4.19.25 The Secretary may authorise payment of medical costs directly to the provider on a case by case basis.

## Assignment of rights to recover costs

- 4.19.26 The Department will not provide assistance with health care costs unless the eligible person assigns to the Department any right to recover the costs from another person

or entity. This does not apply to any benefit that the employee may be entitled to receive from a health benefits fund for an ancillary service.

## Benchmark local hospitals

- 4.19.27 DFAT will designate suitable local hospitals which are as near as practicable to an equivalent public (Medicare) hospital in Australia. The designated benchmark hospitals should be made known to employees in order to avoid conflicts over standards of acceptability.

## Medical Evacuations

- 4.19.28 Medical evacuations (Medivacs) are arranged by International SOS. If International SOS considers that an eligible person requires health care which cannot be satisfactorily provided at the deployment location, a medivac will be organised. Medivacs are typically arranged to the nearest appropriate health facility following advice from International SOS who will determine the best location for the treatment to take place.

## Eligibility

- 4.19.29 Medivac provisions extend to all employees and their eligible dependants posted overseas. Dependants on reunion visits or accompanying employees at official expense are also covered, provided they are declared by the Department on the Schedule of Expatriates.
- 4.19.30 Employees should be aware that treatment undertaken in Australia as a result of medical evacuation cannot be covered by the Department or Comcover, and will be a personal cost to the employee, utilising either Medicare or personal health insurance.

## Provisions

- 4.19.31 As per Section 17 (2) of Comcover's Statement of Cover, Comcover will pay all reasonable and necessary expenses incurred for:
- a) an emergency evacuation or reasonable travel costs as a consequence of a medical condition, provided such evacuation or travel cost is authorised by Comcover
  - b) one person to accompany an evacuated expatriate where
    - i. the expatriate is aged 18 years or younger, or
    - ii. it is considered necessary by Comcover
  - c) funeral or cremation expenses in the country in which the death of an expatriate occurs or the repatriation of their mortal remains to their home country and any related costs
  - d) emergency evacuation of an expatriate, provided such evacuation is authorised by Comcover. Comcover will commence arrangements for the emergency evacuation of the expatriate, provided that:
    - i. emergency evacuation will be initiated after reasonable local measures to protect the health and safety of the expatriate have been exhausted or when Comcover decide that the expatriate, who is not in need of medical attention, is at high risk due to adverse local conditions

- ii. if Comcover considers that the situation will continue for less than 30 days duration, emergency evacuation will be made to the nearest location outside the impacted area, or
- iii. if Comcover considers that the situation will continue for more than 30 days duration, emergency evacuation will be made to the expatriate's home country.

4.19.32 The normal exclusions (see clause 4.19.8) apply.

### Class of air travel for health care

4.19.33 The entitlement for an eligible person to travel to another location to access medical treatment is an economy class fare.

4.19.34 A higher class of travel may be approved if International SOS considers it necessary/reasonable in the circumstances. Factors to be considered include:

- the health of the patient;
- the nature of the aircraft accommodation required by the patient for medical reasons;
- the nature of available accommodation on the aircraft in which the patient is required to travel, and
- any other relevant factors.

4.19.35 Where approved, an accompanying child and/or medical escort of an eligible person travelling to another location for health care may travel at the same class of travel as the eligible person.

### Living costs during treatment

4.19.36 Where the Statement of Cover does not provide for living costs, the following costs for the evacuated person and, where applicable their accompanying dependant or escort, may be approved by the Secretary:

- a reasonable standard of commercial accommodation as determined by the Secretary
- if living in commercial accommodation without cooking facilities, two-thirds of the meal allowance rate applicable to the locality
- if living for five days or less in commercial accommodation with cooking facilities and utensils, two-thirds of the meal allowance rate for the locality
- if living for longer than five days in commercial accommodation with cooking facilities and utensils, one-sixth of the meal allowance rate for the locality; and
- if living in private accommodation, one-sixth of the meal allowance rate for the locality.

The following limitations apply:

- Children under 12 years of age receive two-thirds the adult meal supplement rate

- Accommodation and meal costs for the evacuated individual are not payable during periods of hospitalisation
- Travel incidentals are not payable.

## Continuation of Allowances

- 4.19.37 During medical evacuations, overseas allowances are payable to the employee who has on-going costs and/or dependants remain at post for a period of up to 28 days. After this period, the continuation of overseas allowances will be reviewed by the Secretary.
- 4.19.38 An employee who is medically evacuated must apply for sick leave for their period of absence (including travel time) from work.

## 4.20 Provisions for Childbirth

- 4.20.1 The entitlements listed under this clause will be met under Comcover's Statement of Cover. Any eligible entitlements that are not covered under the Statement of Cover may be met by the Department.

### Suitability of health care facilities

- 4.20.2 Hospitalisation for childbirth should be at the post locality where adequate medical services exist, even if medical considerations may result in high cost medical treatment.
- 4.20.3 If childbirth services of a reasonable standard are not available at post as determined by the DFAT Medical Adviser for the post locality or International SOS, the medivac provisions in clause 4.19.28 will apply.
- 4.20.4 Healthcare relating to pregnancy and childbirth that is provided in-country is treated under the general medical provisions at clause 4.19.11.

## 4.21 Medical Evacuation for Childbirth

- 4.21.1 Regardless of the quality of medical services at post, in an emergency situation assistance will be provided to the expectant mother under the medivac provisions in clause 4.19.28.
- 4.21.2 The following entitlements apply in the case of an eligible person travelling to another location to give birth under the medivac provisions:
- A return business class airfare for the mother to the approved location;
  - A business class airfare for the newborn baby on return to post;
  - 15 kilograms of excess baggage for the return sector to the post.

## 4.22 Travel to Australia for Childbirth

- 4.22.1 Despite adequate childbirth services being available at a post locality, the Secretary may approve an expectant mother's travel to Australia for the childbirth.



- 4.22.2 Approval to travel in such cases would normally only be given where a comparative cost analysis indicates that savings would be achieved by returning an expectant mother to Australia. The cost analysis would take account of the cost of return airfares, excess baggage, accommodation in Australia, etc. against the hospital and medical costs likely to be incurred at the post. The employee would be required to utilise an assisted leave fare or pay for return economy class flights in these circumstances, with the Department topping up the cost of a business class fare.

### Fitness to travel

- 4.22.3 In the normal course of events, an expectant mother would depart the post at around week 35 of pregnancy and return to post within two to six weeks of giving birth. Most international airlines require a medical certificate certifying fitness for travel after week 34 of pregnancy. It is the expectant mother's responsibility to obtain and provide any required documentation for their proposed travel.
- 4.22.4 The Department will top up the assisted leave fare from return economy-class to a return business-class airfare for the expectant mother and accompanying family members. Dependants that travel to Australia, but do not accompany the expectant mother will not have their assisted leave fares upgraded to business-class.

### Accommodation in Australia

- 4.22.5 DIBP will reimburse employees for single occupancy accommodation at a GST-registered commercial accommodation in Australia for the period required or up to 14 weeks whichever is the shorter. The rates are provided in [Schedule Two](#).
- 4.22.6 The [Secretary](#) may approve a longer period of accommodation on advice from a registered medical practitioner that the mother is unfit to return to the post following the birth of their child.
- 4.22.7 Expectant mothers opting to reside at other than a GST registered business will be paid in accordance with [Schedule Two](#).
- 4.22.8 The [Secretary](#) may change the payment limits for accommodation, taking into account the daily non-SES accommodation rate.

### Payment of overseas allowances

- 4.22.9 If return to Australia for an employee is approved, overseas allowances will cease once the employee's absence from the post on Maternity Leave exceeds 28 days. However, overseas allowances will continue to be paid for any annual leave accrued at the post and taken in conjunction with the mandatory maternity leave period. Overseas allowances will continue to be paid for the full period of the Maternity Leave if dependants remain at post during the employee's absence in Australia. No additional allowances (such as travel allowance) are payable in respect to the travel to, and confinement in, Australia.

### Excess baggage

- 4.22.10 DIBP will meet the cost for up to 15kg of accompanied excess baggage per family when returning to the locality of posting following the birth of a child. Alternatively,



the 15kg excess baggage allowance may be converted into an equivalent cost for unaccompanied airfreight.

## Travel to a location other than Australia

- 4.22.11 If an expectant mother is approved to travel to a country other than Australia for the childbirth, the Secretary will decide the level of assistance to be provided by the Department.

## 4.23 Leave Entitlements for Childbirth

### Available leave types

- 4.23.1 The following leave types may be applicable, subject to approval:
- **Annual Leave/Long Service Leave** – Full-pay Annual or Long Service Leave may be taken on completion of the mandatory Maternity Leave period.
  - **Maternity Leave (14 weeks full pay)** – Maternity Leave usually commences six weeks prior to the due date for the birth but can be deferred if a medical certificate certifying fitness for duty is provided.
  - **Parental Leave (Four weeks full pay)** – Paid parental leave is available to employees who are not the primary care giver of a child:
    - to attend the birth of their child, or their partner's child, and provide support and care to the mother in the period after the birth, or
    - to care for an adoptive child, a foster child, or a child for whom the employee is a guardian, and for whom the employee has recently assumed long-term responsibility.
  - Paid parental leave is also available to employees who are the primary care giver, to give birth and recover from a birth where the employee is not eligible for paid maternity leave.
- 4.23.2 Half-pay maternity leave is not available to overseas employees as per the DIBP Enterprise Agreement. Where extended leave is requested, greater than the prescribed entitlement the Secretary may determine for the posting to end rather than provide backfilling arrangements.

### Limited access to extended leave

- 4.23.3 If an employee wishes to take extended periods of unpaid Maternity Leave, Long Service Leave (LSL) or Leave Without Pay (LWOP) in association with their mandatory 14 week Maternity Leave period (12 weeks with an extension of two weeks as per the DIBP Enterprise Agreement), their entitlement to other conditions of service associated with their long-term posting may change. A request for extended periods of leave may also result in termination of the posting by the Secretary, dependent on operational requirements at post and the ability to provide backfilling options.

## 4.24 Assistance with education costs

### Introduction

- 4.24.1 The education assistance provisions in this section are provided to employees on a long-term posting to assist with education costs for recognised dependent children between three years of age and 18 years of age who either reside with the employee at post or remain in Australia to attend school.

### Limitations

- 4.24.2 Education assistance is only provided for children attending pre-school, primary school or secondary school. No education assistance is provided for tertiary students.
- 4.24.3 If an employee's posting ceases between the end of the final term of a school year and prior to the commencement of the first term of the next school year, education assistance is not provided for the new school year.
- 4.24.4 Entitlement to education costs assistance will cease should an employee take unpaid leave.
- 4.24.5 Miscellaneous education items such as school uniforms, books, lunches, etc. are a personal cost to employees.
- 4.24.6 Additional school-related fees incurred by employees for extra-curricular activities are a personal cost to the employee.
- 4.24.7 If an employee's child resides at a third location there will be no entitlement to education assistance under this section or to Child Reunion Allowance in respect of this child.

### Reimbursement payments

- 4.24.8 An employee who is entitled to reimbursement under this section may be paid in full as soon as an account is received and evidence of the actual payment is provided.

### Assistance for a part year

- 4.24.9 If this section applies to an employee for part of a whole year, see [Schedule Two](#) for the formula which is used to calculate the reimbursement to the employee for that period (where refunds are not possible for non-completion of the whole school year the full amount will be paid by DIBP).

### Reimbursement to be reduced by refunds

- 4.24.10 If an employee receives a refund from a school for compulsory boarding and tuition fees that were met by DIBP, the refund is to be repaid to DIBP or alternatively, must be used to offset the amount of reimbursement being claimed by the employee.

## Education assistance in Australia

- 4.24.11 The maximum assistance towards educational expenses in respect of a child remaining in Australia during an employee's long-term posting is the compulsory fees for tuition and boarding at the Canberra Girls Grammar School or the Canberra Grammar School.
- 4.24.12 There is no entitlement to education assistance in Australia for employees on a short-term mission.
- 4.24.13 To receive assistance with compulsory tuition and boarding fees, a child must have resided with the employee for at least six months of the year in Australia prior to the employee's posting.

### Assistance (tuition)

- 4.24.14 Education assistance in Australia may be provided prior to an employee's posting commencing if, as a direct result of the posting, an employee is required to relocate, or make arrangements to relocate, their child from their normal school to another school and subsequently incurs additional fees, charges, etc. because of the need for relocation.
- 4.24.15 If a child is to be educated in Australia, assistance with compulsory tuition fees commences from whichever is the later of:
- the beginning of the school term in which the employee departs Australia to commence their posting; or
  - the commencement of the Australian school year in the year of posting.
- 4.24.16 Assistance with compulsory tuition fees concludes at the end of the final term of the school year in which the employee's posting ends, provided the school year has already commenced. The exception is Year 11 and Year 12 students for whom assistance continues until the end of Year 12, subject to the student meeting a qualifying period of at least 12 months attendance at the school prior to the cessation of the employee's posting.

### Assistance (boarding)

- 4.24.17 Eligibility for assistance with boarding fees commences at the beginning of the school term in which the employee departs Australia and concludes at the end of the school term in which the employee's posting ends.
- 4.24.18 Employees are required to make a personal contribution towards boarding fees to cover meals and other expenses that the employee would have incurred if the child accompanied the employee on posting. The boarding contribution rate is determined by DFAT, which reviews the rate annually using Australian Bureau of Statistics data. Current contribution rates can be seen at [Schedule Two](#).
- 4.24.19 If a child remains in Australia and resides in a private board arrangement, there is no entitlement to reimbursement for private boarding fees.

## Education at post

- 4.24.20 Education assistance overseas is not provided for a child unless the child lives, or intends to live with the employee at post for at least three quarters of the duration of a posting or for 12 months, whichever is the longer.

## Tuition and transport costs

- 4.24.21 If an employee's child resides with the employee at post and the child is at least three years of age, the compulsory fees for the benchmark school and basic school transport costs to and from the benchmark school are met by the Department.
- 4.24.22 Basic school transport costs that are paid by an employee for a dependent child to attend a benchmark school are reimbursable. This includes:
- school bus
  - public transport bus; or
  - train; and
  - does not include:
    - private motor vehicle or
    - taxis.

## Benchmark schools

- 4.24.23 Benchmark schools are determined by DFAT and reviewed regularly. A list of approved benchmark schools is attached at [Schedule Four](#).
- 4.24.24 If an employee chooses to send a child to a school other than the benchmark school, the level of assistance for that school is only equivalent to what it would have cost had the child attended the benchmark school (i.e. Compulsory fees only). If the benchmark school at the employee's post is the public school system, no additional assistance is provided should an employee choose to send their child to a private school.
- 4.24.25 If there are no vacancies at the benchmark school, the [Secretary](#) can determine an appropriate school for reimbursement costs, in consultation with DFAT.
- 4.24.26 Where the benchmark school is the local government school employees should be aware enrolment may be based on residential catchment areas/zones. Employees should consult with DFAT or post when determining their needs for schooling and housing in these circumstances.

## Language tuition

- 4.24.27 The Department will reimburse reasonable costs, as determined by the [Secretary](#), for essential foreign language tuition when a benchmark school does not use English as the teaching language.

## Remedial tuition

- 4.24.28 The [Secretary](#) may approve the cost of no more than 200 hours remedial tuition to be reimbursed where, in the professional judgment of the school, a child's progress and performance in a particular compulsory subject is unsatisfactory as a consequence of the child's relocation to the post.

- 4.24.29 Remedial tuition covers the transitional period from one school system to another which has different requirements, syllabi and standards. It is not a provision for intensive pre-examination tutoring. If a child's school does not provide remedial tuition, the child may receive extra tuition from an accredited tutoring establishment.

## Correspondence lessons

- 4.24.30 If there is no adequate benchmark school at post, and a child is educated by correspondence with an Australian school, the Secretary may approve reimbursement for a reasonable amount of local tuition assistance and the necessarily incurred cost of correspondence lessons. Assistance will not be provided if the correspondence is with a non-Australian school. Approval from the Secretary must be sought prior to commencement of private tuition.
- 4.24.31 Where there is a benchmark school at the post, and a child is educated by correspondence with an Australian school, assistance will be limited to the cost of compulsory school fees and tuition costs for compulsory subjects up to the benchmark school limit.

## School excursions

- 4.24.32 Parents are expected to pay for the same types of school excursions as they do in Australia, including sporting and cultural trips. The Secretary may approve reimbursement for the cost of an in-country school excursion where the child's participation is compulsory and the excursion forms part of the school curricula.

## Summer school programmes

- 4.24.33 At certain posts, employees may be eligible for reimbursement of the costs of an approved summer school programme for any vacation period in excess of the six week Australian summer vacation period, where the Secretary has accepted that there are limited facilities at post accessible to children during the summer vacation. To qualify for a summer school, the summer holiday break at post must be longer than the Australian summer holiday break of six weeks. For example, if a summer holiday break at post is ten weeks and there is a summer school approved for the location, the cost of up to four weeks schooling may be met by DIBP.
- 4.24.34 Suitable summer school programmes are determined by DFAT. Summer schools are not benchmarked and reimbursements will only be made for attendance at approved summer schools listed at Schedule Four – Benchmark Schools. There is no flexibility for attendance at other than the approved summer schools listed.

## Special needs education

- 4.24.35 In instances where a dependent child at post has a requirement to access special needs education, DIBP will assist with costs to the following limits:
- Where a benchmark school has been set, an amount equal to the compulsory fees at the benchmark school plus an additional 25% of the fee; at posts where no benchmark school has been set, such as the USA, the reimbursable school fee amount plus 25% (this may be used to offset schooling costs or the employment of a classroom assistant)

- Where the benchmark school is inadequate for a child at post with special needs, the Secretary may consider and approve assistance with the additional costs of a special needs school, and/or
- Where the services of a counsellor are used at the post, including counselling and psychological evaluation of children with learning difficulties, excess costs may be met by either the Comcover Statement of Cover, or by the Department.

## Return to Australia for education

- 4.24.36 The Secretary may approve an economy class airfare, up to the allowable travel cost, for an employee's child to travel to Australia to enroll at a boarding school. Travel at official expense will not be approved under this clause if an employee has less than 12 months remaining of their posting period.
- 4.24.37 If a child requires assistance with enrolment at boarding school in Australia, the Secretary may approve an economy class return fare, up to the allowable travel cost, for one parent to travel to Australia with their child. A parent is only entitled to travel once per posting to enrol a child into school in Australia.
- 4.24.38 A child approved to return to Australia for education will be entitled to a 15kg excess baggage allowance. An accompanying parent will not be entitled to an excess baggage allowance. Travel by a child under these clauses will be taken to be the child's return to Australia (i.e. End of posting) travel. No assistance will be provided for accommodation, meals or local transport costs.

## 4.25 Bereavement

### Introduction

- 4.25.1 This part details what assistance will be available if an employee, or an employee's dependant, dies whilst undertaking a long term posting or short term mission.
- 4.25.2 Any entitlements or obligations that would have been applicable in relation to dependants are to continue to apply to the dependants for a relevant period, as determined by the Secretary, noting:
- overseas living allowances are payable at the rate that would have been payable
  - no additional school terms or assistance with education will be covered,
  - transport for dependants and their possessions may be provided to a location other than Australia but the amount paid must not be more than the amount DIBP would have paid for their transport to Australia.

### Authorised person to contact next of kin

- 4.25.3 In the event that an employee dies overseas during a period of official business, the responsibility to contact the employee's next of kin rests with the First Assistant Secretary, Support Division.

## Funeral costs of employee/dependant

- 4.25.4 If a posted employee who is overseas on official business or a dependant living overseas with the employee dies, DIBP will pay the cost of returning the employee's or dependant's body (or ashes) to Australia if so requested by the next of kin. Alternatively, DIBP will reimburse to the deceased's legal personal representative the amount by which the cost of the employee's or dependant's funeral at the overseas locality exceeds the reasonable cost that would have been incurred if the body was returned to Australia.
- 4.25.5 For the purposes of the above clause, the cost of an employee's or dependant's funeral at an overseas locality is taken to include the cost of returning the employee's or dependant's ashes to Australia if the employee's or dependant's body is cremated at the post.

## Fares to attend a funeral overseas

- 4.25.6 If an employee on duty overseas, or the employee's spouse, dies and a close relative of the employee or spouse travels to a post to attend the funeral or make necessary arrangements arising from the death of that person and the remains of the person are not to be removed at departmental expense, the employee or spouse is entitled to be reimbursed the lesser of:
- the amount of fares incurred by the close relative to travel to and from that post; or
  - the allowable travel cost for the travel.

## 4.26 Emergency Evacuations and Authorised Departures from Post

### Introduction

- 4.26.1 This section provides conditions and entitlements for employees and their dependants at post or on official business overseas, when the Minister or Secretary authorises the temporary or permanent departure from a post, country or region overseas. The conditions apply to the following three departure scenarios:
- directed orderly departure
  - emergency evacuation; and
  - voluntary departure at official expense.
- 4.26.2 Period of departure is the period beginning the day an employee or dependant departs from post and ends on:
- in the case of an employee, whichever is the earlier of:
    - the day the employee returns to the post
    - the day an employee's posting is terminated; or
    - the day an employee begins living permanently in Australia or at a location other than the post; and
  - in the case of a dependant, whichever is the earlier of:
    - the day the dependant returns to the post

- the day a dependant leaves the post because of the termination of the employee's posting; or
- the day a dependant begins living permanently in Australia or at a location other than the post.

## Access to other entitlements

- 4.26.3 Irrespective of the circumstances of an employee's departure from a post under this section, employees do not attract any other allowances or payments except where the [Secretary](#) may otherwise determine.
- 4.26.4 There is no change to the provisions for children in boarding school if one or both parents return on a directed departure to Australia or another approved location.

## 4.27 Types of Evacuations and Departure

### Directed orderly departure

- 4.27.1 A directed orderly departure may occur where the Minister directs all dependants and certain, or all, employees to depart a post, country or region overseas. The directed orderly departure scenario assumes conditions in a country allow ample time for those departing to plan and organise their travel and to put their local affairs in order.

### Emergency Evacuation

- 4.27.2 An emergency evacuation may occur when the situation at post or at destination (in country) is critical and a Minister or Secretary directs an immediate emergency evacuation (for example; war-like activities in country, natural disaster, or terrorism).
- 4.27.3 In the event of an emergency evacuation the following conditions and entitlements apply with the following variations:
- transport will be by whatever means and class is available at reasonable cost and which ensures the safety of employees and dependants
  - an employee and dependants will receive 20 kg of excess baggage allowance per person. The [Secretary](#) may authorise additional excess baggage; and
  - the Secretary may authorise the reimbursement of reasonable costs necessarily incurred by an employee for purchasing apparel or other personal items as considered reasonable in order to live at the evacuation location. Reimbursement for expenses incurred should not be anticipated.

### Voluntary Departure at Official Expense

- 4.27.4 A voluntary departure from post at official expense might occur when there are certain situations that while they may not warrant a directed orderly departure from post, a Minister may authorise the voluntary departure at official expense of dependants and certain employees and their return to post at a later date.



- 4.27.5 When an employee or their dependants are authorised to depart a post on a voluntary basis and later return at official expense, the following conditions and entitlements apply, unless determined otherwise by the Secretary.

## 4.28 Conditions and Entitlements

### Destination centre

- 4.28.1 The Secretary will determine an employee's and their dependants' destination centre which will normally be Canberra. Employees and dependants may be approved to travel to an alternative destination in Australia, depending on the circumstances. Proposals for travel to alternative destinations in Australia must be submitted prior to travel and must include reasons for the request, the cost of the travel and accommodation arrangements at the destination.
- 4.28.2 The Secretary may approve for an employee and their dependant's to travel to a third country instead of the authorised destination centre. Travel to a third country will only be approved where travel to the destination is considered to be safe. DFAT's travel advisories will be considered in determining a safe destination.
- 4.28.3 Where the Secretary approves dependants to travel to a third country instead of the authorised destination centre, travel costs additional to the notional direct post/authorised destination centre return cost are a personal expense.

### Travel

- 4.28.4 Travel must be by the most direct route. Air travel will be at economy-class.
- 4.28.5 An employee and dependants may only travel by private motor vehicle, where the Secretary deems it appropriate and approves the means of travel prior to departure from destination.
- 4.28.6 Motor Vehicle Allowance applicable for the employee's post will be paid on these occasions. Motor Vehicle Allowance covers only the direct travel between the post and the approved destination.
- 4.28.7 If a more appropriate form of transport for a lower cost can be utilised, only the amount of this transport will be paid. For example, if the cost of an airfare to the destination is less than the reimbursement of motor vehicle kilometres, only the cost of the airfare will be reimbursed to the traveller.

### Excess Baggage

- 4.28.8 An employee and dependants travelling by air each receive 12 kilograms of excess baggage allowance.

### Storage of Effects

- 4.28.9 When an employee and dependants depart a post under this section, personal effects including motor vehicles may be stored at official expense at post. DIBP will take advice from Post Administration regarding alternative cost-effective arrangements such as hiring guards or arranging for domestics to live-in for the duration of the departure.

## Continuation of post allowances

- 4.28.10 Employees continue to receive full overseas allowances for a period of up to three months after an authorised temporary departure from a post. In the event of a prolonged departure from post in excess of three months, the Secretary may review the continuing payment of post allowances in the context of the particular circumstances and evacuation package.
- 4.28.11 Employees at hardship posts continue to receive hardship allowance and accrue additional annual leave as appropriate during their departure for up to three months at which time there will be a review of continuation of allowances in accordance with the above clause.
- 4.28.12 In the event of a prolonged departure from post in excess of three months, the Secretary may review the continuing payment of full meal allowances in the context of the particular circumstances (i.e. accommodation arrangements).

## Accommodation

- 4.28.13 The cost of reasonable commercial accommodation with cooking facilities will be met as an official expense for the duration of the temporary departure. Reasonable cost limits based on Canberra accommodation rates will be advised by the Overseas Conditions team prior to departure from post. If employees or dependants elect to stay in accommodation which exceeds the authorised cost limits, the extra cost is a personal expense. If an employee or dependants elect to relocate to different accommodation, associated arrangements and relocation costs are a personal responsibility. No payment will be made for private accommodation arrangements with relatives or friends.
- 4.28.14 Where the authorised departure destination is Australia, no accommodation is paid for a dependant who travels to a third country.

## Meal supplement

- 4.28.15 Two-thirds of the DIBP approved meal allowance rate for the particular domestic destination (not including incidental payment) will be paid to employees on Long Term Posting and each dependant while in Australia on temporary departure from post.
- 4.28.16 Meal allowances will not be paid for a dependant who travels to a third country if the authorised destination centre is Australia. For authorised destinations outside of Australia the applicable meal allowance for that destination will be that provided by ECA.
- 4.28.17 Meal allowance will be advanced to an employee's Australian bank account once confirmation of departure from post is received. An advance of this kind must be acquitted using the Travel Diary. Refer to Acquittal of travel allowance. If the employee returns to post prior to the end of the advance period, any outstanding meal allowance must be repaid to DIBP.

## Out-of-pocket incidental costs

- 4.28.18 To assist with out-of-pocket incidental costs incurred during a temporary departure or evacuation, employees will receive a one-off relocation supplementation payment as outlined in [Schedule Two](#). The payment is intended to assist with meeting expenses of an incidental nature (e.g. clothing, transport, telephone calls and other similar matters) relating to the authorised evacuation. This payment will be subject to income tax and will be grossed-up to include the PAYG liability.
- 4.28.19 The [Secretary](#) may review and adjust the amount of out-of-pocket incidental payment in July each year.

## Reunion travel

- 4.28.20 If an employee remains at post, they will receive a reverse reunion visit if their dependent children are on a directed departure for a period exceeding three months. If an employee was previously in receipt of reunion entitlements, their normal reunion entitlement is reduced by one visit if a reverse reunion is undertaken. Reunion travel will not be approved to a post that is subject to a directed departure instruction or a voluntary departure.

## Return to post

- 4.28.21 An employee must return to post or official duties at the direction of the Secretary. All financial assistance for an employee's dependants remaining in Australia will cease seven days after the dependants have been authorised by the Secretary to return to the post.

## Authorised person to contact next of kin

- 4.28.22 In the event that an employee is involved in an emergency situation overseas during a period of official business, the responsibility to contact the employee's next of kin rests with the First Assistant Secretary, Support Division.

# 4.29 Early Termination of a Posting

## Early Termination of a posting initiated by management

- 4.29.1 Termination of postings may occur for a range of reasons under Section 25 of the *Public Service Act 1999*.
- 4.29.2 In the event of a management-initiated termination, or other extraordinary circumstance, the [Secretary](#) may approve a payment to the employee, as set out in [Schedule Two](#), with consideration given to the below criteria:
- The date of termination of posting will be the date the employee departs the post.
  - The payment is determined by the number of months remaining in the term of the original posting.
  - Where the employee's posting has previously been extended, the payment is calculated by reference to the number of months remaining of the term of the extended posting.

- 4.29.3 Management-initiated termination of posting might include situations where a position is withdrawn or a post is closed. Withdrawals for disciplinary, performance-related or personal reasons are not covered by compensation payments or assistance.
- 4.29.4 These provisions do not apply if an employee is cross-posted as a result of the early termination of their original posting.
- 4.29.5 If an employee's long-term posting is cancelled prior to travel to post, and uplift has not yet occurred no compensation is available. If uplift has occurred the Secretary may determine an amount of compensation considered reasonable.

### Early Termination of a hardship posting initiated by employee

- 4.29.6 Should an employee posted to a location with a hardship rating of Category D, E or F, decide during the first year of their posting that they wish to complete only two years instead of three for professional or personal reasons, they can apply for an early return. The employee should advise Overseas Network Management Section, through the Regional Director, of their request at the end of their first year at post. Early return will occur without prejudice unless a Regional Director supports the early return in the employee's performance appraisal (either PDA or End of Post Report) as a result of unsatisfactory performance.
- 4.29.7 In a shorter posting period of 12-24 months, the assisted leave fare entitlements would be reduced (see Schedule Three for calculations).

### Assistance on resignation or termination of posting by employee

- 4.29.8 When an employee ends a posting before the ordinary period of posting is completed, other than in the circumstances outlined in clause 4.29.3, the employee is entitled to the following assistance in relation to air fares and the removal of household goods:

Time completed at post	Assistance provided*
Ordinary period of posting	Full airfare and removal costs
Three-quarters but not full period	Three-quarters of airfare and removal costs
At least half but less than three-quarters	Half airfare and removal costs
Less than half the ordinary period	No financial assistance provided.

*\*Assistance for air travel will be paid as a reimbursement.*

- 4.29.9 An employee is only entitled to assistance if the employee returns to Australia within three months of resigning or terminating the posting. An employee will not be reimbursed an amount greater than the allowable travel cost of the employee's and their dependant's air travel.
- 4.29.10 If the Secretary, on considering the circumstances of a termination, is satisfied that it is reasonable, the Secretary may cover the full assistance costs of the employee's and dependant's air travel and removal costs.

- 4.29.11 The cost of storage and insurance of an employee's household goods stored in Australia during the employee's posting will be met by DIBP for up to three months from the date the employee's posting ends.
- 4.29.12 If an employee has separated from DIBP and chooses to move to another location in Australia, the department will only meet the out-of-storage costs to the equivalent of delivery to an address in the employee's pre-posting locality for household goods stored in Australia during the employee's posting. Costs relating to transporting household goods that have been returned from overseas after customs clearance to a location other than the employee's pre-posting locality will be at personal cost to the employee.

### Taking up a promotion in Australia while on posting

- 4.29.13 If an employee wins a position in Australia while on posting it would be expected the employee take up their new position at the cessation of their posting. In the case the employee wishes to commence before the end of their posting, a reasonable period of release must be organised through the Overseas Network Management section and the relevant Regional Director. The Secretary may determine an appropriate level of assistance for the early return to Australia. Early return will occur without prejudice.

## END OF PART FOUR

## 5. Part Five – Long-term Postings – Departing post

### 5.1 Introduction

#### Notification

- 5.1.1 The Overseas Conditions team will contact employees three months prior to the end of the posting period and provide Return to Australia advice. Notification will include all documentation required to facilitate the employee's return from posting.

#### Transfer allowance

- 5.1.2 An employee returning to Australia is entitled to a transfer allowance in accordance with Schedule Two.
- 5.1.3 If an employee's spouse departs a post before the end of an employee's posting, the employee may receive partial payment of the accompanied transfer allowance entitlement in advance of the employee's departure from the post.

#### End of Post Report

- 5.1.4 Each employee should ensure they have an End of Post report when completing a long-term posting. Employees are responsible for ensuring that their report is finalised and forwarded to <sup>s. 47E(d)</sup> @border.gov.au prior to their departure from post. End of Post reports are used by Selection Advisory Committees (SAC) for consideration in future posting rounds.

## 5.2 Removal and Return of Household Goods to Australia

### Removal Arrangements

- 5.2.1 The removal and return of an employee's personal household goods will be coordinated through post. Employees should ensure that the SAO at post is informed of their preparations.
- 5.2.2 The Overseas Conditions team in Canberra will advise Allied Pickfords of an employee's return approximately three months prior to their departure. Allied Pickfords will then contact the employee to make an appointment to conduct a survey and make arrangements for uplift and shipment of their goods back to the employee's home base in Australia.

### Removal and Storage for Cross Posting

- 5.2.3 Employees proceeding on a cross-posting may return unwanted or excess household goods to Australia for storage at official expense provided the total volume of the household goods removed to Australia and to their new post does not exceed the employee's overall volume limit.

## Volume Entitlements

- 5.2.4 The table below specifies the cubic metre limits by family composition for employees returning to Australia from an ordinary period of posting plus any extension at one post. Cubic metre volume limits refer to packed amounts.

Ordinary period of posting and extensions at one post					
Family composition	1	2	3	4	5
Cubic metre volume on RTA	15	19	21	24	26

*\*inclusive of external packaging*

- 5.2.5 The table below specifies the cubic metre limits by family composition for employees proceeding on cross-posting or returning to Australia from multiple postings.

Cross-postings and Multiple postings					
Family composition	1	2	3	4	5
Cubic metre volume post to post	15	19	21	24	26
Cubic metre volume on RTA	19	23	27	30	33

*\*inclusive of external packaging*

- 5.2.6 Family composition comprises only those dependants who accompany an employee at official expense. When family size is greater than five persons, volume limits increase by two cubic metres for each additional dependant.
- 5.2.7 Household goods that exceed the allowable volume limit will be removed at the employee's expense. Employee contributions towards removal of additional household goods must be paid prior to departure. The [Secretary](#) may vary a volume limit where exceptional circumstances have resulted in an employee exceeding their prescribed volume limit.

## Dispatch Arrangements

- 5.2.8 Employees returning to Australia will normally have their household goods sent by sea freight unless they are returning from a designated 'airfreight' post. If an employee has an airfreight entitlement and chooses to send their household goods by sea freight, their volume entitlement will remain unchanged and cannot be increased.
- 5.2.9 The following posts have been designated airfreight posts for return of household goods to Australia: Dhaka, Islamabad, Nairobi, Phnom Penh and Tehran. The [Secretary](#) may add or delete designated airfreight posts.
- 5.2.10 Employees proceeding on cross-posting will normally have their household goods sent by air freight.

## Freight restrictions

- 5.2.11 The dispatch of hazardous, explosive or combustible items is prohibited. It is an employee's responsibility to ensure that they do not transport prohibited or dangerous items. Further details are available on the [Civil Aviation Safety Authority website](#).

- 5.2.12 The Civil Aviation Safety Authority specifies restrictions on what may be transported by aircraft. These include:
- furniture items (including pianos) larger than 1.52mx1.01mx1.62m
  - whitegoods
  - boats, canoes and windsurfers
  - trailers
  - heavy gymnasium equipment
  - lawn mower; and
  - paint, aerosol cans, lighter fuel, etc.

## Employee responsibilities

- 5.2.13 Employees must comply with Australian customs and quarantine requirements. Employees will be personally responsible for additional costs incurred for clearance, handling, storage or destruction of undeclared or prohibited items.
- 5.2.14 Employees must ensure that they are aware of the Government's "Duty Free Concessions" and the provisions related to unaccompanied items. Often goods purchased in the previous 12 months may be subject to duty where they are returned as unaccompanied luggage.

## Insurance and Inventories

- 5.2.15 Prior to uplift, it is encouraged that employees contact their insurance company to ensure that the policy is valid for the return of their goods to Australia. Employees should also ensure inventories are updated for the removalist and insurance company. Employees should also check with their insurance company if they require additional insurance for transit.
- 5.2.16 DIBP will continue to meet the costs for insuring goods stored in Australia for up to three months following the cease date at post. After this date the employee is responsible for both the insurance and storage costs of goods.

## Storage of household goods on completion of a posting

- 5.2.17 DIBP will continue to pay the storage and insurance costs for household goods that have been stored in Australia during the employee's posting for a period of up to three months from the date an employee's posting ceases to allow sufficient time for the employee to return from post and move into permanent accommodation.
- 5.2.18 DIBP will not meet storage or insurance costs on household goods returned from post after customs clearance beyond a period of annual leave with overseas allowances that is taken immediately after completion of a posting. Employees taking approved long service leave, annual leave not accrued at post, or leave without pay after completing a posting will be personally responsible for the storage and insurance costs relating to their household goods being returned to Australia.



## Damage to personal goods

- 5.2.19 If any personal goods are damaged, employees will need to contact the removal company, storage company, or insurance company immediately about making a claim.

## Leave for packing, uplift and removal

- 5.2.20 Employees returning from long-term posting are entitled to up to three days Miscellaneous Leave with Pay (Exceptional Circumstances) for packing, uplift and removal of their household goods (including when cross-posting). This entitlement allows two days for packing and one day for house cleaning. If additional days are required, employees must apply for personal leave or annual leave, ensuring post requirements are met.
- 5.2.21 Employees are entitled to two days Miscellaneous Leave with Pay (Exceptional Circumstances) at their destination for unpacking their household goods. If additional days are required, employees must apply for personal leave or annual leave.
- 5.2.22 The above mentioned Miscellaneous Leave with Pay must be used at the time of packing/unpacking household good; it will not be re-credited. For example employees who choose to take annual leave or unpaid leave for this purpose will not have their leave re-credited or receive remuneration.

## Employees remaining overseas after cessation of posting

- 5.2.23 If an employee intends to remain overseas after completing a posting, they will have six months from the date their posting ceases to return their household goods to Australia at departmental expense. In such cases, the world-wide multiple risk insurance and storage costs for the employee's household goods that were removed overseas will be a personal cost to the employee from the day after the posting ceases, or if annual leave with overseas allowances is taken immediately after the posting ceases, the day after the annual leave with allowances ends.
- 5.2.24 If an employee remains overseas after cessation of posting, DIBP will continue to pay the storage and insurance costs for their household goods that are held in storage in Australia only for a period of three months from the date the posting ceases.

## 5.3 Settling-out at post

### Intention

- 5.3.1 The intention of settling-in and settling-out provisions is to assist with the additional costs for meals faced by employees and their eligible dependants who are obliged to temporarily reside in a hotel or other commercial accommodation prior to, during, or after a posting.

## Entitlement

- 5.3.2 The settling-out at post period begins on the day when long-term residential accommodation becomes unavailable because of the completion of the employee's posting, and ends on the day the employee's period of posting ends. The settling out period includes:
- an entitlement to temporary accommodation at official expense; and
  - a meals supplement payment.
- 5.3.3 The maximum settling-out period at post is 14 days, if the Secretary is satisfied that the circumstances of the employee's removal from the post make it impractical to reduce the period that the employee occupies temporary accommodation.

## Meal Allowance paid overseas

- 5.3.4 If an employee and their dependants are authorised to live in a hotel or other accommodation without cooking facilities during a settling-out period at post, the employee is entitled to:
- two-thirds of the meal allowance specified for the post for the employee and any dependant 12 years or older
  - for each dependant who is less than 12 years of age, two-thirds of the amount specified above for employees and dependants 12 years or older;
  - for each complete day during the settling in/out period.

## Part-day of meals supplement paid overseas

- 5.3.5 On the first and last days of a settling-out period at a post, the employee's and dependant's meal allowance is determined in the same manner as for a short-term mission. The proportion payable is set out in the following table.

Table – Meal rate for day of arrival or departure		
Time of arrival or departure	% of rate for day of arrival	% of rate for day of departure
Before 07:00	100	Nil
07:00 – 13:00	75	25
13:01 – 19:00	50	50
After 19:00	Nil	100

## Meals supplement not payable overseas in certain circumstances

- 5.3.6 An employee and dependants are not entitled to meals supplement in the following cases:
- if meals are provided to the employee or a dependant, or are otherwise paid for, by the Australian Government (e.g. receiving travel allowance)

- during a period of recreation leave taken by the employee, including on weekends and public holidays contiguous with that recreation leave; or
- while the employee occupies accommodation with facilities and utensils sufficient to allow the employee to prepare a cooked meal (e.g. serviced apartment).

## Incidental allowance is not paid

- 5.3.7 There is no entitlement for employees to receive an incidental allowance during settling-out at post.

## 5.4 Travel from Post

### Fare Entitlement

- 5.4.1 Employees and dependants at post are entitled to return to Australia using the International Best Fare (IBF), as set out in [Department of Finance Resource Management Guide No. 405](#). DIBP will pay the cost of an employee's relocation air travel to Australia from post on the most direct route using the lowest business class airfare available, with reasonable planning, on a reputable carrier.
- 5.4.2 Travel originating from post for return to Australia will be managed locally through post administration. At post, the employees should obtain three business class quotes from different airlines for return travel, including any dependants, and select the best fare having consideration of any additional costs, such as any additional accommodation costs the route would require.
- 5.4.3 If an employee intends to remain overseas on paid leave after completing a posting they will have six months from their posting end date to return to Australia at the department's expense.

### Approval of travel

- 5.4.4 Return to Australia travel approval must be obtained prior to travel, in accordance with current requirements and financial delegations. Full details on the approval process for international travel can be found in [Financial Management Directive](#). A travel minute will need to be raised in consultation with the relevant Regional Director and submitted to the delegate for approval.

### Class of Air Travel

- 5.4.5 An employee is entitled to international air travel in accordance with the following provisions:
- where three classes of travel are provided on the aircraft, the employee travels at the intermediate class, usually business class or its equivalent.
  - where there are no intermediate or business classes the ordinary standard of travel is economy class.
  - where business class or an equivalent option is not available for international travel, the [Secretary](#) may consider approving an alternate (non-direct) route, particularly where the travel is in excess of eight hours.

- 5.4.6 Australian domestic sectors and in-country sectors used in conjunction with an international itinerary may be at the same standard of travel if a through ticket is purchased.
- 5.4.7 If an employee travels at a lower standard of travel than prescribed, no credit is to be provided either in cash or as an offset, against higher expenditure on travel in another sector. Similarly, employees are not able to voluntarily downgrade the class of travel to take account of wider travel options or to purchase additional tickets for non-official travel.

## Travel costs of dependants

- 5.4.8 DIBP will pay the travel costs of eligible dependants to the same extent as a posted employee, subject to the following conditions:
- a spouse and accompanying dependants travelling separately to the employee will be entitled to business class air fares using the IBF, without rest days at official expense; and
  - dependants not accompanying an employee or the employee's spouse will be entitled to economy class air fares, without rest days, at official expense.
- 5.4.9 Baby baskets will normally be provided for infants that are new born or not mobile. DIBP will pay for airline seating for infants that are mobile or sitting.

## Alternate routes

- 5.4.10 Travel to and from a posting must meet the sole purpose of conveying employees and dependants to and from post in a timely manner. If employees choose to travel by other than the International Best Fare (IBF) as set out in [Department of Finance Resource Management Guide No. 405](#), indirectly to or from Australia, the following apply:
- employees must meet any travel costs in excess of the business class fair using the IBF
  - rest days and travel allowance will be applicable based on the IBF entitlement
  - any costs incurred additional to those which would be incurred based on the IBF (additional visas, extra travel insurance, etc.) are the personal responsibility of the employee, and must be paid prior to travel; and
  - where Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) is incurred in respect of a deviation from direct travel (including allowed rest days) using the IBF, the FBT liability for the entire trip (not just the deviation) will be at the employee's personal expense unless DIBP agrees to meet this liability.

## Travel out of hours

- 5.4.11 Employees undertaking international business travel may not access flex time or overtime for periods of travel that fall outside normal working hours.

## Frequent flyer points

- 5.4.12 Government employees should not accrue Frequent Flyer Points or Loyalty Reward Points for official business travel. Bookings through DIBP's travel management company do not earn points.

## Promotions and competitions

- 5.4.13 Employees travelling on official business are not permitted to participate in promotions or competitions conducted by external providers.

## Travel and Medical Insurance

- 5.4.14 International travel insurance for official purposes is provided under DIBP's Comcover Insurance Policy. Employees are responsible for private travel and medical insurance when travelling privately, to meet unforeseen circumstances. This includes any period of annual leave *en route* from post.

## Excess baggage

- 5.4.15 The standard baggage limit for business class travellers is 30kg on international flights and 20kg on domestic flights. Where employees and their eligible dependant's send their personal effects by sea freight from a long-term posting (including a cross-posting), DIBP will meet the cost of:
- an additional 15kg of excess baggage for each person where the airline calculates excess baggage by kilograms; or
  - an additional piece of luggage for each person where the airline charge is based on pieces of luggage.
- 5.4.16 This is to compensate for the cost of carrying surplus luggage on the flight from post. The cost of the excess baggage may be charged to a Commonwealth Credit Card.
- 5.4.17 Any freight, customs, quarantine, delivery, storage or other charges incurred are a personal expense.
- 5.4.18 The excess baggage provisions do not extend to household pets.
- 5.4.19 Employees may convert their 15kg excess baggage entitlement to the equivalent value for unaccompanied air freight. Employees must provide an accurate customs declaration and ensure prohibited goods are not imported.
- 5.4.20 The Secretary may approve additional excess baggage entitlement in exceptional circumstances.

## 5.5 Rest Periods from Post

### Introduction

- 5.5.1 Rest periods are intended to provide recuperation after lengthy overseas travel. A rest period is defined as a period of sufficient duration to enable overnight rest, but not longer than 24 hours.

- 5.5.2 On return to Australia employees are not entitled to Travel Allowance or accommodation during a rest period in their home location.
- 5.5.3 Settling-in allowances may be used in conjunction with a rest period. Settling-in allowance is payable as per section 5.7 of the Manual.
- 5.5.4 For further information see [section 3.12](#).

## 5.6 Leave and Salary arrangements following an overseas posting

### Leave with allowances

- 5.6.1 Employees may access only one year's accrued leave credit with overseas living allowances at the end of their long term posting, subject to normal leave approval processes at post.
- 5.6.2 Employees with accrued leave in excess of this amount will retain their leave entitlement but will not be eligible for allowances.

#### **Example:**

An employee commences a three year posting with 22 days annual leave balance prior to posting. Their posting is at a Hardship post where nine days additional leave is provided each year.

Leave accrued during posting (3yrs @ 29 days) = 87 days.

The employee utilises 50 days of Leave over their posting period, and has a remaining 37 days leave credits with allowances at the end of their post.

Total annual leave available at end of posting (22 days pre-posting + 37 days during posting) = 59 days.

The maximum amount of leave with allowances that can be taken on cessation of posting is up to 12 months' leave credits accrued at the post (i.e. 29 days in this example).

Leave available with overseas allowances at end of posting = 29 days

*\*Employees with accrued leave in excess of this amount will retain their leave entitlement but will not be eligible for payment of overseas living allowances beyond the 29th day.*

### Leave

- 5.6.3 Applications for long or extended leave (excluding annual leave with allowances outlined above) must be approved and funded by the work area to which the employee is returning.
- 5.6.4 If an employee is planning to take either LSL / LWOP following cessation of a posting, they must advise the Overseas Conditions team at least two months prior to the end of the posting cessation date.

- 5.6.5 As with extended leave LSL/LWOP will need to be approved by the work area to which the employee is returning.

## Payment of overseas living allowances

- 5.6.6 The Secretary may approve payment of overseas living allowances if accrued annual leave cannot be taken immediately after cessation of a posting because of illness, injury or DIBP's organisational requirements.
- 5.6.7 The Secretary may approve payment of overseas living allowances if an employee ceases a long-term posting and returns to Australia in advance of their dependants whilst the dependants remain at post, for a period of up to 28 days from the date the employee's posting ceased.

## 5.7 Settling-in on Return to Australia

### Entitlement

- 5.7.1 When an employee on their return to Australia arrives back at their home location they will be entitled to one settling-in period of up to three days. The settling-in period in Australia includes:
- an entitlement to temporary accommodation at official expense; and
  - a meals supplement payment (daily mean allowance).
- 5.7.2 Settling-in entitlements at official expense will be provided only once during each settling-in occasion. Where employees opt to travel separately to their dependants and use their settling-in entitlement, the dependants will not be eligible for further settling-in assistance.
- 5.7.3 An employee who returns to a different headquarters to the one from which they departed, due to operational requirements, will be entitled to a maximum of three weeks settling-in period at the new location, reviewed on a week-by-week basis.
- 5.7.4 Any removal of goods to a new headquarters will need to be negotiated and requested with the new business area.
- 5.7.5 The Secretary may extend a settling-in period in exceptional circumstances and determine an appropriate meals supplement for the extended period.

### Temporary Accommodation

- 5.7.6 The standard of temporary accommodation should be appropriate having regard to the composition of the employee's family and the availability of suitable accommodation. DIBP will meet reasonable costs in accommodation, up to 4 stars or equivalent. Accommodation is booked through DIBP's service provider as set out in the department's Financial Management Directive.
- 5.7.7 If the employee is authorised to live in a hotel or other commercial accommodation without cooking facilities sufficient to prepare a cooked meal, the employee and accompanying dependants will be paid a weekly meal rate as set out in Financial Management Directive. Dependants under 12 years of age will be entitled to half the advised weekly meal rate.

- 5.7.8 Employees electing to stay in private accommodation (i.e. with friends or relatives) during a settling-in period in Australia will be eligible to receive a private accommodation payment specified in the Financial Management Directive.

### Incidental allowance is not paid

- 5.7.9 There is no entitlement for employees to receive an incidental allowance during settling-in on return to Australia under these provisions.

## 5.8 Health Care following an Overseas Posting

### Post deployment medical review

- 5.8.1 The Secretary may provide approval for an employee to undergo a medical check after a long-term posting at official expense.
- 5.8.2 If the Secretary is satisfied that a medical check is necessary following a posting, an employee should contact DIBP's medical provider to arrange an appointment. This can be paid for using the Commonwealth Credit Card and costed to the appropriate post cost centre.
- 5.8.3 Employees and any dependants who resided at post are able to undertake a medical examination if they were either posted to, or travelled to category C, D, E or F Hardship locations, see Schedule Three.

## 5.9 Returning to Work in Australia

### Reintegration

- 5.9.1 Where possible, reintegration will be to the employee's home city. The successful reintegration of returning employees is a process involving returning employees and the section in which their substantive position is located. Employees should contact their home areas at least six months prior to their return date. Career Management will support employees through this process.
- 5.9.2 Employees undertaking overseas postings will generally return to a position at their substantive level in their home city unless they are promoted or have arranged a transfer prior to their return.

### Acquittal

- 5.9.3 Employees returning to Australia from a posting are required to acquit their travel within 14 days of returning to work in their new headquarters.
- 5.9.4 The Overseas Conditions team will provide employees with an acquittal form for this process.

### Return of Diplomatic Passports

- 5.9.5 All employees returning from a posting must return their diplomatic passports and those of their dependants to the Overseas Conditions team for cancellation.



- 5.9.6 Diplomatic passports can either be returned to the employee following cancellation, or can be destroyed at the employee's request.

## Systems Access

- 5.9.7 Systems access will be arranged as part of the employee's movement into an onshore position number following the overseas posting. IT Support is the appropriate contact for any issues with systems access. They can be contacted on 1800 204 299 or <sup>s. 47E(d)</sup> [REDACTED]@border.gov.au.

## Building Access

- 5.9.8 Employees returning from post are required to submit a National Office Building Access Form (404). This will be provided by Overseas Workforce Management Section.
- 5.9.9 The form must be forwarded to the section in which the employee is resuming work.
- 5.9.10 Employees returning to a Regional Office should liaise with the relevant office regarding their building access requirements.

## END OF PART FIVE

Pages 114 – 147 removed

Section 22(1)(a)(ii)

Not relevant to request



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Department of Home Affairs

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# Overseas Conditions of Service

## Policy Statement

This Policy sets out the Department of Home Affairs terms and conditions of employment relating to overseas service. This includes employees on short-term missions (STMs) and long-term postings.

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s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

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# 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Department of Home Affairs Overseas Conditions of Service (OCOS) policy sets out the Departments conditions of service relating to overseas service and assists employees with the various phases of their overseas placements. This includes employees on short-term missions (STMs) and long-term postings. The section on long-term postings is therefore presented in three parts to cover conditions and processes: before posting; at post; and returning from post.
- 1.2. The overseas conditions of service is intended to provide a package that allows Australian employees living overseas to maintain a standard of living similar to that in Australia, compensate employees for the general disruption associated with a posting and for working in some environments that can be challenging due to a range of factors.
- 1.3. Overseas allowances can vary during an employee's placement overseas, as can the duration and terms of the placement. Employees are advised to not overextend themselves financially.

## Authority

- 1.4. Under DIBP's *Enterprise Agreement (EA)*, pursuant to clause 11.34, the Secretary is authorised to determine overseas conditions of employment from time to time. Where this manual is silent on particular conditions of employment, or to the extent of any inconsistency, the *Public Service Act 1999*, DIBP's EA, the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* (PGPA Act), *Accountable Authority Instructions (AAIs)*, *Financial Management Directives*, other applicable legislation and/or regulations, and associated people management instructions and policies will apply.
- 1.5. The legal authority for making decisions on a range of overseas conditions matters in this policy has been delegated by the Secretary to designated office holders in the Department. Delegates are listed at *Schedule One – Delegations* to this policy. Delegates must exercise their powers in a manner that a reasonable person would in the circumstances, including not exercising powers in respect to their own position, conditions and entitlements.

# 2. Scope

## In Scope

- 2.1. Unless stated otherwise, the conditions in this policy apply to all Departmental employees, employed under section 22 of the *Public Service Act 1999* and assigned duties overseas for a period of usually more than 28 days. This includes employees on long-term postings and STMs.
- 2.2. The conditions outlined in this policy apply to all Departmental employees who accepted a long-term posting offer or STM post 1 July 2017.

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### Out of Scope

- 2.3. Any employee at post or who accepted an offer prior to 1 July 2017 are grandparented under the previous Overseas Conditions of Service 2015-16, until 30 June 2020.

The exception to the grandparenting provisions are the following arrangements:

- The loss on sale of a motor vehicle component of the Transfer Allowance, which ceased on 1 July 2017.
- Allowances ceasing within three days of an employee ceasing duty at post. Leave accrued on posting should, as far as possible, be taken in the course of that posting. This provision took on effect 1 July 2018 for all employees, including those under grandparenting arrangements.

On 1 July 2020, all employees on grandparented provisions will move to the conditions of service listed in this OCOS policy.

- 2.4. For all employees who are deployed overseas on an aid-funded Whole of Government program, conditions and entitlements are in accordance with the *Overseas Conditions of Service Policy Australian Aid-funded program deployments*.
- 2.5. All other employees undertaking official travel overseas, ie. not a long-term posting or STM, are out of scope of this policy. These officials are covered by the Financial Management Guideline – Official Travel.

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### 3. Glossary

Table 1 – Overseas Conditions of Service Glossary

Term	Acronym (if applicable)	Definition
Accompanied employee		<p>An employee who is on a long-term posting, and whose spouse:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lives with the employee at post for at least 12 months or longer and whose primary residence continues to be at post;</li> </ul> <p>is not absent from the post for a continuous period of more than 28 calendar days, unless accompanying the employee on a period of recreation leave accruing to the employee as a result of service to the post.</p>
Accountable Authority Instructions	AAI	AAIs provide a mechanism for accountable authorities to apply key principles and requirements of the resource management framework, to the operations of their respective entities, and to promote the efficient, effective, economical and the ethical use of the Commonwealth resources.
Airline Liaison Officer	ALO	<p>ALOs can be posted overseas on long term postings or deployed on a short term mission basis for periods of between four to eight months.</p> <p>ALOs work with airlines, airport security groups, host governments and colleagues from other countries to screen passengers travelling to Australia.</p>
Approved summer school		A summer school program determined by DFAT or Austrade and approved by the Delegate.
Australian Border Force	ABF	The Australian Border Force (ABF), is a part of the Department of Home Affairs, responsible for offshore and onshore border control enforcement, investigations, compliance and detention operations in Australia. The ABF workforce is made up of both Border Force Officers who support front-line operations and Departmental workers who support ABF capability.
Australian Public Service	APS	The APS is the federal civil service of the Commonwealth of Australia responsible for public administration, public policy, and public services of the departments and executive and statutory agencies of the Government of Australia.
Assisted leave fare	ALF	The return economy class airfare to either a designated regional leave centre or a relief centre.
Assisted leave fare to Australia	ALFA	The return economy class airfare to the location in Australia where the employee lived prior to their posting.
Austrade		The Australian Trade and Investment Commission is the Australian Governments trade, investment and educations promotion agency.



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Term	Acronym (if applicable)	Definition
Australia		For ALF purposes, means the capital city in Australia with the lowest travel cost from post (excluding Perth, Darwin and Hobart)
Australia based employees	A-based	A departmental employee who has been posted or deployed overseas in an official capacity for a fixed term.
Basic school transport cost		The cost of public transport by bus or train to and from a benchmark school.
Benchmark school		A school determined by DFAT or Austrade and approved by the Delegate in order to establish the maximum level of education assistance that will be provided at post by the Department.
Child		A natural, adopted, foster, ward or step child of the employee or employee's spouse, who ordinarily resides with them.
Close relative		Refers to the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• employee's spouse</li> <li>• a child or parent of the employee or their spouse</li> <li>• another person who stands in a similarly close relationship to that of a parent or child and is, because of special circumstances, approved by the Delegate as a close relative.</li> </ul>
Compulsory fees		In relation to a school, means the sum of the annual amounts of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tuition and sports fees levied by a benchmark school;</li> <li>• fees levied by the school for travel in a designated school bus;</li> <li>• other fees and charges (registrations, waiting lists, etc.) levied by the school in order for a child to attend the school (excluding boarding fees); and</li> <li>• any Government taxes levied on the fees.</li> </ul>
Commonwealth credit card		The Departments corporate credit card used to pay for official expenses.
Critically ill		A life threatening illness or injury judged by the treating medical professional to pose a serious risk of death in the short-term.
Cross-posting		Undertaking a posting immediately following a long-term posting, or finishing a posting early and immediately undertaking a posting in a new location.
De facto relationship		A relationship in which two people, regardless of gender, not being legally married or in a civil partnership or equivalent, have a mutual commitment to living together on a genuine domestic basis.

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Term	Acronym (if applicable)	Definition
Delegate		An employee of the Department who has been designated to act on behalf of the Secretary.
Dependant		Spouse, child or other recognised person as described in the 'Family Circumstances' section of this policy.
Designated location post		The rating applied to determine the relative hardship of the Departments overseas post locations. This is classified in six categories, ranging from category A (least difficult) to category F (most difficult).
Designated refugee camp		A refugee camp recognised by the United Nations or designated by the Delegate.
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	DFAT	The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is the department of the Government of Australia with responsibility of the foreign policy, foreign relations, foreign aid and consular services.
Department		The Department of Home Affairs, with responsibility for national security, law enforcement, emergency management, border control, immigration, refugees, citizenship and multicultural affairs.
Dual agency couple		A departmental employee and their APS employee spouse posted to the same location for work purposes.
Early termination		The ending of an employee's time at post, initiated either by the employee or the Department, before they are scheduled to cease their overseas duties.
Eligible person		In reference to the Healthcare section of this policy, an employee or dependant of an employee entitled to assistance with health care costs. Can also be referred to as a 'patient'.
Employee		An APS employee of the Department other than a locally engaged employee.
Employment Conditions Abroad	ECA	The provider contracted by the Department to provide data in relations to living conditions (post indices, location ratings) overseas.
Employee couple		A Home Affairs employee and their Home Affairs spouse/de facto on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a posting to the same location</li> <li>• postings to different locations</li> <li>• one employee posted, one recalled to undertake an STM at the same location</li> <li>• one employee posted, one recalled to undertake an STM at a different location</li> </ul>
Enterprise Agreement	EA	The current DIBP Enterprise Agreement

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Term	Acronym (if applicable)	Definition
Expatriate		Person outside his or her home country who has been noted on Comcover's Schedule of Expatriates.
Family composition / household		The number of people making up an employee's household, inclusive of the employee plus all recognised dependants.
Financial Management Guideline	FMG	Financial Management Guideline provide guidance for the operational context when using and managing Commonwealth resources under the PGPA framework and AAls.
Gross salary		For the calculation of overseas living allowances, gross salary is the relevant salary point specified in the DIBP Enterprise Agreement applicable to the employee's overseas classification level. Gross salary does not include overtime, shift penalties or allowances but will reflect any higher duties allowance or reduction if the period is to be for a continuous period of three months or longer.
Head of Mission / Head of Post	HoM / HoP	The lead at the Embassy, High Commission or Consulate where the employee is performing duties. This is usually a DFAT officer, but may be Austrade where DFAT is not represented at post.
Home location		For long-term postings – the post at which the employee lives and ordinarily performs duties.  For recall to duty – the post at which the employee ordinarily lives.  If living in Australia – the location at which the employee ordinarily performs, or is required to report for duty.
Household goods		Personal and household effects, furniture and property used, or intended to be used, in the operation of a home. Household good exclude items such as perishable foodstuff, motorised vehicles, trailers, boats, caravans, pets, hazardous, prohibited or dangerous items and excessively heavy or large items.
In-country travel		Official travel undertaken by an employee on long-term posting within the country where the employee resides. These travel arrangements are managed locally at post.
International best fare	IBF	Also known as the best fare of the day, this is the best fare in accordance with the Department of Finance Resource Management Guide No. 405
International SOS		The provider engaged by Comcover to assist expatriates, their dependants and travellers with access to medical advice and referrals for medical assistance.
Long-term posting		A period of duty overseas for 12 months or longer, as determined by the Delegate, at either one or multiple posts.

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Term	Acronym (if applicable)	Definition
Locally engaged employees	LEE	Local employed employees who do not have diplomatic status, privileges or immunity. LEE are subject to local labour laws and local labour market conditions.
Medical service		Medical treatment provided overseas which, if provided in Australia, an eligible person would be entitled to claim under the Medicare Benefit Scheme.
Management initiated termination		The early ending of a posting by the Department for any reason.
Ordinary period of posting		Is three years, or a period determined by the Delegate in respect of a post.
Parent		Any person or guardian who is responsible for the care of a child.
Patient		In reference to the Healthcare section of this policy, an eligible person entitled to assistance with health care costs. Can also be referred to as an 'eligible person'.
Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme	PBS	<p>Under the PBS, the government subsidises the cost of medicine for most medical conditions. Most of the listed medicines are dispensed by pharmacists, and used by patients at home.</p> <p>The PBS Schedule lists all of the medicines available to be dispensed to patients at a Government-subsidised price and is managed by the Department of Health and administered by Department of Human Services.</p>
Pharmaceutical product		A drug or medicinal preparation supplied on the prescription of a duly qualified medical practitioner and which is scheduled under the Pharmaceutical Benefit Scheme.
Post		The location overseas to which an employee has been temporarily transferred.
Post index		The cost of living index that applies to a particular post. This index is derived from the ECA cost of living indices and local exchange rates fluctuations.
Post security managers		Appointed staff responsible of security matters at the Post. Externally appointed.
Public holiday		The day, or part-day, observed as a public holiday at the Embassy, High Commission or Consulate where an employee is performing duties. Public holidays are determined by the DFAT HoM and usually comprise a combination of local and Australian holidays, and as such may differ from post to post.
Public transport		Travel by bus, train or ferry.

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Term	Acronym (if applicable)	Definition
Regional leave centre		For assisted leave fare purposes, this refers to Australia, Miami or London, dependent on employee location.
Relief leave centre		For assisted leave fare purposes, this refers to a leave centre other than Australian, Miami or London and is determined by the employee location.
Return to Australia	RTA	The term used to describe arrangements or support to an employees when they are returning to Australia from post.
Schedule of Expatriates		A schedule provided to Comcover on a monthly basis, which ensures health cover for A-based employees and their formally recognised family members, as defined in the <u>Comcover Statement of Cover</u> .
Senior Administrative Officer	SAO	A Senior Administrative Officer (SAO) is a DFAT employee who undertakes a variety of administrative tasks on behalf of the department, such as reimbursement of education assistance at post, etc.
School		<p>Pre-schools are educational institutions (excluding child care centres) overseas providing a curriculum directed to preparing a child for primary school.</p> <p>Primary school is a school in Australia or a similar educational institution overseas providing a curriculum at the primary level.</p> <p>Secondary school is a school in Australia or a similar educational institution overseas providing a curriculum at the secondary level.</p> <p>Summer school means a summer school program approved by DFAT.</p>
Short-term mission	STM	An unaccompanied period of duty overseas, away from home location, usually for more than 28 days but not greater than 12 months.
Spouse		A person who is living with the employee and is either married to the employee, or in a de facto relationship which has been recognised by the Delegate for the payment of spouse entitlements.
Statement of Cover		The Statement of Cover refers to the health cover provided by Comcover to employees and their families who are listed on the Schedule of Expatriates.
Third country		A location outside Australia and not at the post.
Unaccompanied employee		An employee who is not accompanied by a spouse or dependants for the purposes of overseas allowances.
Utilities		The provision of drinkable water, gas and electrical services, fuel for household purposes, rubbish removal and sewerage.

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# 4. Policy Statement

## Part 1 – General

### 1.1 Overview of Overseas Posting and Placement Types

#### Short-term Mission

- 1.1.1 A short-term mission (STM) is a period of duty overseas in a STM designated position, away from home location, usually for more than 28 days but not greater than 12 months.

#### Airline Liaison Officer (ALO)

- 1.1.2 Employees undertaking an Airline Liaison Officer (ALO) role are considered to be on a short-term mission at a foreign airport.

#### Recall to Duty

- 1.1.3 A recall to duty occurs when an employee is recalled from leave, including leave without pay, for a temporary period of duty overseas. Where this duty occurs at their overseas home location, it is not considered to be away from home location or a STM.

#### Long-term Posting

- 1.1.4 A long-term posting is a period of duty overseas for 12 months or longer and is ordinarily is a period of three years.

#### Whole of Government (WoG) Posting

- 1.1.5 Employees posted as part of Aid-funded Whole of Government program or initiative remain Departmental employees but are subject to separate conditions.

### 1.2 Obligations of a posted Employee

#### Work Health and Safety

- 1.2.1 The *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act) imposes specific responsibilities on workers to ensure the department meets its health and safety obligations. While at work, a worker must:
- take reasonable care for his or her own health and safety
  - take reasonable care that his or her acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons
  - comply, so far as the worker is reasonably able, with any reasonable instruction that is given by the person conducting the business or undertaking to allow the person to comply with the WHS Act; and
  - co-operate with any reasonable policy, procedure, or undertaking relating to health and safety at the workplace that has been notified to workers.
- 1.2.2 Some countries do not require organisations to abide by the same level of work health and safety standards that must be met in Australia. The WHS Act continues to apply to Australian Government

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operations outside Australia. Therefore, it is important for employees on post to remain diligent in respect to safety in Departmental workplaces and the workplace practices of the Department, including Locally Engaged Employees (LEE) and contractors.

- 1.2.3 All employees, including those overseas, are required to complete the Departments e-learning course 'Work Health and Safety Laws' annually.
- 1.2.4 More information about health and safety can be obtained by contacting s. 47E(d) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto: @homeaffairs.gov.au).

### APS Values and Code of Conduct

- 1.2.5 All Australian Public Service (APS) employees must comply with the APS Values, Employment Principles and the APS Code of Conduct. This includes upholding the good reputation of Australia and the department while on duty overseas.
- 1.2.6 Employees should familiarise themselves with the department's Code of Conduct Guidelines, which apply to all employees, including those working overseas and LEEs. All employees are required to complete the Departments Code of Conduct e-learning course every two years.
- 1.2.7 While the department's Code of Conduct Guidelines does not directly extend to cover members of an employee's household, any members accompanying an employee on a posting are expected to uphold Australia's reputation overseas.
- 1.2.8 Posted employees are obliged to take all reasonable steps to ensure that members of their household are aware of local laws, culture and customs. If any member of an employee's household engages in any activity that brings or may bring the department, post or Australia into disrepute, all reasonable steps to ensure that the behaviour ceases must be taken by the employee.
- 1.2.9 If such behaviour continues, the employee must inform their manager, as well as the HoM/HoP of the incidents. Any reputational damage to the department or Australian Government, by an employee or their dependant, may result in the early termination of the employee's posting.
- 1.2.10 The appropriate contact for any queries or reporting of a suspected breach of the Code of Conduct is the Integrity area s. 47E(d) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto: @homeaffairs.gov.au).
- 1.2.11 A breach of the Code of Conduct that involves disciplinary action may result in termination of posting.
- 1.2.12 Further information about the APS Values and Code of Conduct is available from the Integrity area s. 47E(d) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto: @homeaffairs.gov.au).

### Performance Management

- 1.2.13 All employees must participate in the Departments Performance Management Framework (the framework), including when on a posting or deployment.
- 1.2.14 The framework is designed to foster regular, two-way, fair, objective and consistent, and, wherever possible, face-to-face performance feedback. A key part of the framework is the Performance and Development Agreement (PDA). The PDA cycle runs from 1 July to 30 June each year. A mid-cycle assessment must take place between 1 January and 28 February, and an end-cycle assessment must take place by close of business 30 June.
- 1.2.15 All PDAs should be completed electronically via the ourPeople system. If this is not possible, the PDA and assessment discussions should be recorded in some form.



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### 1.3 Diplomatic status and responsibilities

#### Diplomatic status

- 1.3.1 Diplomatic status and privileges are conferred on A-based employees on long-term posting in an accredited position to facilitate the operation of the mission and not for the personal benefit of employees or members of the employee's household. Employees must always act with integrity in relation to any privilege provided (e.g. exemption under international law from the payment of taxes or duties) as a diplomatic representative of Australia. Goods obtained without the payment of duty under privilege are for personal use only and must not be sold or used as payment of any kind to persons that do not have the relevant privilege.
- 1.3.2 Employees shall not use diplomatic privileges in a manner that would undermine the integrity of those privileges. Employees must not seek either to invoke or waive diplomatic immunity, which is a matter for decision by the Minister for Foreign Affairs.
- 1.3.3 Employees and members of their households have no immunity in relation to any professional or commercial activity in which they may engage outside of their official functions. If a member of a household is planning to engage in any private occupation, an employee must advise the Head of Mission or Head of Post who may decide that the department or the host Government be consulted.
- 1.3.4 Employees must take all reasonable steps to ensure that any activities by a member of their household who is undertaking a private gainful occupation or a business do not give rise to a conflict of interest or the perception of a conflict of interest. For example, the mission's address is not to be used as the place of business or the employee's email address used for business-related correspondence.

#### Representational responsibilities

- 1.3.5 Representational funds may be provided for overseas Regional Directors, Post Managers and selected departmental employees required to promote, advance or facilitate the interests of the department or Australia through contact with local agencies, business networks, other relevant organisations and officials to achieve operational objectives.
- 1.3.6 Further information on representation responsibilities and accountability of representational funds is available in the [Financial Management Guideline – Official Hospitality and business catering](#).

#### Spouse employment

- 1.3.7 Employees undertaking an overseas posting should be aware that it might not be possible for spouses/dependants holding diplomatic visas to obtain permission to work outside the embassy/foreign legion environment in certain countries. DFAT has formal and informal bilateral employment arrangements/agreements with a number of countries that allow dependants to access local employment opportunities.
- 1.3.8 Other countries may require spouses or dependants seeking employment locally to relinquish their diplomatic status or waive diplomatic immunity. Decisions concerning waiver of diplomatic immunity or relinquishment of diplomatic status are made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. Accordingly, employees must ensure they are aware of local employment conditions and possible restrictions on obtaining working visas prior to applying for a posting.



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- 1.3.9 Employees whose spouse/dependants intend to give up their diplomatic status or waive immunity in order to access employment opportunities in countries where there are no formal or informal employment arrangements in place must follow procedures issued by DFAT.
- 1.3.10 If a spouse or family member gives up their diplomatic status, they will meet all expenses associated with the change of status, including processing fees and any travel costs associated with possible requirements by the host government to depart the country of posting to change visa type. Costs associated with any resumption of diplomatic status would also be met by the spouse or family member of the posted employee.
- 1.3.11 Employees, spouses and dependants should also be aware that overseas employment might have Australian tax and superannuation implications. Employees may wish to include this when obtaining financial advice prior to posting.

**END OF PART ONE**

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## Part 2 – Short-term Missions

### 2.1 Overview of STM

- 2.1.1 This section applies to employees who undertake designated short-term mission (STM).
- 2.1.2 A STM is an unaccompanied period of duty overseas, away from home location, usually for more than 28 days but not greater than 12 months, as determined by the Delegate.
- 2.1.3 In-country travel, recall to duty at an overseas home location, or travel from a post to Australia is not considered a STM for the purposes of this Part.

#### Allowances Summary

- 2.1.4 The following allowances may apply to employees undertaking a STM.

Allowance	Eligibility
Travel Allowance	Rate that is appropriate to location and classification of the employee.
Equipment Allowance	Entitled to receive allowance once every three years. Employees who have commenced a posting in the last three years are taken to have received the allowance as part of their transfer to post allowance.
Unaccompanied Location Allowance	Based on location rating of Post. A STM must be for 28 days or more for Location Allowance to apply.
Special Location Supplement	For STMs to countries identified in <a href="#">Schedule Three</a> .
Refugee Camp Location Allowance	Subject to delegate approval.

### 2.2 Adjusted Conditions of Service

- 2.2.1 If, for operational reasons, a STM will exceed six months duration the Delegate may approve that the employee receives adjusted conditions of service, based on long-term posting provisions, with the following exceptions:
- there is no entitlement to be accompanied by dependants at official expense unless authorised by the Delegate;
  - there is no entitlement to assistance with education in Australia; and
  - there is no entitlement to flexible travel arrangements.

### 2.3 Pre STM preparations

#### Medicals Clearances

- 2.3.1 To be eligible to undertake a STM, employees must attend a medical consultation and be certified fit by the department's medical service provider.

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- 2.3.2 The medical consultation will provide the employee with specific preventative advice and recommend any vaccinations for the country and/or region of the STM.

### Vaccinations

- 2.3.3 All vaccinations are mandatory and any employee choosing not to undertake any of the vaccinations recommended will not be cleared for the STM.
- 2.3.4 The department will meet the cost of vaccinations that are recommended by the medical service provider.

### Resilience Assessment

- 2.3.5 The Department recognises that roles overseas can place a significant demand on employees' physical and psychological wellbeing. Given this, the Department will ensure that employees have the appropriate level of resilience to cope with the demands. This means that all employees are required to undergo a resilience assessment for their proposed STM location.
- 2.3.6 The resilience assessment will assist an employee to fully explore areas of strength and vulnerability, and identify strategies that will develop, enhance or maintain resilience to get the most out of the STM.

### Security Clearances

- 2.3.7 Employees are required to hold a Negative Vetting 1 (NV1) or Negative Vetting 2 (NV2) security clearance. The level of security classification will be determined by the position they will be undertaking while overseas.

### Commonwealth Credit Card use

- 2.3.8 Employees travelling internationally on official business must hold a Commonwealth Credit Card. All travel-related costs, such as hotel accommodation, taxi costs etc. are to be purchased using the Departments Commonwealth Credit Card or paid by Post.

## 2.4 Travel Arrangements for Short-term Missions

### Introduction

- 2.4.1 The Department will meet the cost of air travel, accommodation and official transport for an employee undertaking a STM. Travel arrangements for STMs from Australia (airfares, visas, passports, travel allowance, etc.) are administered by the Placements team  
s. 47E(d) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:placements@homeaffairs.gov.au).

### Official passports

- 2.4.2 As representatives of the Department undertaking official government business overseas, all employees on a STM must travel on an official passport. The cost of official passports will be charged to the cost centre funding the travel.

### Visas

- 2.4.3 Official passports carry strict visa requirements, which vary for each country. The cost of visas will be charged to the cost centre funding the travel.

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### Travel advisories

- 2.4.4 To assist the Department in the proper discharge of its duty of care obligations, all employees who travel outside Australia on official business must report their travel prior to departure to the Overseas Security team. All employees posted overseas must also report any travel (both official and personal) that takes them away from their usual location to the Overseas Security team <sup>s. 47E(d)</sup> [REDACTED] [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@homeaffairs.gov.au)).
- 2.4.5 Employees undertaking STMs must consult the DFAT Travel Advisories prior to undertaking the travel. As a minimum, employees intending to travel on official business are expected to refer to recommendations made in the travel advisories for the countries to be visited. Where travel advisories flag security or personal safety concerns, employees should consult Post Security Managers at the relevant post where they are or will be based and, if appropriate, at posts with consular responsibility for countries to be visited prior to arranging and proceeding with travel plans. Such consultations are mandatory when travel advisories recommend against travel to the location(s) to be visited.
- 2.4.6 Under current Departmental policy, employees travelling to a 'High Risk' destination will need to have a Security Risk Assessment undertaken in support of their trip prior to departure. A 'High Risk' destination is one that the DFAT 'Smartraveller' website defines as either a 'Reconsider your need to travel' or 'Do not travel' destination. The Protective Security Section will complete the risk assessment and forward it to the responsible SES officer or Regional Director. While A-based employees are at post DFAT assume responsibility for protective security; however A-based employees who travel away from post for official duty to 'High Risk' destination/s come under the Departments policy.
- 2.4.7 Employees who hold an Employment Suitability Clearance and/or a Commonwealth Security Clearance must also report the details of any international travel in accordance with the Department's Declarable Circumstances policy. Travel details should be reported to the Employment Suitability team <sup>s. 47E(c)</sup> [REDACTED] [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:[REDACTED]@homeaffairs.gov.au) prior to travel and on the required form.

### Approval of travel

- 2.4.8 Approval to travel on a STM must be obtained prior to travel, in accordance with current requirements and financial delegations. Full details on the approval process for international travel can be found in [Financial Management Guideline – Official Travel](#). The requesting business are should contact the [Placements team](#) to commence this process.

### Air travel

- 2.4.9 Air travel will be as set out in the Departments '[Accountable Authority Instructions - Resource Management Framework](#)', which stipulates that travel officials must use the International Best Fare (IBF) and act in accordance with the '[Department of Finance Resource Management Guide No. 405](#)'. Value for money is the overarching consideration when booking flights for international travel, taking into consideration the practical business needs of the traveller and overall cost of the trip. It is not intended that employees be required to use an airline where there are reasonable grounds for concerns over safety or security.
- 2.4.10 Employees travelling on a STM are not entitled to access flexible travel arrangements including taking side trips, backtracking or generally deviating from the logical direct route.

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2.4.11 Australian domestic sectors and in-country sectors used in conjunction with an international itinerary may be at the same standard of travel if a through ticket is purchased. If a through ticket is not purchased then any domestic travel must be at economy class.

2.4.12 Offers by airlines to upgrade to first class must be declined in all circumstances.

### **Class of air travel**

2.4.13 An employee is entitled to international air travel in accordance with the following provisions:

- where three classes of travel are provided on the aircraft, the employee travels at the intermediate class, usually business class or its equivalent
- where there are no intermediate or business classes the ordinary standard of travel is economy class; and
- where business class or an equivalent option is not available for international travel, the Delegate may consider approving an alternate (non-direct) route, particularly where the travel is in excess of eight (8) hours.

### **Promotions and competitions**

2.4.14 Employees travelling on official business are not permitted to participate in promotions or competitions conducted by external providers.

### **Unused tickets**

2.4.15 All unused tickets or portions of unused tickets must be returned to the Travel Management Company (TMC) for a refund. Lost or stolen tickets must be reported promptly to the TMC to obtain the maximum refund. Under no circumstances can unused tickets purchased by the Department be used for personal travel.

### **Travel for compassionate reasons**

2.4.16 If compassionate travel is necessary, the Delegate may consider whether the compassionate travel provisions applicable for long-term postings apply, or if cessation of the STM is appropriate.

### **Travel out of hours**

2.4.17 Employees undertaking STMs may not access flex time or overtime for periods of travel that fall outside normal working hours.

### **Frequent flyer, reward or loyalty points**

2.4.18 Government employees are not permitted to accrue Frequent Flyer Points or Loyalty Reward Points for official business travel. Status credits may still be accrued.

### **Excess baggage**

2.4.19 The standard baggage limit for business class travellers is 30kg on international flights and 20kg on domestic flights. An employee undertaking an STM may transport 30kg of baggage at departmental expense. The exception to this is if the carrier charges a price for each bag rather than for the combined weight, in which case the benefit is two suitcases.

2.4.20 Any personal excess baggage costs incurred *en route* to a STM will not be reimbursed and are at the employee's personal expense.

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2.4.21 Employees returning from a STM are entitled to:

- a maximum of 15 kg excess baggage on international flights;
- a maximum of 25 kg excess baggage on the domestic leg of an international flight.

2.4.22 Baggage entitlements, including excess baggage provisions cannot exceed 45kg in total. For example, where an employee receives an airline baggage allowance of 40kg, they would only be entitled to an additional 5kg of excess baggage on return from an STM.

2.4.23 The cost for work-related excess baggage associated with STMs must be charged to a Commonwealth Credit Card, unless that card is not accepted by an agent. In these instances if work-related excess baggage costs are paid personally by an employee, they may seek reimbursement via an 'Employee Reimbursement'. Work-related excess baggage includes training materials, computers, audio visual and other essential business equipment transported with an employee undertaking official travel.

## 2.5 Rest Periods on Short-term Missions

### Introduction

2.5.1 A rest period provides a chance to recover from jet lag, during or after travel, before undertaking duty.

2.5.2 Rest period entitlements are based on the flight duration and 2 hours of incidental travel. It does not include pre-departure travel time, rest periods, leave, or stopovers at localities where an employee is not required to perform duty.

### Rest period entitlements

2.5.3 If an employee undertakes a STM with a continuous travelling time of between 6 to 12 hours, the employee will be entitled to a rest period before commencing duty. A rest period is defined as a period of sufficient duration to enable overnight rest, but not longer than 24 hours. The rest period must be taken at the final destination.

2.5.4 If the employee undertakes a STM with a continuous travelling time of between 12 to 24 hours, the employee will be entitled to two rest periods before commencing duty. One rest period may be taken partway through the journey, and the remaining rest period must be taken at the end of the journey, or both rest periods may be taken at the end of the journey. In the latter case, the combined rest periods must not be longer than 48 hours.

2.5.5 A rest period is effective from the time the traveller disembarks the aircraft at a scheduled stopover in the journey or at the final destination. The actual length of a rest period may vary slightly from the prescribed rest period entitlement and will depend on airline schedules and time of arrival and departure at the destination.

2.5.6 No trip can have more than 2 rest periods.

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### Rest period – employee on duty

- 2.5.7 An employee is considered to be on duty during any approved rest period that falls within normal working hours. A rest period taken outside normal working hours does not entitle an employee to remuneration or time off in lieu. Rest periods that fall on a weekend or a public holiday are rest days if the employee is not required to work on those days.

### Effect of stopover on a rest period

- 2.5.8 If an employee has an unavoidable stopover during travel to an international destination, they are not entitled to a rest period unless the Delegate is satisfied that the stopover did not constitute the equivalent of a rest period for the employee. An employee cannot nominate a stopover at a location other than the scheduled stopover location in order to utilise a rest period entitlement.

## 2.6 Travel Allowance for Short-term Missions

### Introduction

- 2.6.1 The Department will provide a living away from home allowance for employees undertaking a STM in the form of a Travel Allowance appropriate to the employee's classification and the destination where the duties are performed.
- 2.6.2 Travel Allowance comprises of a payment for meals and incidental expenses. Meal allowance compensates employees for the cost of meals. Incidental allowance covers living and incidental expenses including currency conversion fees, commissions, exchange losses etc.
- 2.6.3 An employee who is on Leave Without Pay (LWOP) and is recalled to duty in their current home location is not considered to be undertaking a STM. In this scenario employees will be entitled to receive Travel Allowance only if they travel away from their home location overnight during the recall to duty.

### Travel Allowance advance

- 2.6.4 Employees are entitled to Travel Allowance for the duration of their STM at post and for the time spent at transit points during travel. Travel Allowance is not payable enroute to post, or on return to Australia where meals are received in flight during designated meal times. Travel Allowance is paid in advance prior to departure, based on the approved International Travel Request.
- 2.6.5 Employees will be provided with documents pertaining to their individual Travel Allowance advance, including calculations. This will aid the employee in understanding the amount of meals and incidentals that has been advanced to them for their trip and to assist with completing their 'Travel Diary' at completion, for acquittal.
- 2.6.6 International travellers from Australia must complete a 'Travel Diary' to record their daily expenses and other miscellaneous costs in order to acquit their trip. Items such as departure taxes, taxis and public transport costs that could not be paid using the Commonwealth Credit Card are to be claimed in the acquittal process. All claims for items must be supported by receipts.
- 2.6.7 Employees whose STM is extended beyond the initial STM Travel Allowance advance period will receive the additional Travel Allowance funds as part of the acquittal of their Travel Allowance.

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### Additional expenses

- 2.6.8 Personal expenses such as bank fees and charges for non-official ATM withdrawals, non-prescription pharmaceuticals, private phone calls, etc. will not be met as an official charge.
- 2.6.9 Other expenses associated with STM travel such as official phone calls, passport and visa fees, departure taxes, vaccination costs, reasonable costs to travel to and from work at the overseas destination, etc. will be met as an official charge. Expense items can be charged to the Commonwealth Credit Card where appropriate, paid directly by the post on behalf of the STM or the employee may seek reimbursement via an 'Employee Reimbursement'.

### Travel Allowance during times of leave

- 2.6.10 Travel Allowance will be paid during official travel and while on sick leave, but is not paid during periods of annual leave, or during any weekend or other holiday taken in conjunction with leave.

### Travel Allowance during transit

- 2.6.11 If a traveller transits a domestic destination during a major mealtime, the meal rate (not including incidentals) for that meal will be paid. The following table can be used as a guide for transit travel allowance entitlements:

Time	Meal Provided
06:00 – 08:00	Breakfast
12:00 – 14:00	Lunch
17:00 – 19:00	Dinner

### Rates of Travel Allowance

- 2.6.12 If an employee's international travel involves an overnight stay, the employee is entitled to meals and incidental costs applicable to the town or city at the destination in accordance with the global travel allowance rates provided by Employment Conditions Abroad (ECA). ECA provides Travel Allowance rates each year on 1 July, which apply for the financial year eg. 1 July 2018 rates would cover the 2018/2019 financial year.
- 2.6.13 The applicable Travel Allowance rates for travel from post are the ECA rates used by DFAT.
- 2.6.14 If no Travel Allowance rate is specified for the destination, reimbursement of the cost of meals (excluding the cost of alcoholic beverages) and incidental expenses reasonably incurred by the employee is the amount payable. In such cases, an advance of Travel Allowance may be provided based on a reasonable estimate of the daily meals and incidental costs at the destination.
- 2.6.15 Travel Allowance is required to be acquitted on return from the trip and on presentation of all receipts.

### Meals allowance on the day of arrival or departure

- 2.6.16 An employee is entitled to an allowance for meals on the day of arrival and day of departure at their overseas destination. This payment is automatically calculated and included in the Travel Allowance payment an employee receives prior to undertaking a STM. A proportion of the full meal allowance



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rate is paid according to the time of arrival at, or departure from, the overseas destination as set out in the table below:

Table – Meals rate for day of arrival or departure		
Time of arrival/departure	Rate on day of arrival	Rate on day of departure
Before 07:00am	100%	Nil
07:00am – 1:00pm	75%	25%
1:01pm – 7:00pm	50%	50%
After 7:00pm	Nil	100%

### Incidental Allowance

- 2.6.17 An employee on a STM is entitled to Incidental Allowance. Incidental Allowance covers living and incidental expenses including currency conversion fees and commissions, personal telephone calls or transport costs, personal excess baggage costs, charges for ATM withdrawals etc.
- 2.6.18 The rate of Incidental Allowance reduces by 50% after 28 days at any one location.
- 2.6.19 If an employee arrives at their destination before 12 noon on the day of arrival, or departs after 12 noon on the day of departure, the employee is entitled to a full day's Incidental Allowance. In any other case, the employee is entitled to half the full rate of Incidental Allowance.

### Rate for meals in accommodation with cooking facilities

- 2.6.20 If an employee stays for five continuous days or longer in accommodation with cooking facilities sufficient to prepare a cooked meal (i.e. there are adequate cooking utensils, cutlery, crockery, etc.), the employee is entitled to two thirds of the meal allowance that would have been payable had cooking facilities not been available.

### Reduction in meal allowance if meals provided

- 2.6.21 An employee must not be paid the meal component of Travel Allowance in respect of a meal that is provided. Any meals that are provided must be declared when acquitting Travel Allowance.

### Excess meals and incidental costs

- 2.6.22 Employees should not be financially disadvantaged due to unusual circumstances while travelling (eg. employees travelling with Ministers or Secretaries may incur higher levels of travel expenses).
- 2.6.23 If the Delegate is satisfied that the amount of Travel Allowance payable to an employee was insufficient and upon receipt of supporting documentation the difference between the Travel Allowance paid and the actual cost may be reimbursed to the employee. If approved by the Delegate, reimbursement can be gained via easySAP.

### Travel Allowance if paid by another organisation

- 2.6.24 The amount of Travel Allowance paid to an employee by the Department will be reduced by any amount paid to the employee by another organisation for the same period and location.

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### Acquittal of Travel Allowance

- 2.6.25 Employees must acquit their Travel Allowance advance within 14 days of returning from travel. If travellers do not acquit their Travel Allowance within this period action may be taken to recover the advance in full.
- 2.6.26 Once the Placements team has re-calculated Travel Allowance using the details provided in the International Travel Diary, the employee will be advised by email of any overpayment or underpayment of Travel Allowance, with details of the acquittal.
- 2.6.27 International travellers from post are required to meet post acquittal requirements.

## 2.7 Other Conditions for Short-term Missions

### Accommodation at Post

- 2.7.1 The Department will pay the cost of a reasonable standard of accommodation, arranged by Post. Properties should be selected based on:
- the location in relation to the place of work
  - equivalent to western 4 to 4<sup>1/2</sup> star rating standard for non-SES employees
  - equivalent to western 5 star rating standard for SES employees
  - reputation; and
  - safety standards.

### Flextime and working hours

- 2.7.2 Flextime, travel out of hours, home based work and variable working hour provisions specified in the Departments Enterprise Agreement are not available to employees on a STM.

### Public holidays

- 2.7.3 Employees undertaking STMs observe public holidays on the basis of the overseas location.
- 2.7.4 Post specific holidays are observed by an employee on STM. Where an employee is not in an overseas location with post specific holidays these will be determined by the Delegate.
- 2.7.5 If there is a public holiday in Australia while overseas, the public holiday is forfeited unless it is also observed at the post/overseas location.

### Leave while overseas

- 2.7.6 Subject to the Delegate's approval, the amount of annual leave that can be taken while on a STM cannot exceed the amount of leave accrued during the period of duty overseas and cannot be anticipated. All leave requests are subject to operational needs at Post.
- 2.7.7 Employees will be personally liable for any additional costs incurred by the Department as a result of employees taking leave in association with a STM, such as health and travel insurance, accommodation, visas and personal travel arrangements.
- 2.7.8 Employees on STMs do not accrue additional location leave as is applicable to long-term postings and travel which originates from post.

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### Location Allowance

- 2.7.9 An employee undertaking a STM to a category C, D, E, or F location for a period of 28 days or more is eligible to receive pro rata Location Allowance at the unaccompanied rate from the first day of duty at the post until the last day of duty at post.
- 2.7.10 Location Allowance is paid to compensate for the adverse effects on an employee's lifestyle and welfare from living in different conditions, particularly over an extended period. An employee will not receive Location Allowance where the STM is for less than 28 days.
- 2.7.11 An employee cannot receive two Location Allowances for the same period.
- 2.7.12 If on continuous duty at more than one location for a combined period of 28 days or more, pro rata Location Allowance will be paid at the rate applicable to each post over the period the employee was on duty in each location.
- 2.7.13 Where a long-term posted employee at a C, D, E, or F location is undertaking a STM to another C, D, E or F location for a period of 28 days or more, they will receive the pro rata Location Allowance appropriate to their location, unless the Delegate determines otherwise.

### Special Location Supplement

- 2.7.14 Special Location Supplement (SLS) provides temporary additional remuneration and compensation to departmental employees required to work at overseas locations where regular security incidents, heightened socio-political tensions, environmental disasters and the like have impacted, or may impact, adversely on the personal security and/or welfare of employees and their families. For more information, refer to the [Special Location Supplement section](#) in Part 4.

### Equipment Allowance

- 2.7.15 Equipment Allowance is intended to assist employees with the cost of travel equipment, other items purchased for official travel and the wear and tear on possessions (including luggage) resulting from overseas travel.
- 2.7.16 When travelling from Australia on a STM, an employee will be entitled to receive an Equipment Allowance once every three years. The Delegate may adjust the amount for Equipment Allowance on 1 July each year. See [Schedule Three](#) for the current rate.
- 2.7.17 Equipment Allowance is not paid:
- more than once in any three year period
  - if the employee has commenced a long-term posting within three years prior to the STM, or
  - if an employee is accompanying their spouse on a long-term Departmental posting and is recalled to duty to undertake a STM.
- 2.7.18 Equipment Allowance is not assessable income for employees and will be paid in association with Travel Allowance.

### Medical and dental treatment while overseas

- 2.7.19 An employee on an approved STM is covered under Comcover's Medical Expenses and Medical Emergencies Insurance policy for travel periods of up to 180 days. Employees undertaking international travel in excess of 180 days duration may continue to be covered by Comcover. More

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information regarding this can be obtained by emailing the overseas medical mailbox s. 47E(d) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto: @homeaffairs.gov.au)).

- 2.7.20 Departmental employees requiring medical assistance while travelling on a STM should contact International SOS for assistance, and follow the directions given by International SOS concerning approved medical practitioners and facilities.
- 2.7.21 Any necessary costs associated with medical assistance obtained during a STM should be insurable expenses, and will be covered by International SOS/Comcover instead of being a Departmental expense. If International SOS or Comcover is unable to make payment directly on behalf of the employee in the first instance, then the employee must pay for the service and seek reimbursement by submitting an insurance claim.
- 2.7.22 If an employee becomes ill or is injured during a STM, the Department will meet the reasonable costs of any necessary medical or hospital treatment for the illness or injury which are not recoverable under the Departments Comcover insurance policy.
- 2.7.23 If an employee obtains essential or emergency dental treatment during a STM and the cost of the treatment is not recoverable under the Departments Comcover insurance policy, the employee will be personally liable for the amount by which the treatment costs exceed the cost of the same treatment in Australia; as listed in the Medibank Private Average Charges for Ancillary Services report. If the treatment is not available in Australia, the cost of a similar treatment will be used to determine personal liability.
- 2.7.24 More information about the Departments Comcover insurance can be obtained by contacting the overseas medical mailbox s. 47E(d) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto: @homeaffairs.gov.au)) or the Departments Comcover manager s. 47E(d) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto: @homeaffairs.gov.au)).

### Comcover insurance

- 2.7.25 The Departments Comcover insurance cover provides employees with overseas travel cover for travel periods of up to 180 days. This insurance policy provides the travelling employee and any approved accompanying person (each defined in the Comcover policy as a 'traveller') with the following cover:
- If the traveller's baggage and personal effects are lost, destroyed, or damaged during the travel, Comcover will repair or replace the items up to the limit of AUD25,000.
  - If the traveller has money that is lost or stolen during the travel, Comcover will pay for the lost or stolen money.
  - If the traveller's baggage is delayed for more than 8 hours following the arrival of the traveller at the destination, Comcover will pay the reasonable cost of necessities.
- 2.7.26 Employees undertaking international travel in excess of 180 days duration may continue to be covered by Comcover and in these situations advice should be obtained by contacting the overseas medical mailbox s. 47E(d) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto: @homeaffairs.gov.au)).
- 2.7.27 In the event of injury, illness or death to a traveller, Comcover will pay the Department or the traveller directly (or his or her estate) the limit specified on the relevant Schedule of Cover.

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2.7.28 Comcover will also pay for medical expenses and the costs of medical emergencies, up to the maximum amount of ten million Australian dollars, including:

- emergency evacuation and/or repatriation under medical supervision
- 24 hour worldwide medical information and assistance service
- sending essential medication or equipment not locally available
- sending a registered health professional where appropriate
- repatriation of mortal remains and any related costs; and
- medical monitoring.

2.7.29 If an employee undertaking a STM dies overseas, the same provisions as those for employees on long-term postings will apply.

## 2.8 Airline Liaison Officer

### Introduction

2.8.1 Employees undertaking an Airline Liaison Officer (ALO) role on a STM at an overseas international airport attract the same conditions and entitlements specified under the STM section, with the following variations:

#### Hours of Duty

2.8.2 ALOs will work a roster based on the airline operating schedules. ALOs can expect that hours worked will include early mornings and late evenings, weekends and public holidays.

#### Pre-assignment Medical Assessment

2.8.3 All ALOs are required to undergo a pre-assignment medical assessment, specifically designed for ALO placements, two months prior to departure. The purpose of the assessment is to identify and help manage any pre-existing medical conditions, and discuss management of these conditions in the ALO environment with the Departments identified medical service provider.

2.8.4 Employees not rated as fit for assignment are unable to undertake an ALO role.

END OF PART TWO

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### Part 3 – Long-term Postings – Pre Posting

#### 3.1 Family Circumstances

##### Introduction

- 3.1.1 This section covers the range of family circumstances that may impact on a posted employee's allowances and entitlements. Posted employees are responsible for advising the Placements team s. 47E(d) @homeaffairs.gov.au) of their family circumstances, and any change in those circumstances.
- 3.1.2 Further information on whether an employee is able to be accompanied at post by a de facto partner can be obtained from the DFAT and Austrade post profile reports.

##### Dependants

- 3.1.3 For the purposes of overseas allowances a dependant, in relation to an employee, can be:
- A spouse, who ordinarily lives with the employee.
  - A child under the age of 18, who ordinarily resides with the employee and is financially dependent on them.
  - A child who is 18 years or older who ordinarily resides with the employee and is financially dependent on them, who has not married or entered into a de facto relationship and is undertaking full-time secondary education.
  - A special needs person over 18 who ordinarily resides with the employee, is financially dependent on them, and is determined by the Delegate to be a dependant.
  - A child living at post who has completed secondary education and is remaining at post until commencing tertiary studies at the beginning of the next academic year in Australia.
  - Any other person who is the employee's relative, or the employee's spouse's relative, and whom the Delegate approves for a period, of no less than 12 months, as the employee's dependant for the purpose of providing airfares, rest periods and settling-in and out expenses only.
- 3.1.4 In considering these cases the Delegate must give regard to the following factors:
- the relationship of the person to the employee or employee's spouse;
  - the extent of the person's dependency on the employee, in particular giving regard to their ordinary place of residence; and
  - the likely effect on the person's health and welfare of alternative arrangements that the employee could make for the person's care and maintenance.
- 3.1.5 For Reunion Travel purposes only, a child is considered as a dependant when:
- financially dependent on the employee;
  - less than 23 years of age, and
  - undertaking full-time study in an Australian institution, including tertiary.
- 3.1.6 Dependant status will not be approved if a child is in full-time employment.

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- 3.1.7 An allowance or other entitlement will not be provided to an employee for a dependant unless the employee is on a long-term posting, and the dependant:
- lives, or intends to live, with the employee at post for at least three quarters of the duration of the posting or 12 months, whichever is the longer (e.g. there is no entitlement if the posting will cease less than 12 months from the date a dependant commences residing with the employee);
  - is entitled to education assistance (see Assistance with education costs); or
  - marries or is recognised as a de facto spouse while on posting (allowances and entitlements are payable from the date the employee's spouse takes up residence at post following formal recognition).
- 3.1.8 Notwithstanding the above, a dependant residing at post for less than 12 months is entitled to assistance with health services as per the healthcare provisions, unless recognised as a 'limited dependant' only.
- 3.1.9 Persons with different family names to that of the employee being posted may need to produce marriage, custody or birth certificates.

### Limited dependant status

- 3.1.10 Subject to the Delegate's approval 'Limited dependant status' refers to an employee's dependant over 18 years of age who has completed secondary education and:
- remains at post for no longer than 12 months, until they commence full-time tertiary studies in Australia; or while they decide on future plans; or
  - intends to join the employee at post for no longer than 12 months, until they commence full-time tertiary studies in Australia or while they decide on future plans.
- 3.1.11 Limited dependant status is limited to a maximum of 12 months from the date secondary education was completed and ceases on that date, or once the dependant departs post and returns to Australia.

### Change of circumstances

- 3.1.12 If a change occurs in the circumstances of an approved dependant, that person ceases to be a dependant unless reviewed by the Delegate. Employees are obliged to report any change of circumstances to the Placements team as soon as practicable to ensure correct payments are administered.

## 3.2 Recognition of Relationships

### Recognition of a de facto Relationship

- 3.2.1 Subject to the Delegate's approval, the guidelines below are taken into account when determining whether to recognise a de facto relationship for the purposes of the OCOS Policy. These are not prescriptive and do not guarantee official recognition. Additional proof may be required. It is also important to note that being separated but still married, or separated but still in a civil partnership (or

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equivalent), does not preclude recognition of a de facto relationship with another person. Further information can be obtained from the Placements team.

- 3.2.2 Once recognised, in all official documentation the de facto partner will be described as 'the partner of', 'the spouse of' or 'a member of the household of' the employee.

### **Cohabitation for three years or more**

- 3.2.3 Cohabitation for a continuous period of three years or longer is, in most cases, sufficient evidence of a de facto relationship.
- In support of an application for de fact recognition, the employee and partner must submit a statutory declaration detailing the circumstances and period of the relationship.
  - The Department may also request additional evidence of the relationship.

### **Cohabitation for more than 12 months but less than three years**

- 3.2.4 Cohabitation for a continuous period of 12 months or more but less than three years will require:
- the employee and partner to lodge a statutory declaration detailing the circumstances and period of the relationship; and
  - other information in support of the application, such as:
    - details of any child of the relationship, including a child accepted into the household, whether or not a child of either of the partners;
    - evidence of joint domestic financial arrangements, for example joint bank accounts, joint insurance, joint ownership of property, the existence of wills made in favour of the partner, etc;
    - details of any non-financial support and/or commitment to each other;
    - documentary evidence such as bank statements, statements from persons of repute that attest to the sincerity and public aspects of the relationship, and rental or land ownership agreements must accompany the application for recognition.

### **Non-cohabitation or cohabitation for less than 12 months**

- 3.2.5 Recognition of a de facto relationship where there is no cohabitation or where cohabitation has been for a continuous period of less than 12 months will not normally be considered. Employees should consult with the Delegate if they believe their circumstances are exceptional.

### **Civil Unions**

- 3.2.6 The ACT Government's *Civil Unions Act 2012* provides for any two adults (regardless of gender) to enter into a civil union if they cannot marry. Alternatively, in the ACT, and in the other states and territories, any two adults (regardless of gender) can enter into a civil partnership (variously described) under the respective state and territory legislation. It is the Departments policy to observe the intent of the ACT *Civil Unions Act 2012*, by affording an employee who is in civil union in the ACT or civil partnership in a state or territory the same overseas conditions that apply to a married couple.



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### 3.3 Employee Couples

#### Introduction

- 3.3.1 An employee couple is two Departmental employees in a recognised spouse or de facto relationship in one of the following scenarios:
- both on long-term postings to the same location (postings do not have to be concurrent, they can overlap);
  - both on overlapping or concurrent long-term postings to different locations;
  - one employee on a long-term posting and the accompanying spouse recalled to duty at the same location; or
  - one employee on a long-term posting and the accompanying spouse undertakes a short-term mission at a different location.

#### Pre-departure Conditions

- 3.3.2 Where long-term postings at the same location are not concurrent but overlap and an employee couple departs for post at the same time, conditions and entitlements are applied at the accompanied rate.
- 3.3.3 Where an employee couple departs separately within a short timeframe of each other, entitlements such as those for uplift and transfer allowance will be applied at the accompanied rate. A case can be submitted to the Delegate for consideration of the provision of some separate entitlements such as a split uplift where departure to post would occur separately and with a reasonable gap between departures. An assessment of such a case would need to ensure that any conditions or entitlements are not doubled.

#### Allowances and entitlements

- 3.3.4 Employee couples on joint overseas long-term postings must jointly nominate the person who will be the accompanied employee for receipt of allowances. If the employee couple does not nominate which employee will receive Cost of Posting Allowance (COPA), it will be paid to the employee with the higher gross salary.
- 3.3.5 All allowances and entitlements are subject to the requirement that it is not possible to simultaneously receive an allowance at both the accompanied and unaccompanied rate at the same point in time.
- 3.3.6 If the family composition of any long-term posted employee changes and the change impacts on the rate of an allowance, the posted employee has an obligation to advise the Placements team. Allowances will be adjusted and if an overpayment has occurred, arrangements will be made for recovery.
- 3.3.7 As applies to all postees, if an employee or their spouse/dependants are absent from post for more than 28 consecutive days, certain overseas allowances cease. In these situations, the posted employee has an obligation to advise the Placements team of the absence, to ensure no overpayments occur. The exception to this is where the posted employee is absent while taking annual leave with allowances accrued at post.
- 3.3.8 The following table outlines each of the allowances and entitlements and their application to employee couples:

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Allowances / Entitlements	Employee couple treatment
Transfer Allowance	<b>Scenario1: Employee couple posted to same location.</b> Only one employee will receive Transfer Allowance at the appropriate rate according to family composition.
	<b>Scenario 2: Employee couple posted to different locations.</b> Unaccompanied Transfer Allowance is paid to each employee.
Outlay advance	Employee couples are entitled to a combined amount of \$15,000. This loan can be requested by one employee or can be shared by the couple.
Settling-In/Out allowances	Only one employee will receive meals supplements at each location. This will be paid for those members of the family unit settling in or out at that time.
Education assistance	One parent must nominate to receive assistance with education costs for a child remaining in full-time primary or secondary education in Australia.
Cost of posting allowance (COPA)	<b>Scenario 1: Employee couple posted to same location.</b> Only one employee will receive the accompanied rate of COPA.
	<b>Scenario 2: Employee couple posted to different locations.</b> Unaccompanied COPA is paid to each employee.
	<b>Scenario 3: Employee couple where one person is recalled to duty.</b> Where a posted employee is accompanied and the accompanying partner is recalled to duty, either at the same location or to undertake a STM at another location, the posted employee will continue to receive the accompanied rate of COPA as STMs are ineligible for this payment.
Child supplement	Only one employee of an employee couple is entitled to receive child supplement.
Location Allowance	Only one employee of an employee couple is entitled to receive Location Allowance, at the accompanied rate, if at the same post. Employee couples at different posts are each entitled to the unaccompanied Location Allowance applicable to their location.
Special Location Supplement (SLS)	<b>Scenario 1: Employee couple posted to same location.</b> Only one employee will receive the accompanied rate of SLS.
	<b>Scenario 2: Employee couple posted to different locations.</b>

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Allowances / Entitlements	Employee couple treatment
	Each employee will receive the unaccompanied rate of SLS applicable to their location.
Attraction Allowance	Attraction Allowance is paid to all employees individually, if applicable to their location.
Additional annual leave	Additional annual leave, if applicable, is accrued individually by each employee, based on their dates at category C to F location.
Assisted leave fares (ALF)	Assisted leave fares accrue per employee and their accompanying dependants based on the period of their posting. An employee couple will together accrue the same number of leave fares as for a single posted employee.
Reunion travel	Employee couples on concurrent/overlapping postings, at different posts, are entitled to two reunion fares (i.e. one each) per reunion year.

### 3.4 Dual-agency couples

#### Introduction

- 3.4.1 Dual-agency employee couple means a Departmental employee and their APS-employee spouse employed by another Commonwealth department or agency both deployed to the same post.

#### Allowances and Entitlements

- 3.4.2 If dual-agency employees would both be entitled to overseas conditions of service from their respective department or agency, the employee and their spouse must jointly nominate which employee will be eligible for certain allowances.
- 3.4.3 Nominees cannot change their status during the period of posting.

Allowances / Entitlements	Payments made to
Cost of Posting Allowance	Paid at the accompanied rate if the Departmental employee is the nominated employee
Location Allowance	
Cost of Living Adjustment	Paid individually, if applicable
Special Location Supplement	Paid at the accompanied rate if the Departmental employee is the nominated employee
Attraction Allowance	Paid individually, if applicable
Assisted leave fare entitlements	Paid to nominated employee based on the entitlement rate of the nominated agency's entitlements.
Child Supplement	

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Allowances / Entitlements	Payments made to
Location dependant Allowance	

3.4.4 For postings involving dual-agency employees, the Department will negotiate a suitable joint financial arrangement with its counterpart Commonwealth agency to fund some of the following wide-ranging costs associated with a long-term posting for which only one entitlement per family unit will be paid:

- Uplift/removal of household goods (share)
- Worldwide multiple risks insurance cover
- Storage and insurance of household goods in Australia (share)
- Settling-in/settling-out allowance
- Travel costs to/from post (share)
- Travelling Allowance/rest periods
- Assisted leave fares
- Reunion fares
- Compassionate travel (individual agency)
- Overseas health assistance (individual agency and agency providing accompanied allowances cater for children)
- Education assistance at post and in Australia
- Residential accommodation and utilities (share)
- Transfer Allowance
- Outlay advance
- Passports and visa requirements
- Pre-posting medical costs, and
- Other posting-related costs as agreed between each agency.

3.4.5 Where a specific allowance or benefit attracts a Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) liability that is payable by the employer, the Commonwealth agency which has agreed to fund this allowance or benefit under the terms of the dual-agency agreement will be responsible for funding the FBT liability.

## 3.5 Pre-posting preparations

### Pre-posting expenses

3.5.1 The Department will meet the costs incurred by employees for a range of pre-posting expenses including medical and dental checks, vaccinations, visa photographs, visa application fees and sponsored passport fees.

3.5.2 An employee who is being accompanied to post by a dependant who is the holder of a foreign passport will be responsible for arranging and paying for any necessary foreign passport and visa charges for the dependant. Reimbursement of the visa charge, where applicable, will be provided

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upon presentation of a valid receipt. The Department will not provide reimbursement of costs incurred for a personal passport.

- 3.5.3 An employee who is being accompanied by a same sex partner to a country that does not recognise same sex relationships will be responsible for arranging and paying for any necessary visa. The Placements team can assist by providing a letter of support, confirming the employees posting. Reimbursement of the visa charge, where applicable, will be provided upon presentation of a valid receipt.

### Overseas Preparation Program

- 3.5.4 The purpose of the Overseas Preparation Program (OPP) is to ensure that employees appointed to roles in the Departments offshore network have the most up to date information, as well as the skills and experience necessary to meet the demands of an overseas post. Attendance is a requirement of every posting.
- 3.5.5 The program is a collaborative effort across the Department and is coordinated by Overseas Network Management section.
- 3.5.6 All mandatory training must be completed prior to undertaking a posting.
- 3.5.7 More details on the OPP are available in My Learning on ourPeople by searching Overseas Preparation.

### Language training

- 3.5.8 The Department supports language training for overseas posts where English is not widely spoken. For more information please refer to the Departments Language Training Program for Overseas Preparation Course participants or contact the Employee Development Services team by email s. 47E(d) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:s.47E(d)@homeaffairs.gov.au)).

### Pre-Posting Support

- 3.5.9 Employees undertaking a posting will be supported by the Placements team. The team will provide advice and assistance throughout the pre-posting period. The team will contact employees approximately six months prior to departure commence logistical arrangements. Once contacted by the Placements team, employees should contact their logistics officer to arrange a pre-posting logistics briefing. This briefing will cover pre-posting logistical arrangements including passports, visas, flights to post, relevant status, timing of settling-in etc.

### Private Car insurance

- 3.5.10 If employees intend to purchase a car for personal use at post, it is recommended that they obtain a letter from their insurance company prior to departure from Australia confirming any 'no-claim bonus' if applicable. This will assist when arranging private car insurance overseas.

## 3.6 Pre Post Health Assessments

### Use of Commonwealth Credit Card for health services

- 3.6.1 Employees being posted are required to obtain a Commonwealth Credit Card. Pre-travel medical services such as medical consultations are to be purchased with this credit card, using the post's onshore cost centre.

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3.6.2 The costs of vaccinations required for a long-term posting are covered as an official expense. The cost of vaccinations for private travel is not covered.

3.6.3 The cost for dental consultations and X-rays are covered as an official expense.

3.6.4 Any other treatment is not covered.

### Medical and dental assessments

3.6.5 To be eligible for assistance with health care costs under Comcover's [Statement of Cover](#) while on a long-term posting, employees and their dependants must be declared medically fit by the Department's nominated medical service provider, and have received a dental clearance from a dentist prior to departure from Australia. This includes any dependant remaining in Australia who is eligible for a reunion visit. The assessment may include blood grouping and testing for tuberculosis.

3.6.6 Employees and their dependants must disclose any pre-existing medical conditions to the provider.

3.6.7 Employees and their dependants must ensure vaccinations and any other preventative measures as recommended for a particular location are taken and remain current. Medical coverage may be denied if preventative measures are ignored. For example, an employee ignoring a recommendation to take anti-malarial medication who subsequently contracts malaria may be required to meet all costs of treatment.

3.6.8 An employee is unable to be certified fit to undertake a long-term posting unless they, and their dependants, have completed all medical requirements including any vaccinations.

3.6.9 Employees, and their dependants, can be requested to undertake a medical during a posting to ensure that they are medically fit to continue their posting.

3.6.10 It is recommended employees book appointments with the Departments medical service provider early (but no more than four months prior to posting) to allow time for follow up procedures if required.

3.6.11 Where the medical service provider seeks for an employee to provide a report from their regular GP or specialist, any costs associated with obtaining the additional documentation will be a personal expense to the employee.

3.6.12 The Travel Doctor is the Departments current medical service provider. In relation to dental clearance, employees can be examined by their choice of qualified dentist

3.6.13 All pre-existing dental problems must be brought to the attention of the examining dentist during this dental assessment. It is expected that existing problems will be identified and corrected as part of the dental clearance process. The Department will cover the cost of the initial dental consultation, with the employee covering the cost of any preventative or corrective treatment and further consultations.

3.6.14 Each person attending a dental clearance will need to take with them a dental clearance form, which will be provided by the Placements team.

### Outcome of medical assessment

3.6.15 As a result of a medical assessment, the Departments medical service provider may certify an employee or accompanying dependants as not fit to undertake a posting. In this circumstance, the

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employee or dependant will be required to obtain medical clearance before they can be considered for an overseas posting.

### Treatment of pre-existing conditions or elective treatment

- 3.6.16 Overseas medical arrangements are not intended to provide cover for treatment of pre-existing conditions or forms of elective treatment. Employees contemplating medical procedures that are considered forms of elective treatment in Australia should contact the Overseas Medical mailbox to establish if official financial support is appropriate.
- 3.6.17 Elective treatment could include, but is not limited to, procedures such as capping of teeth, joint replacements and cosmetic surgery.

### Medical insurance

- 3.6.18 For information about medical insurance, refer to [Section 4.18 - Health Care and Medical Insurance](#).

## 3.7 Outlay Advance

- 3.7.1 An Outlay Advance is an interest-free loan available to employees about to undertake a long-term posting (including a cross-posting). It is designed to assist with the establishment and set-up costs at the post, for example:
- purchasing, registering and insuring a motor vehicle at post;
  - purchasing special clothing required because of cultural or climatic conditions; and
  - payment of miscellaneous costs and expenses associated with setting up a new home at the post.
- 3.7.2 Employees may request an Outlay Advance up to a maximum of \$15,000, bearing in mind their own capacity to repay.
- 3.7.3 A request for an Outlay Advance is to be made on the appropriate form. This includes a declaration that the amount will be used for the sole purpose outlined above.

### Payment and Repayment

- 3.7.4 The advance can be paid to the employee up to six weeks prior to commencement at post or within the first six months of arrival at post.
- 3.7.5 The advance is recovered from the employee's salary within 12 months of the payment being made, in fortnightly instalments commencing the first payday after receipt of the funds.

### Repayment if posting cancelled

- 3.7.6 The balance of an Outlay Advance owing by an employee is immediately recoverable in full if an employee's posting does not eventuate, is cancelled, or is terminated by the employee or the Delegate.

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### 3.8 Transfer Allowance

- 3.8.1 Transfer Allowance assists with expenditure incurred as a result of household disruptions associated with a long-term posting.
- 3.8.2 Transfer Allowance covers a range of unspecified costs that may include (but not limited to):
- disposal of unconsumed food and beverages
  - electrical conversion appliances
  - travel equipment and suitcases
  - cleaning supplies that have to be disposed of
  - utilities disconnection/connection
  - equipment allowance, and
  - compression stockings.
- These costs cannot be charged to the Commonwealth Credit Card.
- 3.8.3 Transfer Allowance will not be paid more than six weeks prior to the date a posting commences.
- 3.8.4 Employees who receive Transfer Allowance under this section are not entitled to also receive Transfer Allowance for the same transfer under the Departments Domestic Relocation provisions when commencing a term, or temporary transfer immediately on return to Australia after a posting.

#### Eligibility

- 3.8.5 Transfer Allowance is paid to employees when:
- departing for a long-term posting
  - returning from a long-term posting
  - being cross-posted for a further long-term posting; or
  - being moved at departmental expense from one location to another at post (except if the move is within the same residential compound).
- 3.8.6 Unaccompanied Transfer Allowance will apply if an employee's spouse does not accompany the employee on travel to a post. An employee may be paid the balance of Transfer Allowance owing (i.e. the difference between the unaccompanied and accompanied entitlement) if the employee's spouse later joins them at post.

#### Transfer Allowance rates

- 3.8.7 An employee is paid Transfer Allowance in accordance with [Schedule Three](#).

#### Repayment if posting cancelled

- 3.8.8 If an employee's posting is cancelled or does not eventuate for either personal or operational reasons and the employee's household goods have not been uplifted at the time the posting is cancelled, the employee must repay the full amount of Transfer Allowance received less any amount determined by the Delegate to have been reasonably expended by the employee.



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### 3.9 Uplift and Storage of Household Goods

#### Uplift and storage of household goods

- 3.9.1 The Department will provide employees with one uplift of household goods to and from post (or between posts if cross posted) and one into storage, as part of a long-term posting.
- 3.9.2 An employee's uplift will commence on the three days prior to their departure to post. For example, if an employee is due to travel to post on a Thursday, their uplift will take place Monday through Wednesday. In exceptional circumstances, alternate uplift dates may be considered.
- 3.9.3 If an employee or their dependants have household goods uplifted from Australia or post at different times, and the cost is greater than if all goods had been uplifted at one time, the employee is to pay for the extra costs incurred. In exceptional circumstances, the Delegate may decide that it is reasonable for an uplift to be done at more than one time with no employee contribution required.
- 3.9.4 Household goods are personal and household effects including furniture and property used, or intended to be used, in the operation of a home. Household goods exclude items such as perishable foodstuff, motorised vehicles, trailers, boats, caravans, pets, hazardous, prohibited or dangerous items and excessively heavy or large items.
- 3.9.5 Allied Pickford's is the Departments current service provider for uplift and storage services.

#### Storage in Australia

- 3.9.6 The Department will meet the cost of storing an employee's and their accompanying dependants' household goods that are not removed overseas with Allied Pickford's in Australia for the duration of the employee's posting, plus three months from the last day of duty at post.
- 3.9.7 If the employee wishes to access, remove or add items to the consignment stored for the term of a posting, the employee will need to make their own arrangements with Allied Pickford's and the cost of any handling or access charges will not be covered by the Department. In exceptional circumstances, the Delegate may approve access to stored items with no employee contribution required.

#### Volume entitlements to post

- 3.9.8 The following table specifies the cubic metre limits by family composition for employees to post. Cubic metre volume limits refer to packed amounts. Further advice will be given by the Allied Pickford's consultant at a pre-pack briefing.
- 3.9.9 The external packaging is part of the volume allowance.

Ordinary period of posting and extensions (inclusive of external packaging)					
Family composition	1	2	3	4	5
Cubic metre volume to post	12	15	17	19	21
Cubic metre volume on return to Australia	15	19	21	24	26

- 3.9.10 When family size is greater than five persons, volume limits increase by two cubic meters for each additional dependant.

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- 3.9.11 Household goods that exceed the allowable volume limit will be uplifted at the employee's expense. Employee contributions towards removal of additional household goods must be paid prior to departure. The Delegate may vary a volume limit where exceptional circumstances have resulted in an employee exceeding their prescribed volume limit.

### Dispatch arrangements

- 3.9.12 Employees departing Australia will normally have their household goods sent by airfreight. If an employee has an airfreight entitlement and chooses to send their household goods by sea freight, their volume entitlement will remain unchanged and cannot be increased.

### Freight restrictions

- 3.9.13 The dispatch of hazardous, explosive or combustible items is prohibited. It is an employee's responsibility to ensure that they do not transport prohibited or dangerous items. Further details are available on the Civil Aviation Safety Authority website.
- 3.9.14 The Civil Aviation Safety Authority specifies restrictions on what may be transported by aircraft. These include:
- furniture items (including pianos) larger than 1.52mx1.01mx1.62m
  - white goods such as washing machines, dryers and refrigerators
  - boats, canoes and windsurfers
  - trailers
  - heavy gymnasium equipment
  - lawn mowers; and
  - paint, aerosol cans, lighter fuel, etc.

### Employee responsibilities

- 3.9.15 Overseas removals may include alcohol subject to Australian Customs regulations and those of the country of posting. Employees are responsible for any duty payable on alcohol.
- 3.9.16 The Department will meet the storage costs but will not accept responsibility for the cost of special or extra crating and packaging for valuable art works, wine cellar contents, rare, antique or vintage items and the like that are to be uplifted. Employees are personally responsible for ensuring such items are adequately insured, crated and packaged to minimise loss or damage during uplift and storage.

### Inventories

- 3.9.17 It is recommended that, for valuation purposes and the employee's own protection, employees compile an inventory of household goods being uplifted overseas and for household goods being stored in Australia.
- 3.9.18 The level of detail on each item listed in the inventory should be sufficient to fully describe the item, its condition and replacement value if compensation is sought due to loss or damage.
- 3.9.19 The Department does not require a copy of inventories.

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### Domestic insurance cover for household goods

- 3.9.20 The Department will meet reasonable insurance costs for household goods and personal effects in storage in Australia up to a maximum consignment value of AUD100,000.
- 3.9.21 The provider for this service is Allied Pickford's. Employees are responsible for ensuring any forms are accurately completed and submitted prior to the uplift of the employee's household goods. The effective date for the insurance is the date of uplift.
- 3.9.22 The Department will continue to meet the costs for insuring the employee's goods stored in Australia for up to three months following the cessation date at post. After this date, the employee is responsible for the insurance of their goods.

### Insurance cover for household goods sent to post

- 3.9.23 The Department will meet costs for the insurance coverage of goods going to post up to a maximum consignment value of AUD100,000.
- 3.9.24 The two companies, Allied Pickford's and Marsh, have been identified as companies that provide worldwide insurance cover for goods going to overseas post. Comprehensive information regarding these insurance brokers should be obtained by contacting the relevant company. Employees are responsible for reading all company information and deciding which insurance broker best suits their needs. To seek contact details for Allied Pickford's and March, please contact the placements team by email <sup>s. 47E(d)</sup> [redacted]@homeaffairs.gov.au).
- 3.9.25 Employees need to contact the company of their choice to arrange for a policy, and should ensure their policy is kept up to date while at post. The effective date is the date of uplift.

### Exceeding Insurance Limits

- 3.9.26 Employees are required to personally pay for any additional insurance that may be required to adequately cover their household goods if the maximum values are exceeded.

### Damage to personal goods

- 3.9.27 If any personal goods are damaged, employees will need to contact the removal company, storage company, or insurance company immediately to make a claim. The Department will not act on an employee's behalf in these matters.

### Boarding school

- 3.9.28 Employees are personally responsible for arranging appropriate insurance cover for a child's personal effects at boarding school in Australia.

### Leave for packing, uplift and removal

- 3.9.29 Employees on long-term posting are entitled to up to three days Miscellaneous Leave with Pay (Exceptional Circumstances) for packing, uplift and removal of their household goods (including when moving residence at post or cross-posting). This entitlement allows two days for packing and one day for house cleaning. If additional days are required, employees must apply for personal leave or annual leave. This entitlement does not extend to accompanying partners who are APS employees.

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- 3.9.30 Miscellaneous Leave with Pay (Exceptional Circumstances) must be entered into easySAP for the time of packing/unpacking household goods. Employees who choose to take annual leave or unpaid leave for this purpose will not have their leave re-credited or receive additional remuneration.

### 3.10 Settling-out in Australia

#### Intention

- 3.10.1 The intention of settling-out provisions is to assist with the additional costs for meals faced by employees and their eligible dependants.

#### Entitlement

- 3.10.2 When an employee moves out of their home (due to uplift of effects, etc.) they will be entitled to one settling-out period of up to three days. The settling-out period in Australia includes:
- an entitlement to temporary accommodation at official expense; and
  - a meals supplement payment.
- 3.10.3 An employee's settling-out arrangements should coincide with their uplift dates. In exceptional circumstances (i.e. where a spouse travels to post later), alternate settling-out dates may be considered.
- 3.10.4 Settling-out entitlements at official expense will be provided only once during each settling-out occasion. Where employees opt to travel separately to their dependants and use their settling-out entitlement, the dependants will not be eligible for further settling-out assistance with accommodation. If the employee does not utilise their accommodation entitlement, their dependants will be eligible for settling-out accommodation assistance at official expense.
- 3.10.5 The Delegate may extend a settling-out period in exceptional circumstances and determine an appropriate meals supplement for the extended period.

#### Temporary Accommodation

- 3.10.6 The standard of temporary accommodation should include cooking facilities (sufficient to prepare a cooked meal) and be appropriate having regard to the composition of the employee's family and the availability of suitable accommodation. Noting that the accommodation should take into consideration the Departments Domestic Business Travel Allowance rates for accommodation. For more information about domestic business travel, allowance rates please refer to <https://bordernet.immi.local/PPCR/Pages/domestic-business-travel-allowance-rates-.aspx>.
- 3.10.7 Employees electing to stay in private accommodation (i.e. with friends or relatives) during a settling-out period will be eligible to receive a private accommodation payment.
- 3.10.8 Employees electing to remain in their own home directly prior to posting will not receive settling-out provisions.

#### Meals Supplement

- 3.10.9 During a settling-out period, the employee and accompanying dependants will be paid a meal allowance equivalent to the daily meals rate for Canberra. Dependants less than 12 years of age will be entitled to half the daily meals rate for Canberra.

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### **Incidental allowance is not paid**

3.10.10 There is no entitlement for employees to receive an Incidental Allowance during settling-out either at post or in Australia under the provisions of this section.

## **3.11 Travel to Post**

### **Introduction**

3.11.1 The Department will pay the travel costs for the posted employee and any eligible dependants. Travel arrangements for travel from Australia to post (fares, visas, passports, etc.) are administered by the Placements team.

### **Commonwealth Credit Card use**

3.11.2 Employees travelling internationally on official business must hold a Departmental Commonwealth Credit Card. All travel-related costs, such as hotel accommodation, taxis etc. are to be charged to the employee's Commonwealth Credit Card.

3.11.3 Temporary accommodation at post until long term accommodation is available will be in accordance with the DFAT Service Level Agreement/management at post.

### **Official passports**

3.11.4 As representatives of the Department undertaking official government business overseas, all employees on a posting must travel on a diplomatic passport. Dependant children accompanying an employee to post will travel on endorsed personal passports.

3.11.5 Recognised spouses and/or dependents who are not Australian citizens (do not and cannot hold an Australian passport) cannot travel on diplomatic and/or endorsed passports.

3.11.6 The cost of Department sponsored passports will be charged to the cost centre funding the travel.

3.11.7 The Department will not provide financial assistance for costs associated with obtaining, or renewing personal passports.

3.11.8 The Placements team arranges sponsored passports for posted employees and their dependants.

### **Visas**

3.11.9 Travel on diplomatic passports or dependants' passports containing an observation is governed by different visa requirements to those applying for personal travel. Visas are required for postings to most countries. The cost of visas will be charged to the onshore post cost centre.

3.11.10 Visas for employees going on long-term postings are arranged by the Placements team.

3.11.11 The Department cannot apply for visas for non-Australian citizens. Spouses and dependants who hold a foreign passport (and cannot hold an Australian passport) are responsible for obtaining their own visas to accompany a Departmental employee to post. The costs associated with visas for non-Australian citizens once offshore is a personal expense to the employee.

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### Travel advisories

- 3.11.12 Employees undertaking international travel also need to consult DFAT Travel Advisories ([smartraveller.gov.au](http://smartraveller.gov.au)) prior to undertaking the travel. The travel advisories provide current and important information on safety and security, as well as other topics such as health issues and local laws, which assist Australians travelling or living overseas to make informed decisions.
- 3.11.13 As a minimum, employees intending to travel on official business are expected to refer to recommendations made in the travel advisories for the countries to be visited. Where travel advisories flag security or personal safety concerns, employees should consult Post Security Managers at the relevant post where they are or will be based and, if appropriate, at posts with consular responsibility for countries to be visited prior to arranging and proceeding with travel plans. Such consultations are mandatory when travel advisories recommend against travel to the locations to be visited.

### Approval of travel

- 3.11.14 International travel must be approved in accordance with [Financial Management Guideline – Official Travel](#).
- 3.11.15 The Placements team will obtain the necessary approval relating to travel to post. The normal method of travel is by air.

### Air Travel

- 3.11.16 Travel to and from post will be by the International Best Fare (IBF), as set out in [Department of Finance Resource Management Guide No. 405](#). Value for money is the overarching consideration when booking flights for international travel, taking into consideration the practical business needs of the traveller and overall cost of the trip. It is not intended that employees be required to use an airline where there are reasonable grounds for concerns over safety or security.
- 3.11.17 The Placements team arranges outward air travel bookings from Australia.

### Class of Air Travel

- 3.11.18 An employee is entitled to international air travel in accordance with the following provisions:
- Where three classes of travel are provided on the aircraft, the employee travels at the intermediate class, usually business class or its equivalent.
  - Where there are no intermediate or business classes the ordinary standard of travel is economy class.
  - Where business class or an equivalent option is not available for international travel, the Delegate may consider approving an alternate (non-direct) route, particularly where the travel is in excess of eight hours.
- 3.11.19 Australian domestic sectors and in-country sectors used in conjunction with an international itinerary may be at the same standard of travel if a through ticket is purchased.
- 3.11.20 If an employee travels at a lower standard of travel than prescribed, no credit is to be provided either in cash or as an offset, against higher expenditure on travel in another sector. Similarly, employees are not able to voluntarily downgrade the class of travel to take account of wider travel options or to purchase additional tickets for non-official travel.

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### Train travel

3.11.21 If an employee is required to travel by train when undertaking official business, the ordinary standard of travel is intermediate class. The Delegate may approve another class of travel prior to the travel taking place.

### Travel costs of dependants

3.11.22 The Department will pay the travel costs of eligible dependants to the same extent as a posted employee, subject to the following conditions:

- Travel by a spouse and dependants will not precede that of the employee's travel to post.
- A spouse and accompanying dependants travelling separately to the employee will be entitled to business class airfares using the IBF, without rest days at official expense.
- Dependants not accompanying an employee or the employee's spouse will be entitled to economy class airfares, without rest days, at official expense.

3.11.23 Baby baskets will normally be provided for infants that are newborn or not mobile. The Department will pay for airline seating for infants that are mobile or sitting.

3.11.24 All associated costs with the transportation of pets, or the boarding of animals in Australia, will not be covered by the Department, and are the personal responsibility of the employee.

### Alternate routes

3.11.25 Travel to and from a posting must meet the sole purpose of conveying employees and dependants to and from post in a timely manner. If employees choose to travel by other than the IBF:

- employees must meet any travel costs in excess of the business class fare using the IBF;
- rest days and travel allowance will be applicable based on the IBF entitlement;
- any costs incurred additional to those which would be incurred based on the IBF (additional visas, extra travel insurance, etc.) are the personal responsibility of the employee, and must be paid prior to travel; and
- where Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) is incurred in respect of a deviation from direct travel (including allowed rest days) using the IBF, the FBT liability for the entire trip (not just the deviation) will be at the employee's personal expense unless the Delegate agrees to meet this liability prior to the travel occurring.

### Promotions and competitions

3.11.26 Employees travelling on official business are not permitted to participate in promotions or competitions conducted by external providers.

### Unused tickets

3.11.27 All unused tickets or portions of unused tickets must be returned to the Travel Management Company (TMC) for a refund. Lost or stolen tickets must be reported promptly to the TMC to obtain the maximum refund. Under no circumstances can unused tickets purchased by the Department be used for personal travel.



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### Travel out of hours

3.11.28 Employees undertaking international business travel may not access flex time or overtime for periods of travel that fall outside normal working hours.

### Frequent flyer points

3.11.29 Government employees should not accrue Frequent Flyer Points or Loyalty Reward Points for official business travel. Status credits may still be accrued.

### Baggage benefits

3.11.30 Each employee and dependant authorised to travel overseas may transport 30kg of baggage at departmental expense. The exception to this is if the carrier charges a price for each bag rather than for the combined weight, in which case the benefit is two suitcases.

3.11.31 This benefit includes the amount of baggage the carrier allows the passenger to carry for no extra charge.

3.11.32 When an employee is being accompanied by a dependant child, who will not occupy an airline seat, the Department will meet additional costs incurred for the transportation of one car seat and one pram per child, where these items are not included free of charge by the airline.

### Excess baggage

3.11.33 Where employees and their eligible dependant's send their personal effects by sea freight to a long-term posting (including a cross-posting), the Department will meet the cost of:

- an additional 15kg of excess baggage for each person where the airline calculates excess baggage by kilograms; or
- an additional piece of luggage for each person where the airline charge is based on pieces of luggage.

3.11.34 Baggage entitlements, including excess baggage provisions cannot exceed 45kg in total. For example, where an employee receives an airline baggage allowance of 40kg, under provision 3.11.33, they would only be entitled to an additional 5kg of excess baggage.

3.11.35 This is to compensate for the cost of carrying surplus luggage on the flight to post. The cost of the excess baggage may be charged to a Commonwealth Credit Card.

3.11.36 The excess baggage provisions do not extend to household pets.

3.11.37 The Delegate may approve additional excess baggage entitlement in exceptional circumstances.

### Unaccompanied baggage or air freight

3.11.38 Where excess baggage provisions apply, an employee may convert their excess baggage entitlement to unaccompanied baggage or airfreight.

3.11.39 If an employee chooses to send baggage unaccompanied, the cost limit is equivalent to if the employee had moved the full benefit of air baggage at the accompanied rate.

3.11.40 This means that the cost of accompanied baggage plus the cost of unaccompanied baggage must not be more than the cost of 45kg of accompanied baggage.



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3.11.41 Any freight, customs, quarantine, delivery, storage or other charges incurred are a personal expense.

3.11.42 If there is no unaccompanied baggage rate available, airfreight may be used on the same principle. Noting that employee must provide an accurate customs declaration and ensure prohibited goods are not imported.

### Travel Allowance for Postings

3.11.43 In addition to the cost of air travel, accommodation and official transport, an employee travelling to a long-term posting will be paid Travel Allowance appropriate to their classification and location during travel to post, including any approved rest period or stopover. Travel Allowance comprises a payment for the cost of meals and incidental expenses.

3.11.44 The Travel Allowance rates provided annually by Employment Conditions Abroad (ECA) will apply for any international component. Travel Allowance rates applicable to domestic travel are prescribed within the Domestic Business Travel Allowance rates.

3.11.45 If an employee does not travel by the most logical direct route, the travel allowance rates will be those that would have applied had the rest period been taken during travel using the International Best Fare (IBF) on the most logical direct route.

3.11.46 When rest days are taken on arrival at the employee's destination, employees are not entitled to receive both travel allowance and settling-in/out allowance for the rest days.

### Travel Insurance

3.11.47 International travel insurance for official purposes is provided under the Departments Comcover Insurance Policy. Employees are responsible for private travel and medical insurance when travelling privately, to meet unforeseen circumstances. This includes any period of annual leave en route to post.

## 3.12 Rest Periods to Post

### Introduction

3.12.1 A rest period provides a chance to recover from jet lag, during or after travel, before undertaking duty.

3.12.2 Rest period entitlements are based on the flight duration and 2 hours of incidental travel. It does not include pre-departure travel time, rest periods, leave, or stopovers at localities where an employee is not required to perform duty.

### Entitlement

3.12.3 The numbers of rest periods to post are detailed in [Schedule Three](#).

3.12.4 If an employee's trip has a continuous travelling time of between 6 to 12 hours, the employee will be entitled to a rest period before commencing duty. A rest period is defined as a period of sufficient duration to enable overnight rest, but not longer than 24 hours. Where there is only one rest period entitlement, the rest period must be taken at the final destination.

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- 3.12.5 If an employee's trip has a continuous travelling time of between 12 to 24 hours, the employee will be entitled to two rest periods before commencing duty. One rest period may be taken partway through the journey, and the remaining rest period must be taken at the end of the journey, or both rest periods may be taken at the end of the journey. In the latter case, the combined rest periods may not be longer than 48 hours.
- 3.12.6 A rest period is effective from the time the traveller disembarks the aircraft at a scheduled stopover in the journey or at the final destination. The actual length of a rest period may vary slightly from the prescribed rest period entitlement and will depend on airline schedules and time of arrival and departure at the destination.
- 3.12.7 Where a rest period taken at the post location ceases outside of normal working hours, the employee should present for work at the earliest possible opportunity.
- 3.12.8 No trip can have more than 2 rest periods.

### **Rest period – employee on duty**

- 3.12.9 An employee is taken to be on duty during any approved rest period that falls within normal working hours. A rest period taken outside normal working hours does not entitle an employee to remuneration or time off in lieu. Rest periods that fall on a weekend or a public holiday are rest days if the employee is not required to work on those days.

### **Effect of stopover on a rest period**

- 3.12.10 If an employee has an unavoidable stopover during international travel, they are not entitled to a rest period unless the Delegate is satisfied that the stopover did not constitute the equivalent of a rest period for the employee. An employee cannot nominate a stopover at a location other than the scheduled stopover location.

END OF PART THREE

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### Part 4 – Long-term Postings – At Post

#### 4.1 Introduction

##### Ordinary period of Long-term Posting

4.1.1 The ordinary period of posting is three years or a period set by the Delegate in respect of a post.

##### Employee decision to return from a posting after two years

4.1.2 Should an employee posted to a location with a location rating of D, E or F, decide during the first year of their posting that they wish to complete only two years instead of three for professional or personal reasons, they can apply for an early return. The employee should advise the Regional Director, who will liaise with the appropriate business area responsible for the employee, of their request by the end of their first year at post. Early return will occur without prejudice unless a Regional Director supports the early return in the employee's performance appraisal as a result of unsatisfactory performance.

##### Unforeseen changes to posting

4.1.3 Employees undertaking long-term postings should understand that while a period is prescribed for each posting, circumstances (operational or personal) might arise that could result in a change to the ordinary period of posting.

#### 4.2 Settling-in at post

##### Introduction

4.2.1 The purpose of settling-in provisions at post is to assist with the additional costs for meals faced by employees and their eligible dependants (if any) who are obliged to temporarily reside in a hotel or other commercial accommodation, ahead of moving into more suitable permanent residential accommodation.

##### Settling-in period at post

4.2.2 An employee's settling-in period at post begins on the first day of the employee's period of posting and ends on whichever is the earlier of:

- the day suitable permanent residential accommodation becomes available at the post, with access to goods or settling in kit; or
- six weeks after the day the employee's period of posting begins.

4.2.3 If an employee is unable to obtain suitable permanent residential accommodation within the settling-in period, the Delegate may extend the settling-in period to allow the employee more time to obtain suitable accommodation.

##### Accommodation

4.2.4 The period of settling-in should be kept to a minimum and, where possible, the standard of accommodation should include cooking facilities (sufficient to prepare a cooked meal) and be

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appropriate having regard to the composition of the employee's family and the availability of suitable accommodation.

### Amount of meal allowance paid overseas

4.2.5 If an employee and their dependants are authorised to live in a hotel or other accommodation without cooking facilities during a settling-in period at post, for each full day the employee is entitled to:

- two-thirds of the meal allowance specified for the post for the employee and any dependant 12 years of age or older; and
- for each dependant who is less than 12 years of age, two-thirds of the amount specified above for employees and dependants 12 years or older.

### Part-day of meals supplement paid overseas

4.2.6 On the first and last days of a settling-in period at a post, the employees and their eligible dependant's meal allowance is set out in the following table.

Table – Meal rate for day of arrival or departure		
Time of arrival or departure	% of rate for day of arrival	% of rate for day of departure
Before 07:00	100	Nil
07:00 – 13:00	75	25
13:01 – 19:00	50	50
After 19:00	Nil	100

### Meals supplement not payable overseas in certain circumstances

4.2.7 An employee and dependants are not entitled to a meals supplement in the following cases:

- If meals are provided to the employee and/or a dependant, or are otherwise paid for by the Australian Government (e.g. receiving Travel Allowance).
- During a period of recreation leave taken by the employee, including on weekends and public holidays adjacent to that recreation leave.
- While the employee occupies accommodation with facilities and utensils sufficient to allow the employee to prepare a cooked meal (e.g. serviced apartment).

### Settling-in provisions other than on arrival at post

4.2.8 If an employee's permanent accommodation becomes unavailable or unfit for occupation during their posting, or the employee is directed to live in temporary accommodation without adequate cooking facilities, the employee is entitled to a meals supplement as if the employee began settling-in on the day on which they depart their permanent accommodation.

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### Incidental allowance is not paid

- 4.2.9 There is no entitlement for employees to receive an incidental allowance during settling-in at post under the provisions of this section.

## 4.3 Residential accommodation

### Introduction

- 4.3.1 This section sets out the policy and conditions relating to the provision of residential accommodation at overseas locations for employees and their dependants on long-term posting. Allowances and other conditions provided to employees on long-term posting are based on housing and utilities being provided to A-based employees at departmental expense.
- 4.3.2 Information relating to overseas accommodation, standards, rental properties and furnishings are available by emailing the Leasing team in the Property Section  
s. 47E(d)   [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto: @homeaffairs.gov.au).

### Provision of residential accommodation

- 4.3.3 The Department will arrange to make available to an employee on a long-term posting a furnished house or other dwelling in reasonable proximity to the employee's workplace, that is suitable as a residence for the employee and any dependants.
- 4.3.4 If the former postee's accommodation is not suitable due to family composition, more suitable accommodation will be sourced.
- 4.3.5 Should an employee wish to change accommodation during the posting a business case will need to be prepared and forwarded via the Regional Director to the Leasing team  
s. 47E(d)   [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto: @homeaffairs.gov.au) for consideration and approval.

### Pets

- 4.3.6 If an employee wishes to take a pet on posting, formal approval must be obtained from the Director of Property in conjunction with DFAT at post. The employee will be required to complete an undertaking that any costs/damage associated with transporting and accommodating the pet for the duration of the posting, will be borne by the employee. The Leasing team will seek approval from the lessor of the proposed accommodation to allow the employee to keep the pet at the residence and this will need to be incorporated into the lease document.

### Leases on behalf of the Australian Government

- 4.3.7 If an employee is directed to seek residential accommodation that is suitable for leasing on behalf of the Australian Government, the Delegate may authorise reimbursement of reasonable costs incurred by the employee in searching for, securing and retaining the accommodation.

### Costs incurred under terms of occupancy

- 4.3.8 If an employee is required to pay property taxes or make other payments because of the agreement entered into by the Australian Government for a dwelling occupied by the employee, they are entitled to be reimbursed for the costs equal to the amount expended by the employee.

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### Moving residence at post

- 4.3.9 If an employee is required to move from one residence to another at post because of departmental requirements, the employee is entitled to have their possessions moved at departmental expense. The employee is also entitled to receive Transfer Allowance for moving residence at post. If a move is self-initiated, the removal costs will be a personal expense and no Transfer Allowance will be provided.

### Utilities

- 4.3.10 Employees on long-term posting overseas who are living in accommodation provided by the Department and who incur costs for utilities, are entitled to be reimbursed for the cost of those utilities.
- 4.3.11 If an employee fails to exercise due care and economy in the use of utilities and as a result additional costs are incurred, the Delegate may reduce the amount the employee is entitled to be reimbursed, or require the employee to make a contribution towards the cost of utilities.

### Telephones in private residences

- 4.3.12 Employees on long-term posting are entitled to a semi-official phone (i.e. an official phone in their private residence), except where they have been issued with a mobile phone for work purposes.
- 4.3.13 Where a mobile phone has been issued and the Regional Director has determined that a residential line is required for business continuity or security purposes then the cost of the semi-official phone can still be approved.
- 4.3.14 The Department will meet the following costs for a semi-official telephone:
- telephone service connection and installation costs
  - rental costs on one handset; and
  - business/official call costs.
- 4.3.15 Employees should, where possible, use their own personally funded phones or devices for personal use.
- 4.3.16 Where an employee uses a semi-official phone for personal purposes then the employee must contribute towards the cost of private and personal local calls plus pay for any private international and long distance calls made from their semi-official telephone, except where the personal use of the semi-official phone is incidental, ie. minor, infrequent and irregular, then there is no requirement to recover personal usage costs.
- 4.3.17 The rebate levels for local and international calls must be established locally having regard to local post practice. Rebate levels would normally be determined by the Regional Director.

### Mobile phones

- 4.3.18 The Regional Director will determine mobile call and data packages or thresholds sufficient to meet all genuine business use needs for employees at post.
- 4.3.19 Where personal use of an official mobile phone is:
- incidental, ie. minor, infrequent or irregular there is no requirement to recover personal usage costs.

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- frequent or high, the employee must contribute towards the cost of the excessive personal use made from the mobile phone, including calls, texts and data usage.

### Drinking Water

4.3.20 In determining the quality of the drinking water supply at post, advice will be obtained from DFAT or Austrade at post. When the water is determined 'not potable' procedures to assist with providing potable drinking water will be subject to post arrangements and adjustments.

### Maintaining a garden or swimming pool

4.3.21 When employees are required to maintain a garden or swimming pool as part of a lease, reasonable costs as determined by the relevant Regional Director will be reimbursed from post or regional budgets. Any approval of expenditure at post in relation to garden or swimming pool maintenance, is to be charged to the 'Operating Costs' Cost Centre of the post and not the Property Cost Centre.

4.3.22 An employee is not entitled to be reimbursed for costs incurred for swimming pool heating.

### Post-specific assistance

4.3.23 Other post specific assistance reimbursements may be considered by the delegate on a case-by-case basis. These will usually be notified as part of a DFAT post-specific policy and will be funded from the post budget.

4.3.24 Post specific assistance does not extend to include Household Maintenance and Assistance or cable/satellite television and internet subscription. These provisions are a personal cost to the employee.

## 4.4 Attendance

### Hours of duty

4.4.1 The hours of duty for employees on long-term posting are determined by a Regional Director and will generally coincide with the hours of duty for the overseas mission as determined by a Head of Mission or Head of Post.

### Limited access to certain leave

4.4.2 Periods of long or extended leave such as Miscellaneous Leave without Pay, Long Service leave, leave at half pay, etc., will be determined according to post operating requirements. Noting that any approval may impact on conditions and entitlements.

### Leave for unpacking

4.4.3 Employees are entitled to two days Miscellaneous Leave with Pay (Exceptional Circumstances) at their destination for unpacking their household goods. If additional days are required, employees must apply for personal leave or annual leave.

4.4.4 Miscellaneous Leave with Pay (Exceptional Circumstances) must be used at the time of packing/unpacking household goods. Employees who choose to take annual leave or unpaid leave for this purpose will not have their leave re-credited or receive additional remuneration.

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### Flextime and working hours

- 4.4.5 Flextime, travel out of hours, home-based work and variable working hours provisions specified in the Departments Enterprise Agreement are not available to employees on long-term posting.

### Public holidays

- 4.4.6 For employees on long-term posting, a public holiday is a day or part of a day observed as a public holiday at the Embassy, High Commission or Consulate where the employee is posted. Public holidays usually comprise a combination of local and Australian holidays and are determined by the relevant Head of Mission/Head of Post.

### Time off in lieu (TOIL)

- 4.4.7 Employees on long-term posting may, at the discretion of a Regional Director or Post Manager, access TOIL having regard to operational requirements and the additional or excessive hours worked by the employee over a sustained period. Employees will not be recompensed for excessive hours worked on a one-for-one basis. Employees on TOIL are considered to be on leave and applications for TOIL should be entered into and approved in easySAP.

### Studies assistance and study leave

- 4.4.8 The studies assistance and study leave provisions specified in the Departments Enterprise Agreement are not available to employees while on a long-term posting or on leave without pay to accompany an employee on a long-term posting.

## 4.5 Vehicle Allowance and employee contributions

### Vehicle Allowance

- 4.5.1 If the Delegate authorises an employee to use a motor vehicle owned or hired by the employee for official purposes, the employee is entitled to Vehicle Allowance for a journey that the employee makes under that authority. Travel between an employee's residence and post is not included in any authorised journey.
- 4.5.2 For each kilometre (km) of an authorised journey, an employee is entitled to an amount calculated in accordance with the formula  $A \times B \times (C/100)$ , where:
- A = the Motor Vehicle Allowance (MVA) rate specified in the Departments Enterprise Agreement,
  - B = the period exchange rate; and
  - C = the Employment Conditions Abroad (ECA) Cost of Living (COL) Post Index.
- Note:** The ECA Post Index is the index used for the payday prior to the commencement of travel. If the ECA Post Index is less than 100.0 then an index of 100.0 is used.
- 4.5.3 An employee who is entitled to Vehicle Allowance is entitled to be reimbursed for the reasonable cost of ferries, tolls and garage accommodation that the employee incurs during an authorised journey.



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### Allowance reduced in certain circumstances

4.5.4 The amount of allowances payable for an authorised journey is the lesser of:

- the sum of the vehicle allowance and travelling allowance payable to the employee for the journey; or
- the sum of the cost of the employee's fares by means of commercial transport that the delegate would ordinarily authorise for the journey and the amount of travelling allowance payable to the employee if the journey were by that means of transport.

### Hire of official vehicles for casual short-term private use

4.5.5 The delegate may authorise the private use of an official vehicle subject to conditions and guidelines imposed by post administration on the use of official vehicles for private use. Home garaging of an official vehicle is considered private use.

4.5.6 If an employee hires an official vehicle at post for private use, they will be responsible for paying the Department an amount per kilometre travelled calculated in accordance with the formula  $A \times B \times (C/100)$ , where:

- A = the MVA rate specified in the Departments Enterprise Agreement;
- B = the period exchange rate; and
- C = the ECA COL Post Index.

**Note:** The ECA Post Index is the index used for the payday prior to the commencement of travel. If the ECA Post Index is less than 100.0 then an index of 100.0 is used.

4.5.7 If an official vehicle is hired with a driver, the employee must pay to the Department the cost of any overtime or additional salary that is payable to the driver arising from the vehicle hire. This condition does not apply if the delegate is satisfied that an employee or dependant were prevented from driving the vehicle during the period of hire by religious custom or law or, that such driving would be an unacceptable risk to the personal safety of the employee or dependant.

### Excess commuting costs (private vehicle)

4.5.8 An employee who uses a motor vehicle owned or hired by the employee to travel between their residence and place of employment is entitled to be paid Vehicle Allowance (calculated by the same method outlined in this policy) for travel that exceeds 30kms per day.

4.5.9 Where an employee travels between their residence and place of employment, partly by public transport and partly by private motor vehicle, the employee is taken to have travelled the entire journey by public transport.

4.5.10 An employee is entitled to be reimbursed or paid an allowance only for travel by the most direct available route.

4.5.11 An employee is not entitled to be reimbursed or paid an allowance if they choose to live in a suitable residence that is more than 30 kms away and a residence within 30 kms is available.

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### Continuous full-time private use of official vehicles

- 4.5.12 The Delegate may authorise the hire of an official vehicle for continuous full time private use for periods of 28 days or more subject to any conditions and guidelines imposed by post administration on the private use of official vehicles.
- 4.5.13 If an employee hires an official vehicle at post for continuous private use, they will be responsible for paying the Department an amount for each kilometre travelled by the vehicle during the period of hire calculated in accordance with the formula  $A \times B \times (C/365)$ , where:
- A = the rate of vehicle allowance calculated in accordance with paragraph 4.5.2.
  - B = average annual kilometres travelled, and
  - C = number of days in the period for which the vehicle was allocated.
- 4.5.14 For continuous private use of an official vehicle for 28 days or more, an employee will pay the Department the taxable value of the car fringe benefit that accrues from the day the private use commenced.
- 4.5.15 If the period of authorised continuous full-time private use of an official vehicle is less than 28 days, the employee's personal contribution will be calculated in accordance with the formula used in clause 4.5.13 above. In such cases, any car fringe benefit tax incurred will not be recovered from an employee.

### SES employees and official vehicles

- 4.5.16 The provisions set out in clause 4.5.12 apply to SES employees on long-term posting who have cashed out their Executive Vehicle Scheme (EVS) entitlement prior to 8 February 2018. From 8 February 2018, SES employees are not eligible for the provision unless this is specified in the SES employee's determination.

## 4.6 Allowances – General

### Allowances Summary

- 4.6.1 The following allowances may apply to employees on a long-term posting. Employees on a dual posting should refer to Employee Couples for further details on how payment of these allowances will be determined.

Allowance	Eligibility
Overseas Living Allowances	
Cost of Posting Allowance (COPA)	Employees on long-term posting. Employees on short-term missions with adjusted conditions of service may be eligible.
Cost of Living Allowance (COLA)	Paid to employees on long-term posting where the Employment Conditions Abroad (ECA) index indicates that the cost of living at post is higher than in Canberra.

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Allowance	Eligibility
Dependant and Family Allowances (non-location specific)	
Child Supplement Allowance	Paid to employees with a recognised dependent child at post.
Unaccompanied Parent Allowance	Paid to an unaccompanied parent with a recognised dependent child, up to the age of 18, at post.
Role Specific Allowances	
Principal Migration Officer Liaison Allowance	Employees on long-term posting in Principal Migration Officer (Airline Liaison) roles at specific locations.

### Advice of changed circumstances

- 4.6.2 If an employee's personal/family circumstances change for any reason (e.g. changed marital status, spouse departs post, education status of dependants, dependants no longer dependent, etc.) that might affect the level of overseas allowances or entitlements provided during the employee's long-term posting. In such circumstances, written advice must be provided to the Placements team within 14 days of the change in circumstances occurring, to ensure correct payment of allowances.

## 4.7 Overseas Living Allowances

### Overseas Living Allowances

- 4.7.1 An employee is entitled to Cost of Posting Allowance (COPA) and Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) from the day they start duty at post until the last day of duty at post, except when:
- not entitled to salary
  - on Long Service Leave
  - absent from post, unless:
    - on Annual Leave that was accrued during the current period of posting
    - on paid leave (other than Annual Leave) for less than 28 days
    - absent from post for less than 28 days
    - dependants continue to live at the post, or
    - the absence is the result of an emergency evacuation directed by the Minister.
- 4.7.2 There may be exceptional circumstances where, at the Delegates discretion, continuing payment of overseas living allowances may not be affected. Such a situation could occur where workload is moved from one overseas location to another and employees must accompany the workload and continue processing at the new overseas location.

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- 4.7.3 Annual Leave utilised at post, which is in excess of the annual leave accrual at post, will result in an adjustment to the employee's overseas living allowances.

### Cost of Posting Allowance (COPA)

- 4.7.4 COPA compensates employees for the wider range of impacts a posting has on their lives. It serves as an incentive for overseas service and provides a buffer to even out the effects of costs, which may not be picked up by COLA.
- 4.7.5 COPA is calculated as a percentage of an employee's gross salary, and varies depending on whether the employee is accompanied or unaccompanied.
- 4.7.6 For employees approved for posting from 1 July 2017, the formula for calculating COPA is subject to a cap (top of the EL2 salary range). Once the cap is reached, no further allowance will be calculated. See [Schedule Two](#) for calculations.
- 4.7.7 For employees who are on grandparented provisions, the formula for calculating COPA is subject to a cap, after which the percentage applied to the gross salary is halved for each dollar above the ceiling. See [Schedule Two](#) for calculations.
- 4.7.8 Accompanied rates of COPA are payable to an employee whose spouse resides continuously with the employee and makes the post location his/her principal place of residence.
- 4.7.9 Accompanied rates of COPA are not payable to an employee whose spouse is absent from the locality of posting for a continuous period of more than 28 days, unless accompanying the employee on a period of recreation leave. Where a spouse is or will be, absent for more than 28 days the employee must advise overseas payroll <sup>s. 47E(d)</sup> [REDACTED] @homeaffairs.gov.au) to allow for the adjustment to their allowances. The employee will receive unaccompanied rates from day 29 until the day their spouse returns to post.

### Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)

- 4.7.10 COLA is an overseas living allowance that compensates employees for the additional cost of purchasing goods and services at post. COLA represents the amount by which the cost of living in a post is greater than the cost of living in Canberra.
- 4.7.11 COLA is calculated based on an employee's spendable salary (ie. gross salary minus tax, average superannuation of 5 per cent, housing and savings component) and the Employment Conditions Abroad (ECA) Cost of Living Post Index and fortnightly exchange rates. See [Schedule Two](#) for all COLA calculations.
- 4.7.12 In relation to determining spendable salary, the Department will use information obtained from ECA. ECA obtains information from household expenditure surveys published by government statistical offices in each country to calculate spendable and housing & savings for differing salary levels and family size.
- 4.7.13 For employees who are on grandparented provisions, COLA will be based on an employee's disposable salary (ie. gross salary minus PAYG tax and an average of 5 per cent superannuation contribution) and the ECA Cost of Living Post Index and fortnightly exchange rates. See [Schedule Two](#) for calculations.

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- 4.7.14 For employees who are on grandparented provisions and who do not have access to all duty free privileged prices available to diplomatic employees at the post, are entitled to receive a five per cent loading on the amount paid in COLA.

### 4.8 Dependant and family allowances

#### Child Supplement

- 4.8.1 Child Supplement provides supplementation for the additional costs borne by an employee on posting who has a dependent child residing with them at post. The allowance takes account of the additional costs of raising children overseas in an unfamiliar environment.
- 4.8.2 Child Supplement is based on a percentage of the Departments average overseas salary to reflect the additional costs associated with children in different age groups. These being:
- 6.5% for children under the age of three years;
  - 5% for children aged three years and under 12 years; and
  - 6% for children aged 12 years or over.

See Schedule Two for the calculations.

- 4.8.3 For employees who are under the grandparented provisions, Child Allowance and /or Child Reunion Allowance is the applicable allowance paid as opposed to Child Supplement. Refer to Child Allowance/Child Reunion for further details.

#### Eligibility for Child Supplement

- 4.8.4 An employee who has a child living with them at post is entitled to receive Child Supplement for the period that:
- begins on the day on which the child arrives and takes up residence at the employee's post or the employee's posting begins, whichever is the later; and
  - ends 28 days from the day on which the employee's posting ends or the day the child ceases to live at the post, whichever is the earlier.
- 4.8.5 A child who has reached the age of 18 years must be approved by the Delegate as a dependant before an employee can receive Child Supplement in respect of that child.

#### Child Allowance

- 4.8.6 This provision only applies to employees on grandparented provisions.
- 4.8.7 Child Allowance provides supplementation for the additional costs borne by an employee on posting who has a dependent child residing with them at post. The allowance takes account of the additional costs of raising children overseas in an unfamiliar environment.
- 4.8.8 Child Allowance is calculated based on an employee's gross salary, the ECA Post Index and fortnightly exchange rates. The allowance increases for eligible children 12 years of age or above. See Schedule Two for calculations.

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### Eligibility for Child Allowance

- 4.8.9 An employee who has a child living with them at post is entitled to receive Child Allowance for the period that:
- begins on the day on which the child arrives and takes up residence at the employee's post or the employee's posting begins, whichever is the later; and
  - ends 28 days from the day on which the employee's posting ends or the day the child ceases to live at the post or the day on which the employee becomes eligible for child reunion allowance, whichever is the earlier.
- 4.8.10 A child who has reached the age of 18 years must be approved by the Delegate as a dependant before an employee can receive child allowance in respect of that child.
- 4.8.11 An employee is not eligible concurrently for Child Allowance and Child Reunion Allowance for the same child. An employee may receive Child Allowance and Hardship Dependent Allowance in respect to the same child.

### Child Reunion Allowance

- 4.8.12 This provision only applies to employees on grandparented provisions.
- 4.8.13 Child Reunion Allowance supplements employees for the additional costs of maintaining a dependent child in full-time primary, secondary or tertiary education in Australia while they are on posting. The allowance is only paid where an entitlement to a reunion visit exists.
- 4.8.14 The Child Reunion Allowance rate is 75% of the Child Allowance rate that would be payable if the employee was eligible for Child Allowance for the particular child. See Schedule Two for calculations.

### Unaccompanied Parent Allowance

- 4.8.15 Unaccompanied Parent Allowance compensates an employee, who is an unaccompanied parent with a dependant who is a child living with the employee at the post, for the lack of flexibility they may encounter in managing child-care arrangements in conjunction with work commitments. See Schedule Three for current allowance rate.
- 4.8.16 The Delegate may adjust the amount of Unaccompanied Parent Allowance to reflect annual percentage movements in the Departments salaries.

### Eligibility for Unaccompanied Parent Allowance

- 4.8.17 An unaccompanied employee who has a dependent child, under 18 years of age, accompanying them is entitled to Unaccompanied Parent Allowance for the period that:
- begins on the day on which the child arrives and takes up residence at the employee's post or the employee's posting begins, whichever is the later; and
  - ends on the day the employee's posting ends or the day the child ceases to live at the post, whichever is the earlier.
- 4.8.18 An employee may receive Unaccompanied Parent Allowance and Child Supplement in respect to the same child.

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- 4.8.19 For employees on grandparented provisions, an employee may receive Unaccompanied Parent Allowance, Child Allowance and Location Dependant Allowance in respect to the same child. An employee is not eligible concurrently for Unaccompanied Parent Allowance and Child Reunion Allowance for the same child.
- 4.8.20 Unaccompanied Parent Allowance may not be split and paid to more than one employee/parent of a child.

## 4.9 Role Specific Allowances

### Principal Migration Officer Liaison Allowance

- 4.9.1 Principal Migration Officer Liaison (PMOL) duties include maintaining a visible presence at international airports at their post location, performing duties similar to Airline Liaison Officers (ALO). The PMOL allowance compensates PMOLs whose duties necessitate abnormal rostering.

### Eligibility for PMOL Allowance

- 4.9.2 Employees on long-term posting as PMOL will be eligible to receive a PMOL allowance while performing these duties.
- 4.9.3 The Delegate may adjust the rates of PMOL allowance on 1 July each year to reflect movements in the Consumer Price Index. See [Schedule Three](#) for current rates.
- 4.9.4 For any new localities the Delegate will determine the rate for a PMOL allowance to apply at a particular locality, taking into consideration any changes such as varied work patterns.

## 4.10 Allowances/Entitlements – Post specific

### Introduction

- 4.10.1 This section explains the Departments post specific allowances including the location rating system and describes the additional conditions that apply to employees.
- 4.10.2 The Departments location post package compensates employees for the difficulties associated with working and living in designated locations.
- 4.10.3 The following table outlines the allowances and entitlements that comprise this package. This is in addition to those allowances outlined in the part entitled 'Allowances – General'. For STMs, please see [STM Location Allowance](#).

Allowance/Entitlement	Eligibility
Post Specific Allowances	
Location Allowance	Paid to employees at designated C, D, E or F locations
Post Attraction Allowance	Paid to employees at certain post locations, as determined by the Secretary

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Allowance/Entitlement	Eligibility
Special Location Supplement	For postings to locations as identified in <a href="#">Schedule Three</a>
Refugee Camp Hardship Allowance	Subject to delegate approval
Post Specific Entitlements	
Additional Annual Leave	Accrues for employees, at designated locations, in addition to their normal leave credits. See <a href="#">Schedule Three</a>
Assisted Leave Fares	An employee on a long-term posting at a category C, D, E or F post who undertakes return travel to a designated leave centre in conjunction with approved leave of at least five days. See <a href="#">Schedule Three</a>

### Post location elements

4.10.4 The standard location ratings developed by Employment Conditions Abroad (ECA) form the basis for determining the relative hardship of the Departments overseas post locations. The main factors considered by ECA to advise on location ratings are:

- personal security and socio-political tensions
- health services
- housing, utilities and education
- language and culture
- availability of goods and services
- isolation
- social network and leisure; and
- climate.

### Post location categories

4.10.5 The Department uses the location rating determined by ECA. ECA classifies locations within six categories ranging from category A (least difficult) to category F (most difficult).

4.10.6 An employee on a long-term posting at a designated C, D, E or F location post will receive Location Allowances, based on their location and family situation.

### Review and adjustment of post location categories

4.10.7 Post location rankings are reviewed by ECA annually.

4.10.8 DFAT post administration organise expatriate participation in the ECA location ratings survey on behalf of the Department.

4.10.9 The Department will adopt the ECA post categories and percentage rates.



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4.10.10 For employees on grandparented provisions, the Delegate will determine the ratings for each post based on the ECA ratings. In determining the ratings to apply the following will be taken into consideration:

- whether the ECA rating indicates a post sits on the borderline of two ratings;
- any variation in ECA ratings between their Australia and New Zealand region base and the Canberra based rating; and
- any post specific information, including advice from DFAT.

4.10.11 Employees should be aware that adjustment to post location ratings may occur during the course of a posting as a result of the ECA location ratings review and the changes may affect the level of location post conditions and entitlements applicable to employees.

## 4.11 Post Specific Allowances

### Location Allowance

- 4.11.1 Location Allowance is paid to compensate for the adverse effects on employee's lifestyle and welfare from living in different conditions to those in Australia, particularly over an extended period. It provides additional remuneration to enable employees to fund alternate means of relief from the difficult environment. The allowance is paid on a sliding scale according to the post's location rating.
- 4.11.2 Eligible employees are entitled to receive Location Allowance from the day they start duty at post until the last day of leave with allowances is taken, up to a maximum of 3 days.
- 4.11.3 Location Allowance is calculated as a percentage of the average overseas salary, based on the location rating of the post and whether the employee is accompanied by a spouse or not. See Schedule Two for calculations and current amounts.
- 4.11.4 For employees on grandparented provisions, Location Allowance will be referenced as Hardship Post Allowance.

### Eligibility for Location Allowance

- 4.11.5 Employees are entitled to Location Allowance for the same periods of service at, and absence from, the designated post as for COPA and COLA. Location Allowance is not payable for a recall to duty while on paid leave unless the employee is recalled to duty at a designated post and their partner is not receiving a location allowance at the accompanied rate.
- 4.11.6 Accompanied rates of Location Allowance are payable to an employee whose spouse resides continuously with the employee and makes the post location his/her principal place of residence. The accompanied rate of Location Allowance is payable to an employee for the same period they are eligible to receive COPA at the accompanied rate.
- 4.11.7 If a location rating changes, an employee's Location Allowance will be adjusted on the first payday in January following receipt of advice from ECA unless determined otherwise by the Delegate.

### Average Salary for Location Allowance

- 4.11.8 The average salary for location allowance purposes is based on the average of the top salary increment of APS6 to EL2 positions in the overseas network. A review of the average salary and

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methodology will be conducted based on the overseas staffing profile at 31 March each year and updated with effect from the first payday in July each year. See [Schedule Three](#) for more information.

### Hardship Dependant Allowance

4.11.9 This provision only applies to employees on grandparented provisions.

4.11.10 Hardship Dependant Allowance recognises the increased difficulties and additional costs faced by employees whose dependent children accompany them to a designated post with a C to F location rating.

4.11.11 The Hardship Dependent Allowance is paid as an annual amount per dependent child residing at post. See [Schedule Three](#) for current rates.

### Eligibility for Hardship Dependant Allowance

4.11.12 An employee who has a dependent child living with them at a designated location post is entitled to Hardship Dependant Allowance for the period that:

- begins on the day on which the child arrives and takes up residence at the employee's post or the employee's posting begins, whichever is the later; and
- ends the day after the employee's posting ends or the day the child ceases to live at the post, whichever is the earlier.

4.11.13 An employee will not be eligible for Hardship Dependant Allowance unless they are also eligible for Child Allowance for the same child. An employee is not eligible concurrently for Hardship Dependent Allowance and Child Reunion Allowance for the same child.

### Post Attraction Allowance

4.11.14 Post Attraction Allowance is provided in order to attract suitable employees to work at certain posts where the Department experiences difficulty in recruiting.

### Eligibility for Post Attraction Allowance

4.11.15 The need to provide Post Attraction Allowance will be considered during the recruitment process and will be part of the letter of posting offer. Post Attraction Allowance is attached to individual employees and is provided only when there is specific difficulty identified in attracting interest to a post location. The Delegate may determine the duration and add or delete localities to which Post Attraction Allowance will apply.

4.11.16 Post Attraction Allowance is payable per annum for the length of the posting and cannot be applied retrospectively to a posting.

4.11.17 Employees are entitled to Post Attraction Allowance for the same periods of service and absence from the designated post as for COPA.

4.11.18 Post Attraction Allowance is only payable to employees undertaking long-term postings.

### Special Location Supplement

4.11.19 Special Location Supplement (SLS) provides temporary additional remuneration and compensation to departmental employees required to work at overseas locations where regular security incidents,

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heightened socio-political tensions, environmental disasters and the like have impacted, or may impact, adversely on the personal security and/or welfare of employees and their families.

- 4.11.20 The rate of SLS is set as a percentage of the category F location allowance, and varies for different locations based on local environments. See [Schedule Three](#) for current locations and rates.
- 4.11.21 When circumstances warrant, the Delegate will determine the rate and duration for a SLS to apply at a particular locality. The Delegate will review the rate and duration of payment of SLS at least annually and add or delete locations that will be subject to the allowance.

### Eligibility for Special Location Supplement

- 4.11.22 Employees on long-term posting at overseas locations to which a SLS applies will be eligible to receive SLS.
- 4.11.23 Employees are entitled to SLS for the same periods of service and absence from the post as for COPA. The allowance is not payable for a recall to duty while on paid leave unless the employee is recalled to duty at a post where SLS applies.
- 4.11.24 Employees who are accompanied by a spouse who lives with them continuously at post will receive the accompanied rate of SLS. If an employee's spouse is absent from the post for more than 28 days, they will be deemed to be an unaccompanied employee and the unaccompanied rate of SLS will apply.
- 4.11.25 Employees will also be eligible to receive SLS if they are on long-term posting and are required to visit, either on a business trip as part of their duties or for a STM, a country that has been determined to attract SLS for such a purpose.
- 4.11.26 An employee who is eligible for SLS on a business trip from post or STM will receive pro rata SLS for each day at that location, provided the trip is more than 24 hours duration. The unaccompanied rate only will apply for employees who are required to travel to locations that attract SLS for short-term business trips from post or STMs.

### Refugee Camp Hardship Allowance

- 4.11.27 A 'designated refugee camp' is a recognised United Nations refugee camp or a refugee camp that is designated by the Delegate.
- 4.11.28 If the Delegate is satisfied that it will cause hardship, an employee (on a short-term mission or a long-term posting) who performs duty at a designated refugee camp may receive a Refugee Camp Allowance (RCA) for each day of duty in that camp, provided the trip is more than 25 hours duration.
- 4.11.29 The RCHA is payable at 32% of the minimum APS6 salary level specified in the Departments Enterprise Agreement. See [Schedule Two](#) for calculations.

## 4.12 Post Specific Entitlements

### Summary

- 4.12.1 Additional annual leave and Assisted Leave Fares (ALFs) are intended to assist employees and their dependants on long-term posting to category C, D, E and F posts to have sufficient breaks from their location to:
- regularly leave the post locality during a period of annual leave;

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- obtain relief from a difficult environment;
- access suitable medical, hospital and dental facilities; and
- access facilities for buying household and personal items, which are unavailable at post.

4.12.2 Managers should consider the use of an ALF when considering travel requests for non-urgent matters such as medical check-ups.

### **Additional Annual Leave**

4.12.3 Each long-term employee posted to a category C, D, E and F locations is entitled to additional annual leave days, in addition to their normal annual leave credits, see Schedule Three.

### **Period of entitlement**

4.12.4 Additional annual leave accrues from the day the employee arrives to commence duty at the location on a long-term posting and ends on the day the employee's posting ends. If employees proceed on leave immediately on arrival at post, they are taken to commence duty on the first working day after the annual leave ends.

### **Accrual of annual leave**

- 4.12.5 Normal annual leave credits accrue to employees as provided in the Departments Enterprise Agreement. Annual leave credits, including any additional annual leave days specified in this section, accrue daily and are credited after each month of service at post.
- 4.12.6 Employees who have more than two years of annual leave credits (including additional annual leave days) accrued as at 1 January each year will be subject to any Departmental Enterprise Agreement provisions for utilising annual leave that may exist.
- 4.12.7 Employees are expected to manage leave prior to posting so as not to travel to post with excess leave.

### **Entitlement when a location rating changes**

4.12.8 If a location rating changes, resulting in a change to the number of days additional annual leave entitlement, adjustment to an employee's annual leave accruals will take effect from 1 January in the subsequent year unless determined otherwise by the Delegate.

### **Assisted Leave Fares**

- 4.12.9 Assisted Leave Fares (ALF) provide a return economy airfare from the post to the designated Regional or Relief Leave Centre. A list of designated leave centres and the frequency of assisted leave fare entitlements applicable to individual posts are listed in Schedule Three.
- 4.12.10 The maximum amount that the Department will pay is the allowable travel costs for economy class return air travel between the post and the designated leave centre for employees and any dependants living at post. Dependants that do not normally live at post with the employee are not eligible for assisted leave fares.
- 4.12.11 The entitlement is to be used to assist with the purchase of return economy class airfares only. The Department is unable to purchase business class fares for this entitlement, however an employee is able to purchase business class airfares personally and then seek reimbursement, up to the amount

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of the economy airfare. Appropriate quotes must be obtained which clearly demonstrate the economy class costs.

4.12.12 Assisted leave fare entitlements must be taken individually and cannot be combined or blocked together to obtain a higher value from the entitlement.

### **Substitute leave centres**

4.12.13 When a designated leave centre is affected by war, civil disorder, natural disaster or other similar event, the Delegate may substitute the designated leave centre, having regard to reasonable economic conditions and facilities at the substituted leave centre, with another leave centre.

### **Entitlement if a location rating changes**

4.12.14 Location ratings are reviewed annually based on ranking advice received from ECA. If a location rating change results in the loss of an ALF entitlement for a post:

- Employees working at post prior to 1 January will not lose any ALF entitlements and will have until the end of their current period of posting to utilise their original ALF entitlements.
- Employees who have commenced at post from 1 January will be subject to the assisted leave fares applicable to the new location rating for the post.

4.12.15 If a location rating change results in additional ALF entitlements for a post, employees at post who have at least 6 months remaining until their current posting ceases will be eligible for the additional assisted leave fare entitlements.

### **Eligibility for Assisted Leave Fare**

4.12.16 An employee on long-term posting at a category C, D, E or F location, who undertakes return travel to a designated leave centre in conjunction with approved leave of at least one week, is eligible for assisted leave fares specified for the employee's locality of posting.

4.12.17 There is no eligibility for assisted leave fares in the following circumstances:

- before an employee's long-term posting commences;
- after an employee's period of posting ends;
- for return travel to an in-country destination unless the destination is a designated regional or relief leave centre;
- for travel by the employee or dependants to a destination that does not meet the purpose for which assisted leave fares are intended;
- for travel by the employee or dependants to a destination where travel advisories recommend 'do not travel';
- for travel when the employee and dependants will not be returning to the post location;
- for return travel by an employee that is not taken in conjunction with at least five days approved leave;
- for return travel taken by the employee and dependants within three months of the employee commencing or ceasing duty at post.

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In exceptional circumstances, the Delegate may approve the utilisation of an assisted leave fare outside of the above conditions.

### Accompanied employees

- 4.12.18 An employee's eligible dependants are not required to travel with the employee or travel in conjunction with a period of annual leave taken by the employee.
- 4.12.19 Eligible dependants will only be entitled to the assisted leave fares applicable to the employee from the date they permanently accompany the employee to post. For example, if an employee travels to post unaccompanied, and a recognised dependant joins the employee at post permanently at a later date, the dependant will only be eligible to receive the number of ALF's remaining at the date they permanently accompany the employee at post. Therefore, if an employee utilised 1 of 3 eligible ALF's prior to their recognised dependant joining them at post, the dependant would only be entitled to the remaining 2 ALF's.

### Alternative destinations

- 4.12.20 An employee on long-term posting at a category C, D, E or F location who is taking approved leave of not less than five days duration may utilise the value of their assisted leave fare entitlement to travel to a location other than a designated leave centre in conjunction with that leave.

### Determining a value for an ALF entitlement

- 4.12.21 The value of an assisted leave fare entitlement is an amount equal to whichever is the lesser of:
- the allowable travel cost for return economy class air travel to a location other than a designated leave centre, or
  - the allowable travel cost for return economy class air travel to a designated leave centre.

### Excess baggage in association with assisted leave fares

- 4.12.22 An employee may claim reimbursement for the cost of up to 12 kilograms of excess baggage carried by the employee and each dependant for one return sector from a designated leave centre during the ordinary period of posting. If travel is to a destination other than a designated leave centre, excess baggage costs for the return journey are met as if the travel had been from the designated leave centre.

### Accessing leave fare entitlements

- 4.12.23 An overseas Regional Director may authorise payment of assisted leave fare entitlements. Authorised employees may not approve the payment of their own assisted leave fare entitlements. Overseas Regional Directors' leave fare entitlements may be authorised by the First Assistant Secretary, International Division.
- 4.12.24 Approval requests for assisted leave fares are to be submitted to the relevant Regional Director for approval. Full details on the process of approval for international travel can be found in the Financial Management Guideline – Official Travel.
- 4.12.25 When accessing an assisted leave fare entitlement, employees are encouraged to plan ahead and book early to obtain the most cost effective fares for their proposed travel. A minimum of three

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quotes should be obtained through post administration or post's travel service advisor where possible in order to establish a minimum cost for the proposed return travel.

- 4.12.26 If, due to work-related priorities or other operational factors an employee suffers financial detriment because their planned leave and associated travel arrangements have to be cancelled or deferred, then the Department will reimburse the employee up to the value of an extra leave fare entitlement and other miscellaneous costs incurred as a direct result of the cancellation or deferral.
- 4.12.27 Employees may choose how they access and utilise their leave fare entitlements. However, access to the entitlement will be dependent on the employee obtaining appropriate leave approval. Assisted leave fares should be utilised at regular intervals over the posting period to obtain maximum benefit from the entitlement.

### Claiming an entitlement

- 4.12.28 Procedures for claiming an assisted leave fare entitlement will be governed by local Post Administration processes and guidelines. If an assisted leave fare entitlement is advanced, the advance must be acquitted by providing evidence of the travel and costs incurred. If reimbursed, evidence of the travel and expenditure (e.g. used tickets) must be provided to support the claim. Payment should not be made for more than one leave fare entitlement at any one time.
- 4.12.29 For the purpose of determining eligibility for and administering assisted leave fares, a year commences on the day on which the employee arrives at post and ends on the day before the anniversary of that date.
- 4.12.30 Assisted leave fare entitlements are only payable if the employee leaves the post location on leave for a period of at least five consecutive days. There is no eligibility for assisted leave fares for in-country travel associated with a period of leave unless the in-country destination is a designated leave centre. Authorised employees should satisfy themselves (by sighting passports, travel tickets, itineraries, etc.) that an employee has departed, or will depart, the post for at least five consecutive days.

### Assisted Leave Fares for a shortened or extended posting period

- 4.12.31 If an employee's total period of posting is either shorter or longer than the ordinary three year period of posting, then the number of leave fares will be adjusted accordingly. The formula for these adjustments is at Schedule Three.
- 4.12.32 When a posting period is shortened to a total period of less than 12 months, adjusted leave fare entitlements will not include travel to a regional leave centre. When a posting period is shortened, so that the total posting period is 12 months or more, adjusted leave fare entitlements will include travel to only one regional leave centre with the balance of entitlements (if any) being for travel to relief leave centres.
- 4.12.33 At the time of notification of a reduction in a posting period an employee's leave fare entitlements will be reduced accordingly. If the employee has already exceeded the adjusted leave fare entitlement, no recovery will be made.
- 4.12.34 If the Delegate believes it is unreasonable to do so an employee's entitlement to assisted leave fares may be maintained on termination of an employee's posting, taking into consideration any exceptional circumstances.



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4.12.35 If an employee is entitled to additional leave fares the first leave fare will be to the designated Regional Centre, with any subsequent additional leave fare to the designated Relief Centre.

### **Assisted leave fare to Australia (ALFA)**

4.12.36 If an employee's period of posting at a designated post is extended for 12 months or longer than the ordinary period of posting, the employee is entitled to reimbursement for the cost of return economy class air travel on the most direct route between their post locality and the location in Australia where the employee lived prior to commencing their posting.

4.12.37 The ALFA entitlement applies only to one extension of 12 months or longer at the same post. If employees extend their posting period more than once, no additional ALFA entitlement will accrue for the additional extensions.

4.12.38 An ALFA entitlement must be used to travel to a location in Australia and cannot be converted for travel to another overseas destination. There are no official rest periods, excess baggage or land fare (train or bus) entitlements provided when travelling under ALFA provisions.

4.12.39 The ALFA entitlement must be taken in lieu of a regional leave centre assisted leave fare travel entitlement and the travel must be undertaken in conjunction with a period of annual leave. Dependants with an ALFA entitlement are not required to travel with the employee or in conjunction with a period of annual leave taken by the employee.

## **4.13 Travel during Long-Term Posting**

### **Arranging travel bookings at Post**

4.13.1 In managing travel at post the following principle requirements apply:

- All travel must be approved by the appropriate Delegate prior to travel.
- There must be a demonstrated business need to travel.

4.13.2 Full details on the process of approval for international travel can be found in [Financial Management Guideline – Official Travel](#).

4.13.3 Travel bookings from or at post should be managed locally via post administration. Travel arrangements must:

- represent efficient, effective, economical and ethical use of public money and achieve value for money;
- comply with relevant policies of the Commonwealth, including the [Department of Finance Resource Management Guide No. 405 – Official International Travel](#);
- be publicly defensible and able to withstand internal and external scrutiny; and
- ensure the safety of employees.

### **International travel**

4.13.4 In exceptional circumstances, such as urgent medical or compassionate travel, where the approval cannot be documented prior to the trip, verbal approval from the Regional Director must be obtained and the trip approval documented as soon as possible.



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### Class of air travel (in-country)

- 4.13.5 The standard class of air travel for in-country travel at an overseas post for non-SES is economy class. Where the standard of economy class air travel within a country is determined to be substantially below Western standards, the Delegate may determine a different standard for air travel within that country, excluding first class. The standard class of air for in-country travel at an overseas post for SES is business class.

### Class of air travel (international)

- 4.13.6 The standard class of air travel for an international business trip is business-class for all employees. Where an intermediate or business class is not available, travel is by economy class.
- 4.13.7 The standard class of air travel for other types of trips, including for Assisted Leave Fares, Reunion and Compassionate travel is economy unless otherwise specified.

### Frequent flyer, reward or loyalty points

- 4.13.8 Government employees are not permitted to accrue Frequent Flyer Points or Loyalty Reward Points for official business travel. Status credits may still be accrued.

### Promotions and Competitions

- 4.13.9 Employees travelling on official business are not permitted to participate in promotions or competitions conducted by external providers.

### Train travel

- 4.13.10 If an employee is required to travel by train when undertaking official business, the class of travel will normally be at intermediate class. Another class may be used as determined by the Delegate prior to travel.

### Travel advisories

- 4.13.11 To assist the Department in the proper discharge of its duty of care obligations, all employees posted overseas must report any travel (both official and personal) that takes them away from their usual location to the Overseas Security team at <sup>s. 47E(d)</sup> [REDACTED]@homeaffairs.gov.au.
- 4.13.12 Employees holding a security clearance must advise of any changes to their personal circumstances, including any residence in or visits to foreign countries, by completing the Declarable Circumstances form when necessary and provide to it the Employment Suitability Section via email <sup>s. 47E(d)</sup> [REDACTED]@homeaffairs.gov.au).
- 4.13.13 Employees need to consult the DFAT Travel Advisories prior to undertaking the travel. As a minimum, employees intending to travel on official business are expected to refer to recommendations made in the travel advisories for the countries to be visited. Where travel advisories flag security or personal safety concerns, employees should consult Post Security Managers at the relevant post where they are, or will be, based and, if appropriate, at posts with consular responsibility for countries to be visited prior to arranging and proceeding with travel plans. Such consultations are mandatory when travel advisories recommend against travel to the locations to be visited.
- 4.13.14 Under current Departmental policy, employees travelling to 'high risk' locations must have a Security Risk Assessment undertaken in support of their trip prior to departure. A 'high risk' destination is one

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that the DFAT Smartraveller website defines as either a 'Reconsider your need to Travel' or 'Do not Travel' destination. The Protective Security Section will complete the risk assessment and a copy will be sent to the person travelling for review and action where required. A copy will also be forwarded to the responsible Regional Director.

- 4.13.15 While employees are at post, DFAT assume responsibility for protective security, however employees who travel away from post for official duty to 'high risk' destinations come under the Departments policy.

### 4.14 Reunion Travel

#### Introduction

- 4.14.1 Reunion travel provides employees on a long-term posting the opportunity to reunite with recognised dependants who remain in Australia and intend to do so for the duration of the employee's posting.
- 4.14.2 The entitlement is to be used to assist with the purchase of return economy class airfares only and cannot be used for any other purpose.

#### Maximum entitlement

- 4.14.3 The maximum entitlement of an employee for a reunion visit is the least of:
- the actual cost incurred for return travel by a dependant;
  - the allowable travel cost for the travel of a dependant between Australia and the post; or
  - the allowable travel cost for return travel by the dependant to another location, which has been pre-approved by the Delegate.

#### Transport costs

- 4.14.4 It is the employee's responsibility to meet the cost of transportation (taxis, etc.) for dependants during a reunion visit including to and from airports both in Australia and at the locality of posting.

#### Restrictions on reunion travel

- 4.14.5 Reunion travel will not be approved when:
- the period of a reunion visit is less than seven days; and
  - there is less than three months remaining of an employee's long-term posting.

#### Reunion travel by another person

- 4.14.6 An employee may have an entitlement to reunion travel for a third person, who is not a dependant, if the Delegate considers that person should be reunited with the employee or a dependant residing at post.

#### Arranging reunion travel

- 4.14.7 Reunion travel must be arranged by the Placements team s. 47E(d) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:homeaffairs.gov.au). Reunion travel is not a flexible fare entitlement and the Department is unable to arrange for alternative routes or non-essential stopovers.

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- 4.14.8 The Department is unable to reimburse the costs of reunion travel arrangements made independently by employees or family members except where an employee has utilised reverse reunion travel.
- 4.14.9 If the value of a ticket provided is greater than the amount that the employee is entitled to for reunion travel, the employee must pay the extra cost to the Department. Employees cannot utilise frequent flyer points that have been accrued from department-funded travel for private purposes or to provide reunion fares, seating upgrades, etc.

### Frequency of reunion visits

- 4.14.10 The Delegate may approve reunion travel to the post for a dependant or spouse, based on the following frequencies. The Delegate will decide the frequency, if any, of reunion entitlements not covered in the below table.

Location of child or spouse	Frequency
Child in Australia with both parents or sole-parent at post.	One reunion fare at the end of each school term to a maximum of four terms per year. If the school has less than four terms, the fourth reunion is to be taken at a reasonable interval.
Child in Australia with one parent at post.	Two reunion fares per reunion year.
Child at post with one parent (who is not the employee's spouse) in Australia.	No entitlement to reunion travel.
Child in Australia with parents on separate postings.	Four reunion fares per reunion year to either post as agreed by the parents.
Child under 18 years studying full-time in a third country location.	No entitlement to reunion travel.
Full-time tertiary student under 23 years in Australia.	One reunion fare per reunion year.
Full-time tertiary student under 23 years in Australia with parents on separate postings.	One reunion fare per reunion year to each parent.
Full-time tertiary student under 23 years studying full-time in a third country.	No entitlement to reunion travel.
Spouse who remains in Australia and intends to do so for the duration of the employee's posting.	One reunion fare per reunion year.
Spouse living in a third country location.	No entitlement to reunion travel.
Spouse and employee on concurrent separate postings.	Two reunion fares per couple per reunion year.
Child living at an overseas location other than the employee's post and receiving	One reunion fare at the end of each school term. If the school has less than four school

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Location of child or spouse	Frequency
education assistance under the provisions of this manual.	terms, the fourth reunion is to be taken at a reasonable interval.
Child at the employee's post who's other APS employee parent is on long-term posting to another post.	Two reunion fares per reunion year to the employee parent's post.

(A reunion year begins on the first day of a posting and anniversaries of that date.)

### Entitlements for tertiary students

4.14.11 All entitlements to reunion allowance will cease when a dependant turns 23 years of age, with the exception below.

4.14.12 To allow maximum flexibility, eligible tertiary students may use their final reunion entitlement with travel to be commenced by 31 December in the relevant year, and completed prior to commencement of the following academic year, in the following circumstances:

- after completion of final exams for that academic year, or
- in the year in which the student turns 23 years of age.

4.14.13 An eligible tertiary student must provide satisfactory documentation of undertaking full time tertiary study at the time of requesting a reunion, during each year that they claim entitlement.

### Reduction of entitlement in certain circumstances

4.14.14 The Delegate may reconsider and revoke the authorisation of additional reunion visits not yet taken in any year, if, while travelling in the course of official duty or assisted leave travel, an employee or the employee's spouse:

- travels to the country in which the dependant lives; or
- takes one week or more of leave (other than sick leave) in the country in which the dependant lives.

### Reverse reunion visits

4.14.15 An employee may choose to be reimbursed for reunion travel undertaken by the employee or the employee's spouse (but not both) once per reunion year to visit a dependant instead of being reimbursed for a reunion visit by that dependant.

4.14.16 The number of reunion visits in the year in which the employee or spouse travels is to be reduced by one for each dependant who lives at the location to which the employee and/or spouse travels.

4.14.17 The cost of a reverse reunion visit shall not exceed the combined cost of a reunion visit by each dependant to travel to the post at which the employee/spouse lives.

4.14.18 Reunion travel is calculated on a return journey from the post to the location at which the dependant lives, regardless of the location at which the employee or spouse and the dependant reunite.

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### Insurance of personal effects

4.14.19 The Department's insurance provider (Comcover) does not cover loss or damage to personal effects for dependants undertaking reunion travel. Employees should arrange appropriate travel insurance for reunion travel.

### Assistance with health care

4.14.20 A dependant or spouse on reunion travel and for the period of the reunion visit will be covered by Comcover's Statement of Cover so long as the dependant or spouse is listed on the Department's Schedule of Expatriates.

4.14.21 To be eligible for assistance with health care, a medical and dental clearance must be obtained during the pre-posting period or before the first reunion visit. If a clearance is not obtained, the dependant will not be covered by Comcover's Statement of Cover or the Department.

4.14.22 A dependant or spouse is covered for the period spent outside Australia for medical costs only.

## 4.15 Compassionate travel

### Introduction

4.15.1 Compassionate travel is provided to an employee or their accompanying spouse (but not both) when a close relative in Australia is critically ill or dies. Where there is a serious family crisis involving the welfare of a close relative in Australia, special travel may be approved under this section. A close relative refers to:

- the employee's spouse;
- a child or parent of the employee or employee's spouse;
- another person who stands in a similarly close relationship to that of a parent or child and is, because of special circumstances, approved by the Delegate as a close relative.

4.15.2 This section applies to an employee and accompanying spouse on a long-term posting from the day of arrival at post and ends on the day of departure from post. There is no entitlement to access travel in respect of the same relative more than once during a posting.

### Fare liability

4.15.3 The Delegate may approve reimbursement of economy class compassionate travel at the allowable travel cost, as follows:

- for the employee or their spouse to travel to the location in Australia where the close relative is critically ill or lived prior to death, or the location in Australia at which the funeral is held, or
- for a close relative to travel to post if the employee or their spouse becomes critically ill.

4.15.4 In the case of the death of an employee's or accompanying spouse's child in Australia, the allowable travel cost for both parents to travel to Australia will be met by the Department.

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4.15.5 The Delegate may authorise a child to accompany the person travelling at departmental expense, if:

- the person travelling under this section is the parent or guardian of the child; and
- the Delegate is satisfied that it is impractical to make other appropriate arrangements for the care of the child, having regard to:
  - the age of the child;
  - any arrangements the person could make for the care of the child in the circumstances; and
  - the circumstances in which the person is to travel.

### **Fare liability (travel to a third country)**

4.15.6 If travel is to a location other than Australia, the reimbursement of the cost of fares to the employee or accompanying spouse is reduced by the allowable travel cost of travel from the capital city in Australia where the employee normally resides, to the third location. The Departments liability is therefore the excess travel cost over what it would have cost the employee or spouse had they been living in Australia.

4.15.7 This provision ensures employees overseas are not disadvantaged but meet the same costs as staff in Australia who need to personally meet the cost of their compassionate travel to locations overseas.

### **Medical certificate required in case of illness**

4.15.8 A medical certificate must be provided for the employee to be reimbursed for compassionate travel in cases of critical illness. The medical certificate must be issued by the medical practitioner who has been treating the relevant illness and must certify that the employee, or spouse or close relative of the employee was critically ill during the period specified.

### **Eligibility of close relatives**

4.15.9 If more than one close relative of an employee is available to travel, or travels, under this section to visit an employee or spouse, reimbursement will be made in respect to only one close relative whom the Delegate considers most appropriate.

### **Limitation on entitlement**

4.15.10 An employee, spouse or close relative is not entitled to be reimbursed for travel more than once during a posting for the illness or death of the same person unless the Delegate is satisfied, having regard to any relevant factors, that there are special circumstances making additional travel essential.

### **Access to leave during compassionate travel**

4.15.11 Employees travelling under this section must apply for leave for the duration of their absence, including travel time. Employees should apply for leave in accordance with the provisions of the Departments Enterprise Agreement.

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### 4.16 Comcare in the workplace

#### Work Health and Safety

- 4.16.1 Under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (WHS Act) and *Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011*, the same Work Health and Safety (WHS) obligations apply to Departmental overseas staff as would apply to onshore staff.
- 4.16.2 As such, it is important that the Department consider, take reasonably practicable steps, and document those steps to address the health and safety risks and do what is reasonably practicable to ensure a worker's health and safety.
- 4.16.3 Some countries do not have the same WHS standards as Australia. Therefore it is important for overseas staff to continue to enforce Australian WHS standards and due diligence.
- 4.16.4 Under the WHS Act, particular incident types (those more serious in impact/nature) must also be notified to Comcare. It is legislatively required that the following incident types be notified to Comcare:
- Death
  - A serious injury or illness that requires a worker to receive:
    - medical treatment within 48 hours of exposure to a substance;
    - immediate treatment as an in-patient in a hospital; or
    - immediate treatment for a serious injury or illness.
  - A dangerous incident in a workplace that exposes a worker or any other person to a serious risk to their health and safety emanating from an immediate or imminent exposure to a risk(s).
- 4.16.5 If unsure of whether an incident meets the criteria for a notifiable incident, employees are advised to err on the side of caution and report it. There are no penalties for over-reporting, but there are penalties for not reporting it.
- 4.16.6 Where the Department shares a workplace with other agencies at overseas posts, an incident can be reported by one or both agencies; it does not matter if the same incident is reported more than once.

### 4.17 Personal Effects Insurance

#### Comcover for personal effects

- 4.17.1 If an employee's *personal effects* are lost, destroyed or damaged, and this occurs in the approved workplace of an employee, or while on approved business travel within the employee's country of assignment during a long-term posting, Comcover will pay (as per the Personal Effects and Travel Inside Country insurance policy) replacement costs up to the limit of \$25,000 AUD.
- 4.17.2 When employees are making a claim, a \$250 excess will apply for each claim under the Comcover Statement of Cover.

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4.17.3 Employees should remember that they may have additional or overlapping cover for their personal belongings under the worldwide multiple risk insurance policy taken out with Marsh or Allied Pickford's prior to the commencement of the long-term posting. For details of cover under these alternate insurance policies, please refer to the relevant product disclosure statement.

4.17.4 Further information on this provision can be obtained by contacting the Comcover Manager s. 47E(d) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto: @homeaffairs.gov.au).

### Loss or damage through war etc.

4.17.5 Where an employee suffers loss or damage to their possessions due to war, civil disorder or similar occurrences, the Delegate may indemnify the employee for the losses where the employee has been unable to claim against their worldwide multiple risk insurance (after reasonable endeavours), Comcover insurance, or other appropriate insurance for the loss or damage suffered. In considering the amount payable, the Delegate should have regard to:

- the nature and extent of the possessions lost or damaged;
- the amount that an insurer would pay to the employee for the loss or damage;
- Any competent valuation for the loss or damage
- the estimated residual value of the possessions, taking into account their cost and subsequent depreciated value;
- personal possessions covered under this part include:
  - household goods that were removed to post at departmental expense;
  - food, beverages and other household consumables; and
  - a private motor vehicle.

4.17.6 Employees lodging a claim will need to satisfy the Delegate that they took reasonable precautions to avoid loss or damage.

4.17.7 If an employee did not arrange for their possessions to be adequately insured and the Delegate considers it reasonable that an employee should have insured their possessions against the event that caused loss or damage to the possessions, the amount paid to the employee must be reduced by the amount that the employee could reasonably expect to have received under a contract of insurance, if the employee had arranged for the possessions to be adequately insured and had been successful in recovering the loss or damage from the insurer.

### Comcover during approved international business travel from post

4.17.8 If an employee travels on an approved business trip from post outside their overseas posting country (i.e. internationally) for up to 180 consecutive days, they and any approved accompanying persons will be covered under Comcover's Travel Outside of Country – Baggage and Personal Effects & Travel Outside of Country – Medical Expenses and Medical Emergencies Insurance policy. Refer to the Comcover Statement of Cover for more details.

4.17.9 This insurance policy provides the travelling employee and any approved accompanying person (each defined in the Comcover policy as a 'traveller') with the following cover:

- If the *traveller's* baggage and personal effects are lost, destroyed, or damaged during the travel, Comcover will repair or replace the items up to the limit of \$25,000 AUD.



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- If the *traveller* has money that is lost or stolen during the travel, Comcover will pay for the lost or stolen money.
- If the *traveller's* baggage is delayed for more than 8 hours following the arrival of the traveller at the destination, Comcover will pay the reasonable cost of necessities.

4.17.10 As this policy only provides cover for international travel from post with a maximum duration of up to 180 consecutive days, employees must contact the Departments Comcover Manager to request an extension of cover if the international business travel from post will exceed 180 days. The Comcover Manager can be contacted by e-mail <sup>s. 47E(d)</sup> [REDACTED]@homeaffairs.gov.au).

### Insurance coverage for reunion visits

4.17.11 Comcover does not cover loss of, or damage to personal effects for dependants undertaking reunion travel. Therefore, it is strongly recommended to arrange private insurance for dependants undertaking reunion travel.

## 4.18 Health Care and Medical Insurance

### Intention

- 4.18.1 The intention of the Department's overseas health care provisions is to provide employees and eligible dependants with the same standard of health care overseas as if they were a public (Medicare) patient in Australia. The Department's health care provisions cover the treatment of day-to-day health matters and illnesses or injuries that arise during, or as a result of, a posting.
- 4.18.2 These provisions do not cover or provide treatment of pre-existing conditions, or forms of elective or cosmetic procedures (e.g. capping of teeth, laser eye surgery, or cosmetic surgery), joint replacements and reconstructions, or fertility related procedures.
- 4.18.3 It is recommended that employees consider maintaining Australian private health insurance as any medical costs incurred in Australia will not be covered by provisions in the OCOS Policy.

### Medical Cover

- 4.18.4 Employees undertaking a long-term posting (for Comcover insurance purposes a posting of more than 180 consecutive days) and all of their officially recognised dependants are listed on Comcover's Schedule of Expatriates.
- 4.18.5 The Department is responsible for adding employees and their accompanying dependants to the Comcover Schedule of Expatriates prior to their posting. Once added to this schedule, employees will be provided with health cover as defined in the Comcover Statement of Cover (refer to the 'Expatriate' section).
- 4.18.6 Employees should familiarise themselves with the Statement of Cover prior to posting as it is this document which identifies what will and will not be covered in terms of health care costs.
- 4.18.7 If employees have a change in posting dates, or in family composition while on posting, they must advise the overseas medical mailbox <sup>s. 47E(d)</sup> [REDACTED]@homeaffairs.gov.au) as soon as possible to ensure the Comcover Schedule of Expatriates can be kept up to date.

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### Eligibility

- 4.18.8 Employees and their dependants must pass medical and dental fitness examinations prior to posting to be eligible for medical coverage under the Comcover Statement of Cover.
- 4.18.9 Where an employee's family composition changes during their posting period, ie. due to an adoption in country, or entering into a recognised defacto relationship, the recognised dependants must undertake medical and fitness examinations prior to being provided coverage under the Comcover Statement of Cover. In these circumstances, please contact the overseas medicals mailbox. Please note: recognised spouses residing in their home country are ineligible to receive medical coverage under the Comcover Statement of Cover.

### Pre-existing medical conditions

- 4.18.10 Pre-existing medical conditions, as identified during the medical examination with the Department's medical provider, are excluded from the Statement of Cover. Pregnancy or childbirth is considered a pre-existing condition if known about before the posting commencement date.
- 4.18.11 In exceptional circumstances, the Delegate can approve cover for a pre-existing medical condition that is excluded under the Department's insurance arrangements; however, coverage of routine pre-existing conditions should not be expected. In considering the level of cover, if any, the delegate will consider the following:
- the nature and extent of the pre-existing condition;
  - the amount Medicare would have covered in Australia;
  - the amount a private medical insurer would have covered in Australia;
  - the ongoing maintenance costs to the Department; and
  - the location of posting.

Agreed cover will be provided on a case-by-case basis. All expenses relating to pre-existing conditions that are approved for cover will be borne by the appropriate onshore post cost centre.

### Coverage

- 4.18.12 As identified in Comcover's Statement of Cover, Comcover will pay all reasonable and necessary medical expenses incurred outside Australia by an expatriate during their period of posting.
- 4.18.13 Comcover will not pay for:
- expenses resulting from any deliberately self-inflicted injury, suicide or attempt thereat;
  - expenses resulting from engaging in, or taking part in, or training for any professional sports of any kind;
  - expenses resulting from any elective and/or cosmetic procedure, treatment or surgery unless essential to recovery;
  - expenses for which a Medicare benefit is payable or which we are prohibited by law from paying;
  - any loss or claim by any expatriate who has not undergone pre-deployment medical and dental examinations;

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- any loss or claim by any expatriate who has not been declared medically and dentally fit to be deployed to their country of posting;
- expenses resulting from any pre-existing condition.

### Personal Travel/ Recreation Leave

- 4.18.14 Employees and their accompanying dependants are covered for medical expenses incurred outside Australia by an expatriate during their period of posting, subject to the terms and conditions of the Comcover Statement of Cover.
- 4.18.15 Employees are still encouraged to take out separate travel insurance for themselves and their dependants when departing the posting location on recreation leave. Employees are also advised to take out private travel insurance where travel is to a location categorised as 'do not travel' on the DFAT travel advice page ([www.dfat.gov.au](http://www.dfat.gov.au)).
- 4.18.16 Neither the Department or Comcover provide cover for loss of flights, hotel bookings, stolen or lost personal items, including money while on personal travel/recreation leave.

### Vaccinations

- 4.18.17 For vaccinations required during a posting period, the following costs will be covered at official expense: preventative vaccinations, anti-malarial drugs, annual flu vaccination and Gardasil vaccinations for dependants aged 12 and 13 years old.
- 4.18.18 Vaccinations for any privately funded travel are not covered under these health care provisions and are a personal cost to the employee.
- 4.18.19 Employees may use the Diplomatic Bag to receive non-liquid medical supplies at post. Where seeking to receive medical supplies via Diplomatic Bag, please contact the Overseas Medicals mailbox prior to departure to post to understand the process. Please note: medical documentation for the transfer of medication via Diplomatic Bag may be required.

### International SOS

- 4.18.20 International SOS is engaged by Comcover to assist expatriates, their dependants and travellers with access to medical advice and referrals for medical assistance while on long-term posting. In extreme cases, International SOS will also facilitate evacuations for expatriates, their dependants and travellers.
- 4.18.21 This cover provides expatriates with access to administrative support on a 24/7 basis for medical, dental, travel and security assistance. Their contact details are as follows:
- Online at [www.internationalsos.com](http://www.internationalsos.com)
  - Via Phone: s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
- Employees will need to quote the Departments membership number (12ACMA000001).
- 4.18.22 During a long-term posting, expatriates may contact International SOS for the provision of routine medical and dental information and pre-travel advice. If routine medical treatment is obtained at post as a result of International SOS advice, the employee should be reimbursed in accordance with Comcover Statement of Cover.
- 4.18.23 Expatriates may also contact International SOS for assistance with medical emergencies and other emergency situations affecting them overseas. In such cases, International SOS is able to make

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arrangements on behalf of the posted expatriates including emergency medical appointments, hospital admittance, and any necessary transport or accommodation arrangements.

- 4.18.24 Employees should follow the directions given by International SOS concerning approved medical practitioners and facilities at each overseas location. If routine medical services are obtained overseas following discussions with International SOS, any medical costs incurred are to be paid by the employee at the time of service as a personal expense. Receipts must be retained to support a claim for reimbursement under the provisions of this section.

### Direct payment of health costs

- 4.18.25 The Delegate may authorise payment of medical costs directly to the provider on a case by case basis.

### Assignment of rights to recover costs

- 4.18.26 The Department will not provide assistance with health care costs unless the eligible person assigns to the Department any right to recover the costs from another person or entity. This does not apply to any benefit that the employee may be entitled to receive from a health benefits fund for an ancillary service.

### Benchmark local hospitals

- 4.18.27 International SOS are able to advise employees of suitable local hospitals for treatment that meet International standards.
- 4.18.28 Alternatively, DFAT designate suitable local hospitals which are as near as practicable to an equivalent public (Medicare) hospital in Australia. The designated benchmark hospitals should be made known to employees in order to avoid conflicts over standards of acceptability.

### Medical Evacuations

- 4.18.29 Medical evacuations (Medivacs) are arranged by International SOS. If International SOS considers that an eligible person requires health care, which cannot be satisfactorily provided at the deployment location, a medivac will be organised. Medivacs are typically arranged to the nearest appropriate health facility following advice from International SOS who will determine the best location for the treatment to take place.

### Eligibility for Medical Evacuations

- 4.18.30 Medivac provisions extend to all employees and their eligible dependants posted overseas. Dependants on reunion visits or accompanying employees at official expense are also covered, provided the Department declares them on the Schedule of Expatriates.
- 4.18.31 Employees should be aware that treatment undertaken in Australia as a result of medical evacuation cannot be covered by the Department or Comcover, and will be a personal cost to the employee, utilising either Medicare or personal health insurance.

### Provisions for Medical Evacuations

- 4.18.32 As per Comcover's Statement of Cover, Comcover will pay all reasonable and necessary expenses incurred for:

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- an emergency evacuation or reasonable travel costs as a consequence of a medical condition, provided such evacuation or travel cost is authorised by Comcover;
- one person to accompany an evacuated expatriate where
  - i. the expatriate is aged 18 years or younger; or
  - ii. it is considered necessary by Comcover.
- funeral or cremation expenses in the country in which the death of an expatriate occurs or the repatriation of their mortal remains to their home country and any related costs.

4.18.33 Additionally, Comcover will pay all reasonable and necessary expenses incurred for the evacuation of an expatriate as a consequence of a major incident or natural disaster occurring in the country where the expatriate is posted, and the expatriate is at risk of injury or illness (Section 16 (3)). Comcover will commence arrangements for the evacuation of the expatriate provided:

- emergency evacuation will be initiated after reasonable local measures to protect the health and safety of the expatriate have been exhausted or when Comcover decide that the expatriate, who is not in need of medical attention, is at high risk due to adverse local conditions;
- if Comcover considers that the situation will continue for less than 30 days duration, emergency evacuation will be made to the nearest location outside the impacted area; or
- if Comcover considers that the situation will continue for more than 30 days duration, emergency evacuation will be made to the expatriate's home country.

4.18.34 The normal exclusions (see clause 4.18.13) apply.

### **Class of air travel for health care**

4.18.35 The entitlement for an eligible person to travel to another location to access medical treatment is an economy class fare.

4.18.36 A higher class of travel may be approved if International SOS considers it necessary/reasonable in the circumstances. Factors to be considered include:

- the health of the patient;
- the nature of the aircraft accommodation required by the patient for medical reasons;
- the nature of available accommodation on the aircraft in which the patient is required to travel; and
- any other relevant factors.

4.18.37 Where approved, an accompanying child and/or medical escort of an eligible person travelling to another location for health care may travel at the same class of travel as the eligible person.

### **Living costs during treatment**

4.18.38 Where the Comcover Statement of Cover does not provide for living costs, the following costs for the evacuated person and, where applicable their accompanying dependant or escort, may be approved by the Delegate:

- a reasonable standard of commercial accommodation as determined by the Delegate;

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- if living in commercial accommodation without cooking facilities, two-thirds of the meal allowance rate applicable to the locality;
- if living for five days or less in commercial accommodation with cooking facilities and utensils, two-thirds of the meal allowance rate for the locality;
- if living for longer than five days in commercial accommodation with cooking facilities and utensils, one-sixth of the meal allowance rate for the locality; and
- if living in private accommodation, one-sixth of the meal allowance rate for the locality.

The following limitations apply:

- Children under 12 years of age receive two-thirds the adult meal supplement rate.
- Accommodation and meal costs for the evacuated individual are not payable during periods of hospitalisation.
- Travel incidentals are not payable.

### Continuation of Allowances

4.18.39 During medical evacuations, overseas allowances are payable to the employee who has on-going costs and/or dependants remain at post for a period of up to 28 days. After this period, the continuation of overseas allowances will be reviewed by the Delegate.

4.18.40 An employee who is medically evacuated must apply for sick leave for their period of absence (including travel time) from work.

## 4.19 Provisions for Childbirth

4.19.1 The entitlements listed under this clause will be met under Comcover's Statement of Cover. Any eligible entitlements that are not covered under the Comcover Statement of Cover may be met by the Department.

### Suitability of health care facilities

4.19.2 Hospitalisation for childbirth should be at the post locality where adequate medical services exist, even if medical considerations may result in high cost medical treatment.

4.19.3 If childbirth services of a reasonable standard are not available at post as determined by International SOS for the post locality, the medivac provisions in clause 4.18.29 will apply.

4.19.4 Healthcare relating to pregnancy and childbirth that is provided in-country is treated under the general medical provisions at clause 4.18.12.

### Medical Evacuation for Childbirth

4.19.5 Regardless of the quality of medical services at post, in an emergency situation assistance will be provided to the expectant mother under the medivac provisions in clause 4.18.29.

4.19.6 The following entitlements apply in the case of an eligible person travelling to another location to give birth under the medivac provisions:

- a return business class airfare for the mother to the approved location, and

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- 15 kilograms of excess baggage for the return sector to the post.

### Travel to Australia for Childbirth

- 4.19.7 Despite adequate childbirth services being available at a post locality, the Delegate may approve an expectant mother's travel to Australia for the childbirth.
- 4.19.8 Approval to travel in such cases would normally only be given where a comparative cost analysis indicates that savings would be achieved by returning an expectant mother to Australia. The cost analysis would take account of the cost of return airfares, excess baggage, accommodation in Australia, etc. against the hospital and medical costs likely to be incurred at the post. The employee would be required to utilise an assisted leave fare or pay for return economy class flights in these circumstances.

### Fitness to travel

- 4.19.9 In the normal course of events, an expectant mother would depart the post at around week 35 of pregnancy and return to post within two to six weeks of giving birth. Most international airlines require a medical certificate certifying fitness for travel after week 34 of pregnancy. It is the expectant mother's responsibility to obtain and provide any required documentation for their proposed travel.
- 4.19.10 The Department will top up the assisted leave fare from return economy-class to a return business-class airfare for the expectant mother and recognised accompanying family members. Dependants that travel to Australia, but do not accompany the expectant mother will not have their assisted leave fares upgraded to business-class.

### Accommodation in Australia

- 4.19.11 The Department will reimburse employees for single occupancy accommodation at a GST registered commercial accommodation in Australia for the period required or up to 14 weeks whichever is the shorter. The rates are provided in [Schedule Three](#).
- 4.19.12 The Delegate may approve a longer period of accommodation on advice from a registered medical practitioner that the mother is unfit to return to the post following the birth of their child.
- 4.19.13 Expectant mothers opting to reside at other than a GST registered business will be paid in accordance with [Schedule Three](#).
- 4.19.14 The Delegate may change the payment limits for accommodation, taking into account the daily non-SES accommodation rate.

### Payment of overseas allowances

- 4.19.15 If return to Australia for an employee is approved, overseas allowances will cease once the employee's absence from the post on Maternity Leave exceeds 28 days. However, overseas allowances will continue to be paid for any annual leave accrued at the post and taken in conjunction with the mandatory maternity leave period. Overseas allowances will continue to be paid for the full period of the Maternity Leave if dependants remain at post during the employee's absence in Australia. No additional allowances (such as Travel Allowance) are payable in respect to the travel to, and confinement in, Australia.



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### Excess baggage

4.19.16 The Department will meet the cost for up to 15kg of accompanied excess baggage per family when returning to the locality of posting following the birth of a child. Alternatively, the 15kg excess baggage allowance may be converted into an equivalent cost for unaccompanied airfreight.

### Travel to a location other than Australia

4.19.17 If an expectant mother is approved to travel to a country other than Australia for the childbirth, the Delegate will decide the level of assistance to be provided by the Department.

### Leave Entitlements for Childbirth

4.19.18 The following leave types may be applicable, subject to approval:

- **Annual Leave/Long Service Leave** – Full-pay Annual or Long Service Leave may be taken on completion of the mandatory Maternity Leave period.
- **Maternity Leave (14 weeks full pay)** – Maternity Leave usually commences six weeks prior to the due date for the birth but can be deferred if a medical certificate certifying fitness for duty is provided.
- **Parental Leave (Four weeks full pay)** – Paid parental leave is available to employees who are not the primary care giver of a child:
  - to attend the birth of their child, or their partner's child, and provide support and care to the mother in the period after the birth, or
  - to care for an adoptive child, a foster child, or a child for whom the employee is a guardian, and for whom the employee has recently assumed long-term responsibility.
- Paid parental leave is also available to employees who are the primary care giver, to give birth and recover from a birth where the employee is not eligible for paid maternity leave.

4.19.19 Half-pay maternity leave is not available to overseas employees as per the Departments Enterprise Agreement. Where extended leave is requested, greater than the prescribed entitlement the Delegate may determine for the posting to end rather than provide backfilling arrangements.

### Limited access to extended leave

4.19.20 If an employee wishes to take extended periods of unpaid Maternity Leave, Long Service Leave (LSL) or Leave Without Pay (LWOP) in association with their mandatory 14-week Maternity Leave period (12 weeks with an extension of two weeks as per the Departments Enterprise Agreement), their entitlement to other conditions of service associated with their long-term posting may change. A request for extended periods of leave may also result in termination of the posting by the Delegate, dependent on operational requirements at post and the ability to provide backfilling options.



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### 4.20 Assistance with education costs

#### Introduction

4.20.1 The education assistance provisions in this section are provided to employees on a long-term posting to assist with education costs for recognised dependant children between three years of age and 18 years of age who either reside with the employee at post or remain in Australia to attend school.

#### Limitations

4.20.2 Education assistance is only provided for children attending pre-school, primary school or secondary school. No education assistance is provided for tertiary students.

4.20.3 If an employee's posting ceases between the end of the final term of a school year and prior to the commencement of the first term of the next school year, education assistance is not provided for the new school year.

4.20.4 Entitlement to education costs assistance will cease should an employee take unpaid leave.

4.20.5 Miscellaneous education items such as school uniforms, books, lunches, etc. are a personal cost to employees. Where school lunches are incorporated into the overall tuition fees at a school, DFAT at post will liaise with the school to determine an appropriate amount payable by the parent.

4.20.6 Additional school related fees incurred by employees for extra-curricular activities are a personal cost to the employee.

4.20.7 If an employee's child resides at a third location there will be no entitlement to education assistance under this section in respect of this child.

#### Reimbursement payments

4.20.8 An employee who is entitled to reimbursement under this section may be paid in full as soon as an account is received and evidence of the actual payment is provided.

#### Assistance for a part year

4.20.9 If this section applies to an employee for part of a whole year, the formula which is used to calculate the reimbursement to the employee for that period (where refunds are not possible for non-completion of the whole school year the full amount will be paid by the Department) are detailed in Schedule Two.

#### Reimbursement to be reduced by refunds

4.20.10 If an employee receives a refund from a school for compulsory boarding and tuition fees that were met by the Department, the refund is to be repaid to the Department or alternatively, must be used to offset the amount of reimbursement being claimed by the employee.

#### Education assistance in Australia

4.20.11 Students may board at the Australian benchmark schools, which for boys is Canberra Grammar School and for girls is Canberra Girls Grammar, or at another boarding school in Australia or via a private boarding arrangement.

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4.20.12 The maximum assistance towards educational expenses in respect of a child remaining in Australia during an employee's long-term posting is the compulsory fees for tuition and boarding at the Australian benchmark school.

4.20.13 There is no entitlement to education assistance in Australia for employees on a short-term mission.

4.20.14 To receive assistance with compulsory tuition and boarding fees, a child must have resided with the employee for at least six months of the year in Australia prior to the employee's posting.

### **Tuition Assistance in Australia**

4.20.15 Education assistance in Australia may be provided prior to an employee's posting commencing if, as a direct result of the posting, an employee is required to relocate, or make arrangements to relocate, their child from their normal school to another school and subsequently incurs additional fees, charges, etc. because of the need for relocation.

4.20.16 If a child is to be educated in Australia, assistance with compulsory tuition fees commences from whichever is the later of:

- the beginning of the school term in which the employee departs Australia to commence their posting; or
- the commencement of the Australian school year in the year of posting.

### **Boarding Assistance in Australia**

4.20.17 Eligibility for assistance with boarding fees commences at the beginning of the school term in which the employee departs Australia and concludes at the end of the school term in which the employee's posting ends.

4.20.18 Employees are required to make a personal contribution towards boarding fees to cover meals and other expenses that the employee would have incurred if the child accompanied the employee on posting. The boarding contribution rate is determined by DFAT, with the rate being reviewed annually. Current contribution rates can be seen at [Schedule Two](#).

4.20.19 If a child remains in Australia and resides in a private board arrangement, there is no entitlement to reimbursement for private boarding fees.

4.20.20 Employees may wish to privately arrange insurance cover for a child's personal effects and medical coverage, including ambulance at boarding school or while in a private boarding arrangement as their personal effect and medical coverage are not covered by the Department.

### **Education assistance at post**

4.20.21 Education assistance overseas is not provided for a child unless the child lives, or intends to live with the employee at post for at least three quarters of the duration of a posting or for 12 months, whichever is the longer.

### **Tuition and transport costs at post**

4.20.22 If an employee's child resides with the employee at post and the child is at least three years of age, the compulsory fees for the benchmark school and basic school transport costs to and from the benchmark school are met by the Department.

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4.20.23 Basic school transport costs that are paid by an employee for a dependant child to attend a benchmark school are reimbursable. This includes:

- school bus;
- public transport bus; or
- train.

Noting that in order to be recognised as a school bus, the provider of the bus service must be engaged by the school to provide the service.

An employee seeking reimbursement for these costs will need to provide evidence that the transport provider is engaged by the school. Suitable evidence that the provider is engaged with the school could include the contract between the provider and the school.

Basic school transport costs do not include a private motor vehicle or taxis.

4.20.24 Reimbursement for school transport costs are administered through local post administration.

### **Benchmark schools at post**

4.20.25 Benchmark schools are determined by DFAT and reviewed regularly. A list of approved benchmark schools is attached at [Schedule Two](#).

4.20.26 If an employee chooses to send a child to a school other than the benchmark school, the level of assistance for that school is only equivalent to what it would have cost had the child attended the benchmark school (i.e. Compulsory fees only). If the benchmark school at the employee's post is the public school system, no additional assistance is provided should an employee choose to send their child to a private school.

4.20.27 If there are no vacancies at the benchmark school, the Delegate can determine an appropriate school for reimbursement costs, in consultation with DFAT.

4.20.28 Where the benchmark school is the local government school, employees should be aware that enrolment may be based on residential catchment areas/zones. Employees should consult with DFAT or post when determining their needs for schooling and housing in these circumstances.

### **Language tuition at post**

4.20.29 The Department will reimburse reasonable costs, as determined by the Delegate, for essential foreign language tuition when a benchmark school does not use English as the teaching language.

### **Remedial tuition at post**

4.20.30 The Delegate may approve the cost of no more than 200 hours remedial tuition to be reimbursed where, in the professional judgment of the school, a child's progress and performance in a particular compulsory subject is unsatisfactory as a consequence of the child's relocation to the post.

4.20.31 Remedial tuition covers the transitional period from one school system to another which has different requirements, syllabi and standards. It is not a provision for intensive pre-examination tutoring. If a child's school does not provide remedial tuition, the child may receive extra tuition from an accredited tutoring establishment.

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### Correspondence Education assistance at post

- 4.20.32 If there is no adequate benchmark school at post, and a child is educated by correspondence with an Australian school, the Delegate may approve reimbursement for a reasonable amount of local tuition assistance and the necessarily incurred cost of correspondence lessons. Assistance will not be provided if the correspondence is with a non-Australian school. Approval from the Delegate must be sought prior to commencement of private tuition.
- 4.20.33 Where there is a benchmark school at the post, and a child is educated by correspondence with an Australian school, assistance will be limited to the cost of compulsory school fees and tuition costs for compulsory subjects up to the benchmark school limit.

### School excursions at post

- 4.20.34 Parents are expected to pay for the same types of school excursions as they do in Australia, including sporting and cultural trips. The Delegate may approve reimbursement for the cost of an in-country school excursion where the child's participation is compulsory and the excursion forms part of the school curricula.

### Summer school programs at post

- 4.20.35 At certain posts, employees may be eligible for reimbursement of the costs of an approved summer school program for any vacation period in excess of the six-week Australian summer vacation period, where the Delegate has accepted that there are limited facilities at post accessible to children during the summer vacation.

To qualify for a summer school, the summer holiday break at post must be longer than the Australian summer holiday break of six weeks. For example, if a summer holiday break at post is ten weeks and there is a summer school approved for the location, the cost of up to four weeks schooling may be met by the Department.

- 4.20.36 Suitable summer school programs are determined by DFAT. Summer schools are not benchmarked and reimbursements will only be made for attendance at approved summer schools listed at Schedule Two – Benchmark Schools. There is no flexibility for attendance at other than the approved summer schools listed.

### Special needs education at post

- 4.20.37 In instances where a dependent child at post has a requirement to access special needs education, the Department will assist with costs to the following limits:
- Where a benchmark school has been set, an amount equal to the compulsory fees at the benchmark school plus an additional 25% of the fee; at posts where no benchmark school has been set, such as the USA, the reimbursable school fee amount plus 25% (this may be used to offset schooling costs or the employment of a classroom assistant).
  - Where the benchmark school is inadequate for a child at post with special needs, the Delegate may consider and approve assistance with the additional costs of a special needs school.
  - Where the services of a counsellor are used at the post, including counselling and psychological evaluation of children with learning difficulties, excess costs may be met by either the Comcover Statement of Cover, or by the Department.

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### Year 11 and 12 Students (both in Australia and at post)

- 4.20.38 Assistance with compulsory tuition fees concludes at the end of the final term of the school year in which the employee's posting ends, provided the school year has already commenced. The exception is Year 11 and Year 12 students for whom assistance continues until the end of Year 12. This is subject to the student meeting a qualifying period of at least 12 months attendance at the school prior to the cessation of the employee's posting.
- 4.20.39 Assistance with boarding fees will cease at the end of the school term in which the employees posting is completed.

### Return to Australia for education

- 4.20.40 The Delegate may approve an economy class airfare, up to the allowable travel cost, for an employee's child to travel to Australia to enrol at a boarding school. Travel at official expense will not be approved under this clause if an employee has less than 12 months remaining of their posting period.
- 4.20.41 If a child requires assistance with enrolment at boarding school in Australia, the Delegate may approve an economy class return fare, up to the allowable travel cost, for one parent to travel to Australia with their child. A parent is only entitled to travel once per posting to enrol a child into school in Australia.
- 4.20.42 A child approved to return to Australia for education will be entitled to a 15kg excess baggage allowance. An accompanying parent will not be entitled to an excess baggage allowance. Travel by a child under these clauses will be taken to be the child's return to Australia (i.e. End of posting) travel. No assistance will be provided for accommodation, meals or local transport costs.

## 4.21 Bereavement

### Introduction

- 4.21.1 This section details what assistance will be available if an employee, or an employee's dependant, dies whilst undertaking a long-term posting or short-term mission.
- 4.21.2 Any entitlements or obligations that would have been applicable in relation to dependants are to continue to apply to the dependants for a relevant period, as determined by the Delegate, noting:
- overseas living allowances are payable at the rate that would have been payable;
  - no additional school terms or assistance with education will be covered; and
  - transport for dependants and their possessions may be provided to a location other than Australia but the amount paid must not be more than the amount the Department would have paid for their transport to Australia.

### Authorised person to contact next of kin

- 4.21.3 In the event that an employee dies overseas during a period of official business, the responsibility to contact the employee's next of kin rests with the First Assistant Secretary, People Division.

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### Funeral costs of employee/dependant

- 4.21.4 If a posted employee who is overseas on official business or a dependant living overseas with the employee dies, the Department will pay the cost of returning the employee's or dependant's body (or ashes) to Australia if so requested by the next of kin. Alternatively, the Department will reimburse to the deceased's legal personal representative the amount by which the cost of the employee's or dependant's funeral at the overseas locality exceeds the reasonable cost that would have been incurred if the body was returned to Australia.
- 4.21.5 For the purposes of the above clause, the cost of an employee's or dependant's funeral at an overseas locality is taken to include the cost of returning the employee's or dependant's ashes to Australia if the employee's or dependant's body is cremated at the post.

### Fares to attend a funeral overseas

- 4.21.6 If an employee on duty overseas, or the employee's spouse, dies and a close relative of the employee or spouse travels to post to attend the funeral or make necessary arrangements arising from the death of that person and the remains of the person are not to be removed at departmental expense, the employee or spouse is entitled to be reimbursed the lesser of:
- the amount of fares incurred by the close relative to travel to and from that post; or
  - the allowable travel cost for the travel.

## 4.22 Emergency Evacuations and Authorised Departures from Post

### Introduction

- 4.22.1 This section provides conditions and entitlements for employees and their dependants at post or on official business overseas, when the Minister or Secretary authorises the temporary or permanent departure from a post, country or region overseas.

The conditions apply to the following three departure scenarios:

- directed orderly departure;
- emergency evacuation;
- voluntary departure at official expense.

- 4.22.2 The period of departure begins the day an employee or dependant departs from post and ends on whichever is the earlier of:
- the day the employee returns to the post;
  - the day an employee's posting is terminated; or
  - the day an employee begins living permanently in Australia or at a location other than the post.
  - in the case of a dependant, whichever is the earlier of:
    - the day the dependant returns to the post;
    - the day a dependant leaves the post because of the termination of the employee's posting; or
    - the day a dependant begins living permanently in Australia or at a location other than the post.

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4.22.3 Irrespective of the circumstances of an employee's departure from a post under this section, employees do not attract any other allowances or payments except where the Delegate may otherwise determine.

4.22.4 There is no change to the provisions for children in boarding school in Australia if one or both parents return on a directed departure to Australia or another approved location.

### **Directed orderly departure**

4.22.5 A directed orderly departure may occur where the Minister directs all dependants and certain, or all, employees to depart a post, country or region overseas. The directed orderly departure scenario assumes conditions in a country allow ample time for those departing to plan and organise their travel and to put their local affairs in order.

### **Emergency Evacuation**

4.22.6 An emergency evacuation may occur when the situation at post or at destination (in country) is critical and a Minister or Secretary directs an immediate emergency evacuation (for example, war-like activities in country, natural disaster, or terrorism).

4.22.7 In the event of an emergency evacuation the following conditions and entitlements apply with the following variations:

- transport will be by whatever means and class is available at reasonable cost and which ensures the safety of employees and dependants
- an employee and dependants will receive 20 kg of excess baggage allowance per person. The Delegate may authorise additional excess baggage, and
- the Delegate may authorise the reimbursement of reasonable costs necessarily incurred by an employee for purchasing apparel or other personal items as considered reasonable in order to live at the evacuation location. Reimbursement for expenses incurred should not be anticipated.

### **Voluntary Departure at Official Expense**

4.22.8 A voluntary departure from post at official expense might occur when there are certain situations that while they may not warrant a directed orderly departure from post, a Minister may authorise the voluntary departure at official expense of dependants and certain employees and their return to post at a later date.

4.22.9 When an employee or their dependants are authorised to depart a post on a voluntary basis and later return at official expense, the following conditions and entitlements apply, unless determined otherwise by the Delegate.

### **Destination centre**

4.22.10 The Delegate will determine an employee's and their dependants' destination centre which will normally be Canberra. Employees and dependants may be approved to travel to an alternative destination in Australia, depending on the circumstances. Proposals for travel to alternative destinations in Australia must be submitted prior to travel and must include reasons for the request, the cost of the travel and accommodation arrangements at the destination.



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4.22.11 The Delegate may approve for an employee and their dependant's to travel to a third country instead of the authorised destination centre. Travel to a third country will only be approved where travel to the destination is considered to be safe. DFAT's travel advisories will be considered in determining a safe destination.

4.22.12 Where the Delegate approves dependants to travel to a third country instead of the authorised destination centre, travel costs additional to the notional direct post/authorised destination centre return cost are a personal expense.

### Travel

4.22.13 Travel must be by the most direct route. Air travel will be at economy class.

4.22.14 An employee and dependants may only travel by private motor vehicle, where the Delegate deems it appropriate and approves the means of travel prior to departure from destination.

4.22.15 Motor Vehicle Allowance applicable for the employee's post will be paid on these occasions. Motor Vehicle Allowance covers only the direct travel between the post and the approved destination.

4.22.16 If a more appropriate form of transport for a lower cost can be utilised, only the amount of this transport will be paid. For example, if the cost of an airfare to the destination is less than the reimbursement of motor vehicle kilometres, only the cost of the airfare will be reimbursed to the traveller.

### Excess Baggage

4.22.17 An employee and dependants travelling by air each receive 12 kg of excess baggage allowance.

### Storage of Effects

4.22.18 When an employee and dependants depart a post under this section, personal effects including motor vehicles may be stored at official expense at post. The Department will take advice from Post Administration regarding alternative cost-effective arrangements such as hiring guards or arranging for domestics to live-in for the duration of the departure.

### Continuation of post allowances

4.22.19 Employees continue to receive full overseas allowances for a period of up to three months after an authorised temporary departure from post. In the event of a prolonged departure from post in excess of three months, the Delegate may review the continuing payment of post allowances in the context of the particular circumstances and evacuation package.

4.22.20 Employees at posts continue to receive location allowance and accrue additional annual leave as appropriate during their departure for up to three months at which time there will be a review of continuation of allowances in accordance with the above clause.

4.22.21 In the event of a prolonged departure from post in excess of three months, the Delegate may review the continuing payment of full meal allowances in the context of the particular circumstances (i.e. accommodation arrangements).

### Accommodation

4.22.22 The cost of reasonable commercial accommodation with cooking facilities will be met as an official expense for the duration of the temporary departure. Reasonable cost limits based on Canberra



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accommodation rates will be advised by the Placements team prior to departure from post. If employees or dependants elect to stay in accommodation, which exceeds the authorised cost limits, the extra cost is a personal expense. If an employee or dependants elect to relocate to different accommodation, associated arrangements and relocation costs are a personal responsibility. No payment will be made for private accommodation arrangements with relatives or friends.

- 4.22.23 Where the authorised departure destination is Australia, no accommodation is paid for a dependant who travels to a third country.

### Meal supplement

- 4.22.24 Two-thirds of the Departments approved meal allowance rate for the particular domestic destination (not including incidental payment) will be paid to employees on long-term posting and each dependant while in Australia on temporary departure from post.
- 4.22.25 Meal allowances will not be paid for a dependant who travels to a third country if the authorised destination centre is Australia. For authorised destinations outside of Australia the applicable meal allowance for that destination will be that provided by ECA.
- 4.22.26 Meal allowance will be advanced to an employee's Australian bank account once confirmation of departure from post is received. An advance of this kind must be acquitted using the Travel Diary. If the employee returns to post prior to the end of the advance period, any outstanding meal allowance must be repaid to the Department.

### Out-of-pocket incidental costs

- 4.22.27 To assist with out-of-pocket incidental costs incurred during a temporary departure or evacuation, employees will receive a one-off relocation supplementation payment as outlined in [Schedule Three](#). The payment is intended to assist with meeting expenses of an incidental nature (e.g. clothing, transport, telephone calls and other similar matters) relating to the authorised evacuation. This payment will be subject to income tax and will be grossed-up to include the PAYG liability.
- 4.22.28 The Delegate may review and adjust the amount of out-of-pocket incidental payment in July each year.

### Reunion travel

- 4.22.29 If an employee remains at post, they will receive a reverse reunion visit if their dependent children are on a directed departure for a period exceeding three months. If an employee was previously in receipt of reunion entitlements, their normal reunion entitlement is reduced by one visit if a reverse reunion is undertaken. Reunion travel will not be approved to a post that is subject to a directed departure instruction or a voluntary departure.

### Return to post

- 4.22.30 An employee must return to post or official duties at the direction of the Delegate. All financial assistance for an employee's dependants remaining in Australia will cease seven days after the dependants have been authorised by the Delegate to return to the post.

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### Authorised person to contact next of kin

- 4.22.31 In the event that an employee is involved in an emergency situation overseas during a period of official business, the responsibility to contact the employee's next of kin rests with the First Assistant Secretary, People Division.

## 4.23 Early Termination of a Posting

### Early Termination of a posting initiated by management

- 4.23.1 Termination of postings may occur for a range of reasons under Section 25 of the *Public Service Act 1999*.
- 4.23.2 In the event of a management initiated termination, or other extraordinary circumstance, the Delegate may approve a payment to the employee, as set out in [Schedule Three](#), with consideration given to the below criteria:
- The date of termination of posting will be the date the employee departs the post.
  - The payment is determined by the number of months remaining in the term of the original posting.
  - Where the employee's posting has previously been extended, the payment is calculated by reference to the number of months remaining of the term of the extended posting.
- 4.23.3 Management initiated termination of posting might include situations where a position is withdrawn or a post is closed. Withdrawals for disciplinary, performance-related or personal reasons are not covered by compensation payments or assistance.
- 4.23.4 These provisions do not apply if an employee is cross-posted as a result of the early termination of their original posting.
- 4.23.5 If an employee's long-term posting is cancelled prior to travel to post, and uplift has not yet occurred no compensation is available. If uplift has occurred, the Delegate may determine an amount of compensation considered reasonable.

### Early Termination of a posting initiated by employee

- 4.23.6 Should an employee posted to a location with a rating of Category D, E or F, decide during the first year of their posting that they wish to complete only two years instead of three for professional or personal reasons, they can apply for an early return. The employee should advise the Regional Director, who will liaise with the responsible business area, of their request at the end of their first year at post. Early return will occur without prejudice unless a Regional Director supports the early return in the employee's performance appraisal (either PDA or End of Post Report) as a result of unsatisfactory performance.
- 4.23.7 In a shorter posting period of 12-24 months, the assisted leave fare entitlements would be reduced (see [Schedule Two](#) for calculations).

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### Assistance on resignation or termination of posting by employee

- 4.23.8 When an employee ends a posting before the ordinary period of posting is completed, other than in the circumstances outlined in clause 4.23.3, the employee is entitled to the following assistance in relation to air fares and the removal of household goods:

Time completed at post	Assistance provided*
Ordinary period of posting	Full airfare and removal costs
Three-quarters but not full period	Three-quarters of airfare and removal costs
At least half but less than three-quarters	Half airfare and removal costs
Less than half the ordinary period	No financial assistance provided.

*\*Assistance for air travel will be paid as a reimbursement.*

- 4.23.9 An employee is only entitled to assistance if the employee returns to Australia within three months of resigning or terminating the posting. An employee will not be reimbursed an amount greater than the allowable travel cost of the employee's and their dependant's air travel.
- 4.23.10 If the Delegate, on considering the circumstances of a termination, is satisfied that it is reasonable, the Delegate may cover the full assistance costs of the employee's and dependant's air travel and removal costs.
- 4.23.11 The cost of storage and insurance of an employee's household goods stored in Australia during the employee's posting will be met by the Department for up to three months from the date the employee's posting ends.
- 4.23.12 If an employee has separated from the Department and chooses to move to another location in Australia, the Department will only meet the out-of-storage costs to the equivalent of delivery to an address in the employee's pre-posting locality for household goods stored in Australia during the employee's posting. Costs relating to transporting household goods that have been returned from overseas after customs clearance to a location other than the employee's pre-posting locality will be at personal cost to the employee.

### Taking up a promotion in Australia while on posting

- 4.23.13 If an employee wins a position in Australia while on posting, it would be expected the employee take up their new position at the cessation of their posting. In the case the employee wishes to commence before the end of their posting, a reasonable period of release must be organised through the Overseas Network Management section and the relevant Regional Director. The Delegate may determine an appropriate level of assistance for the early return to Australia. Early return will occur without prejudice.

## 4.24 Cross Postings

- 4.24.1 When an employee is cross-posted, they will be required to have changes made to their passport observation label. These changes are administered by the Placements team.

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- 4.24.2 When cross posting the required visas, flights and accommodation to the new location are administered through local post administration.
- 4.24.3 The costs associated with the transfer to the new post will be the responsibility of the new post location. For example, if an employee is currently posted to Islamabad and will be cross-posted to Nairobi then the costs of the new visa, flights will be charged to the Nairobi cost centre.
- 4.24.4 Post administration will be responsible for completing an International Travel minute for approval, which will be sought from the Regional Director of the post that the employee will be travelling to.

### Removal and Storage for Cross Posting

- 4.24.5 Employees proceeding on a cross posting may return unwanted or excess household goods to Australia for storage at official expense provided the total volume of the household goods removed to Australia and to their new post does not exceed the employee's overall volume limit.
- 4.24.6 The table below specifies the cubic metre limits by family composition for employees proceeding on cross posting.

Cross-postings (inclusive of external packaging)					
Family composition	1	2	3	4	5
Cubic metre volume post to post	15	19	21	24	26

- 4.24.7 Employees proceeding on cross posting will normally have their household goods sent by airfreight.

### Leave for packing, uplift and removal

- 4.24.8 Employees proceeding on cross posting are entitled to up to three days Miscellaneous Leave with Pay (Exceptional Circumstances) for packing, uplift and removal of their household goods. This entitlement allows two days for packing and one day for house cleaning. If additional days are required, employees must apply for personal leave or annual leave, ensuring post requirements are met.
- 4.24.9 Employees are entitled to two days Miscellaneous Leave with Pay (Exceptional Circumstances) at their destination for unpacking their household goods. If additional days are required, employees must apply for personal leave or annual leave.

### Transfer Allowance

- 4.24.10 Employees proceeding on a cross posting will be eligible for Transfer Allowance. Refer to [Schedule Three](#) for the applicable rates.

END OF PART FOUR

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### Part 5 – Long-term Postings – Returning from Post

#### 5.1 Introduction

##### Notification

- 5.1.1 The Placements team will contact employees, normally between three to six months prior to the end of the posting period, to provide 'Return to Australia' advice. Notification will include all documentation required to facilitate the employee's return from posting.

##### Transfer Allowance

- 5.1.2 An employee returning to Australia is entitled to Transfer Allowance in accordance with [Schedule Three](#).
- 5.1.3 If an employee's spouse departs a post before the end of an employee's posting, the employee may receive partial payment of the accompanied Transfer Allowance entitlement in advance of the employee's departure from the post.

##### End of Post Report

- 5.1.4 Each employee must ensure they have an End of Post report when completing a long-term posting. Employees are responsible for ensuring that their report is finalised and forwarded to the Placements team <sup>s. 47E(d)</sup> [redacted] [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto:[redacted]@homeaffairs.gov.au)) prior to their departure from post. End of Post reports are used by Selection Advisory Committees (SAC) for consideration in future posting rounds.

#### 5.2 Removal and Return of Household Goods to Australia

##### Removal Arrangements

- 5.2.1 The removal and return of an employee's personal household goods will be coordinated through post. Employees should ensure that the SAO at post is informed of their preparations.
- 5.2.2 The Placements team in Canberra will advise Allied Pickford's of an employee's return approximately three months prior to their departure. Allied Pickford's will then contact the employee to make an appointment to conduct a survey and make arrangements for uplift and shipment of their goods back to the employee's home base in Australia.

##### Volume Entitlements

- 5.2.3 The table below specifies the cubic metre limits by family composition for employees returning to Australia from an ordinary period of posting plus any extension at one post. Cubic metre volume limits refer to packed amounts.

Ordinary period of posting and extensions at one post (inclusive of external packaging)					
Family composition	1	2	3	4	5
Cubic metre volume on RTA	15	19	21	24	26

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- 5.2.4 The table below specifies the cubic metre limits by family composition for employees returning to Australia from multiple postings.

Cross-postings and Multiple postings (inclusive of external packaging)					
Family composition	1	2	3	4	5
Cubic metre volume on RTA	19	23	27	30	33

- 5.2.5 Family composition comprises only those dependants who accompany an employee at official expense. When family size is greater than five persons, volume limits increase by two cubic metres for each additional dependant.
- 5.2.6 Household goods that exceed the allowable volume limit will be removed at the employee's expense. Employee contributions towards removal of additional household goods must be paid prior to departure. The Delegate may vary a volume limit where exceptional circumstances have resulted in an employee exceeding their prescribed volume limit.

### Dispatch Arrangements

- 5.2.7 Employees returning to Australia will normally have their household goods sent by sea freight unless they are returning from a designated 'airfreight' post. If an employee has an airfreight entitlement and chooses to send their household goods by sea freight, their volume entitlement will remain unchanged and cannot be increased.
- 5.2.8 A number of posts have been designated airfreight posts for return of household goods to Australia. The designated airfreight only posts are governed by DFAT taking in to account the security of the posts. The Delegate may add or delete designated airfreight posts. A list of posts can be found in [Schedule Two](#).

### Freight restrictions

- 5.2.9 The dispatch of hazardous, explosive or combustible items is prohibited. It is an employee's responsibility to ensure that they do not transport prohibited or dangerous items. Further details are available on the Civil Aviation Safety Authority website.
- 5.2.10 The Civil Aviation Safety Authority specifies restrictions on what may be transported by aircraft. These include:
- furniture items (including pianos) larger than 1.52m x1.01m x1.62m
  - whitegoods
  - boats, canoes and windsurfers
  - trailers
  - heavy gymnasium equipment
  - lawn mower; and
  - paint, aerosol cans, lighter fuel, etc.

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### Employee responsibilities

- 5.2.11 Employees must comply with Australian customs and quarantine requirements. Employees will be personally responsible for additional costs incurred for clearance, handling, storage or destruction of undeclared or prohibited items.
- 5.2.12 Employees must ensure that they are aware of the Government's 'Duty Free Concessions' and the provisions related to unaccompanied items. Often goods purchased in the previous 12 months may be subject to duty where they are returned as unaccompanied luggage.

### Insurance and Inventories

- 5.2.13 Prior to uplift, it is encouraged that employees contact their insurance company to ensure that the policy is valid for the return of their goods to Australia. Employees should also ensure inventories are updated for the removalist and insurance company. Employees should also check with their insurance company if they require additional insurance for transit.
- 5.2.14 The Department will continue to meet the costs for insuring goods stored in Australia for up to three months following the cease date at post. After this date, the employee is responsible for both the insurance and storage costs of goods.

### Storage of household goods on completion of a posting

- 5.2.15 The Department will continue to pay the storage and insurance costs for household goods that have been stored in Australia during the employee's posting for a period of up to three months from the date an employee's posting ceases to allow sufficient time for the employee to return from post and move into permanent accommodation.
- 5.2.16 The Department will not meet storage or insurance costs on household goods returned from post after customs clearance beyond a period of annual leave with overseas allowances that is taken immediately after completion of a posting. Employees taking approved long service leave, annual leave not accrued at post, or leave without pay after completing a posting will be personally responsible for the storage and insurance costs relating to their household goods being returned to Australia.

### Damage to personal goods

- 5.2.17 If any personal goods are damaged, employees will need to contact the removal company, storage company, or insurance company immediately about making a claim. In the event that an employee's personal goods are damaged, it is the responsibility of the employee to meet the costs of any excess charges applied by the insurance company. The Department will not act on the employees behalf in these matters.

### Leave for packing, uplift and removal

- 5.2.18 Employees returning from long-term posting are entitled to up to three days Miscellaneous Leave with Pay (Exceptional Circumstances) for packing, uplift and removal of their household goods. This entitlement allows two days for packing and one day for house cleaning. If additional days are required, employees must apply for personal leave or annual leave, ensuring post requirements are met.

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- 5.2.19 Employees are entitled to two days Miscellaneous Leave with Pay (Exceptional Circumstances) at their destination for unpacking their household goods. If additional days are required, employees must apply for personal leave or annual leave.
- 5.2.20 The above-mentioned Miscellaneous Leave with Pay must be used at the time of packing/unpacking household goods; it will not be re-credited. For example, employees who choose to take annual leave or unpaid leave for this purpose will not have their leave re-credited or receive remuneration.

### **Employees remaining overseas after cessation of posting**

- 5.2.21 If an employee intends to remain overseas after completing a posting, they will have six months from the date their posting ceases to return their household goods to Australia at departmental expense. In such cases, the world-wide multiple risk insurance and storage costs for the employee's household goods that were removed overseas will be a personal cost to the employee from the day after the posting ceases, or if annual leave with overseas allowances is taken immediately after the posting ceases, the day after the annual leave with allowances ends.
- 5.2.22 If an employee remains overseas after cessation of posting, the Department will continue to pay the storage and insurance costs for their household goods that are held in storage in Australia only for a period of three months from the date the posting ceases.

## **5.3 Settling-out at post**

### **Intention**

- 5.3.1 The intention of settling-in and settling-out provisions is to assist with the additional costs for meals faced by employees and their eligible dependants who are obliged to temporarily reside in a hotel or other commercial accommodation prior to, during, or after a posting.

### **Entitlement**

- 5.3.2 The settling-out at post period begins on the day when long-term residential accommodation becomes unavailable because of the completion of the employee's posting, and ends on the day the employee's period of posting ends. The settling out period includes:
- an entitlement to temporary accommodation at official expense; and
  - a meals supplement payment.
- 5.3.3 The maximum settling-out period at post is 14 days, if the Delegate is satisfied that the circumstances of the employee's removal from the post make it impractical to reduce the period that the employee occupies temporary accommodation.

### **Meal Allowance paid overseas**

- 5.3.4 If an employee and their dependants are authorised to live in a hotel or other accommodation without cooking facilities during a settling-out period at post, the employee is entitled to:
- two-thirds of the meal allowance specified for the post for the employee and any dependant 12 years or older;
  - for each dependant who is less than 12 years of age, the rate paid is two-thirds of the amount specified above for employees;



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for each complete day during the settling in/out period.

### Part-day of meals supplement paid overseas

- 5.3.5 On the first and last days of a settling-out period at a post, the employee and dependant's meal allowance is determined in the same manner as for a short-term mission. The proportion payable is set out in the following table.

Table – Meal rate for day of arrival or departure		
Time of arrival or departure	% of rate for day of arrival	% of rate for day of departure
Before 07:00	100	Nil
07:00 – 13:00	75	25
13:01 – 19:00	50	50
After 19:00	Nil	100

### Meals supplement not payable overseas in certain circumstances

- 5.3.6 An employee and dependants are not entitled to meals supplement in the following cases:
- if meals are provided to the employee or a dependant, or are otherwise paid for, by the Australian Government (e.g. receiving travel allowance);
  - during a period of recreation leave taken by the employee, including on weekends and public holidays contiguous with that recreation leave; or
  - while the employee occupies accommodation with facilities and utensils sufficient to allow the employee to prepare a cooked meal (e.g. serviced apartment).

### Incidental Allowance is not paid

- 5.3.7 There is no entitlement for employees to receive an Incidental Allowance during settling-out at post.

## 5.4 Travel from Post

### Fare Entitlement

- 5.4.1 Employees and dependants at post are entitled to return to Australia using the International Best Fare (IBF), as set out in Department of Finance Resource Management Guide No. 405. The Department will pay the cost of an employee's relocation air travel to Australia from post on the most direct route using the lowest business class airfare available, with reasonable planning, on a reputable carrier.
- 5.4.2 Travel originating from post for return to Australia will be managed locally through post administration. At post, employees should utilise posts travel advisor to obtain three business class quotes from different airlines for return travel, including any dependants, and select the best fare having consideration of any additional costs, such as any additional accommodation costs the route would require.

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- 5.4.3 If an employee intends to remain overseas on paid leave after completing a posting, they will have six months from their posting end date to return to Australia at the department's expense.

### Approval of travel

- 5.4.4 Return to Australia travel approval must be obtained prior to travel, in accordance with current requirements and financial delegations. Full details on the approval process for international travel can be found in [Financial Management Guideline – Official Travel](#). A travel minute will need to be raised in consultation with the relevant Regional Director and submitted to the delegate for approval.

### Class of Air Travel

- 5.4.5 An employee is entitled to international air travel in accordance with the following provisions:
- where three classes of travel are provided on the aircraft, the employee travels at the intermediate class, usually business class or its equivalent;
  - where there are no intermediate or business classes the ordinary standard of travel is economy class;
  - where business class or an equivalent option is not available for international travel, the Delegate may consider approving an alternate (non-direct) route, particularly where the travel is in excess of eight hours.
- 5.4.6 Australian domestic sectors and in-country sectors used in conjunction with an international itinerary may be at the same standard of travel if a through ticket is purchased.
- 5.4.7 If an employee travels at a lower standard of travel than prescribed, no credit is to be provided either in cash or as an offset, against higher expenditure on travel in another sector. Similarly, employees are not able to voluntarily downgrade the class of travel to take account of wider travel options or to purchase additional tickets for non-official travel.

### Travel costs of dependants

- 5.4.8 The Department will pay the travel costs of eligible dependants to the same extent as a posted employee, subject to the following conditions:
- a spouse and accompanying dependants travelling separately to the employee will be entitled to business class air fares using the IBF, without rest days at official expense; and
  - dependants not accompanying an employee or the employee's spouse will be entitled to economy class airfares, without rest days, at official expense.
- 5.4.9 Baby baskets will normally be provided for infants that are newborn or not mobile. The Department will pay for airline seating for infants that are mobile or sitting.

### Alternate routes

- 5.4.10 Travel from a posting must meet the sole purpose of conveying employees and dependants from post in a timely manner. If employees choose to travel by other than the IBF as set out in Department of Finance Resource Management Guide No. 405, indirectly to or from Australia, the following apply:
- employees must meet any travel costs in excess of the business class fair using the IBF;

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- rest days and travel allowance will be applicable based on the IBF entitlement;
- any costs incurred additional to those which would be incurred based on the IBF (additional visas, extra travel insurance, etc.) are the personal responsibility of the employee, and must be paid prior to travel; and
- where Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT) is incurred in respect of a deviation from direct travel (including allowed rest days) using the IBF, the FBT liability for the entire trip (not just the deviation) will be at the employee's personal expense unless the Department agrees to meet this liability.

### Travel out of hours

5.4.11 Employees undertaking international business travel may not access flex time or overtime for periods of travel that fall outside normal working hours.

### Frequent flyer points

5.4.12 Government employees should not accrue Frequent Flyer Points or Loyalty Reward Points for official business travel. Status credits may still be accrued.

### Promotions and competitions

5.4.13 Employees travelling on official business are not permitted to participate in promotions or competitions conducted by external providers.

### Travel and Medical Insurance

5.4.14 International travel insurance for official purposes is provided under the Departments Comcover Insurance Policy. Employees are responsible for private travel and medical insurance when travelling privately, to meet unforeseen circumstances. This includes any period of annual leave en route from post.

### Baggage benefits

- 5.4.15 Each employee and dependant authorised to travel overseas may transport 30kg of baggage at departmental expense. The exception to this is if the carrier charges a price for each bag rather than for the combined weight, in which case the benefit is two suitcases.
- 5.4.16 This benefit includes the amount of baggage the carrier allows the passenger to carry for no extra charge.
- 5.4.17 When an employee is being accompanied by a dependant child, who will not occupy an airline seat, the Department will meet additional costs incurred for the transportation of one car seat and one pram per child, where these items are not included free of charge by the airline.

### Excess baggage

- 5.4.18 Where employees and their eligible dependant's send their personal effects by sea freight from a long-term posting (including a cross-posting), the Department will meet the cost of:
- an additional 15kg of excess baggage for each person where the airline calculates excess baggage by kilograms; or
  - an additional piece of luggage for each person where the airline charge is based on pieces of luggage.

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- 5.4.19 Baggage entitlements, including excess baggage provisions cannot exceed 45kg in total. For example, where an employee receives an airline baggage allowance of 40kg, under provision 5.4.18, they would only be entitled to an additional 5kg of excess baggage.
- 5.4.20 This is to compensate for the cost of carrying surplus luggage on the flight from post. The cost of the excess baggage may be charged to a Commonwealth Credit Card.
- 5.4.21 Any freight, customs, quarantine, delivery, storage or other charges incurred are a personal expense.
- 5.4.22 The excess baggage provisions do not extend to household pets.
- 5.4.23 The Delegate may approve additional excess baggage entitlements in exceptional circumstances.

### Unaccompanied baggage or air freight

- 5.4.24 Where excess baggage provisions apply, an employee may convert their excess baggage entitlement to unaccompanied baggage or airfreight.
- 5.4.25 If an employee chooses to send baggage unaccompanied, the cost limit is equivalent to if the employee had moved the full benefit of air baggage at the accompanied rate.
- 5.4.26 This means that the cost of accompanied baggage plus the cost of unaccompanied baggage, must not be more than the cost of 45kg of accompanied baggage.
- 5.4.27 Any freight, customs, quarantine, delivery, storage or other charges incurred are a personal expense.
- 5.4.28 If there is no unaccompanied baggage rate available, airfreight may be used on the same principle. Noting that the employee must provide an accurate customs declaration and ensure prohibited goods are not imported.

## 5.5 Rest Periods from Post

- 5.5.1 A rest period provides a chance to recover from jet lag, during or after travel, before undertaking duty.
- 5.5.2 Rest period entitlements are based on the flight duration and 2 hours of incidental travel. It does not include pre-departure travel time, rest periods, leave, or stopovers at localities where an employee is not required to perform duty.
- 5.5.3 On return to Australia, employees are not entitled to Travel Allowance or accommodation during a rest period in their home location.
- 5.5.4 Settling-in allowances may be used in conjunction with a rest period. Settling-in allowance is payable as per section 5.7 of this policy.
- 5.5.5 Further information on entitlements is listed in [section 3.12](#).

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### 5.6 Leave and Salary arrangements following an overseas posting

#### Leave with allowances

- 5.6.1 Leave with allowances is only accessible by an employee for up to three working days after ceasing work at post.
- 5.6.2 Employees with accrued leave in excess of the three days will retain their leave entitlement but will not be eligible for allowances.

#### **Example:**

An employee commences a three-year posting with 22 days annual leave balance prior to posting. Their posting is at a location where nine days additional leave is provided each year.

Leave accrued during posting (3yrs @ 29 days) = 87 days.

The employee utilises 50 days of Leave over their posting period, and has a remaining 37 days leave credits with allowances at the end of their post.

Total annual leave available at end of posting (22 days pre-posting + 37 days during posting) = 59 days.

The maximum amount of leave with allowances that can be taken on cessation of posting is three days.

Leave available with overseas allowances at the end of posting = 3 days. The remaining 56 days can be taken as annual leave (without allowances).

#### Leave

- 5.6.3 Applications for long or extended leave (excluding annual leave with allowances outlined above) must be approved and funded by the work area to which the employee is returning.
- 5.6.4 Employees must ensure that they record all leave they are planning to take at the cessation of their posting on their 'Return to Australia' form which should be provided to the Placements team at least one month prior to the end of the posting cessation date

### 5.7 Settling-in on Return to Australia

#### Entitlement

- 5.7.1 When an employee on their return to Australia arrives back at their home location, they will be entitled to one settling-in period of up to three days. The settling-in period in Australia includes:
- an entitlement to temporary accommodation at official expense; and
  - a meals supplement payment (daily meal allowance).
- 5.7.2 Settling-in entitlements at official expense will be provided only once during each settling-in occasion. Where employees opt to travel separately to their dependants and use their settling-in entitlement, the dependants will not be eligible for further settling-in assistance.

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- 5.7.3 An employee who returns to a different location to the one from which they departed, due to operational requirements, will be entitled to a maximum of three weeks settling-in period at the new location, reviewed on a week-by-week basis.
- 5.7.4 Any removal of goods to a new location will need to be negotiated and requested with the new business area.
- 5.7.5 The Delegate may extend a settling-in period in exceptional circumstances and determine an appropriate meals supplement for the extended period.

### Temporary Accommodation

- 5.7.6 The standard of temporary accommodation should be appropriate having regard to the composition of the employee's family and the availability of suitable accommodation. The Department will meet reasonable costs for accommodation, up to 4 stars or equivalent. Accommodation is booked through the Department's service provider as set out in the Department's Financial Management Guideline – Official Travel.
- 5.7.7 If the employee is authorised to live in a hotel or other commercial accommodation without cooking facilities sufficient to prepare a cooked meal, the employee and accompanying dependants will be paid a weekly meal rate as set out in Financial Management Guideline – Official Travel. Dependants under 12 years of age will be entitled to half the advised weekly meal rate.
- 5.7.8 Employees electing to stay in private accommodation (i.e. with friends or relatives) during a settling-in period in Australia will be eligible to receive a private accommodation payment specified in the Financial Management Guideline – Official Travel. There is no entitlement to a private accommodation payment or meal allowance when an employee elects to stay in their own home during a settling-in period.

### Incidental Allowance is not paid

- 5.7.9 There is no entitlement for employees to receive an Incidental Allowance during settling-in on return to Australia under these provisions.

## 5.8 Post deployment debriefs

### Post deployment debrief

- 5.8.1 At the completion of a posting, all employees are required to undergo a posting debrief with a counsellor. The purpose of the post debrief is to provide employees with the opportunity to raise issues they may have about their experience working at an overseas location and to assess if employees present with any psychological or emotional risks that may require further support upon their return to Australia.
- 5.8.2 Information on undertaking this debrief will be provided by the Health Screening team.

### Business area debrief

- 5.8.3 A debrief session for returning employees with International Division and/or the ABF is to occur for employees who held the role of Post Managers, an ABF offshore role and other roles by exception that cover strategic relationship management.

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- 5.8.4 The debrief session will occur no more than 4 weeks before the end of the posting period and generally the country desk in International Policy Division and/or the Australian Border Force Operations Centre will conduct this.

## 5.9 Health Care following an Overseas Posting

### Post deployment medical review

- 5.9.1 Following completion of a long-term posting a Delegate may approve, at official expense, for an employee to undergo a medical examination with the Departments medical service provider.
- 5.9.2 A medical examination is strongly recommended for all employees whose posting has been to a C to F location, particularly for those returning from countries with high incidences of TB and other infectious diseases.
- For employees posted to A or B locations, a medical examination is encouraged.
- 5.9.3 Any dependants who accompanied an employee to a C to F location and resided at that location are also able to undertake a medical examination (at Departmental expense) with the Departments medical service provider.

## 5.10 Returning to Work in Australia - Reintegration

### Introduction

- 5.10.1 The Department is committed to ensuring a smooth transition for employees returning to their onshore substantive role. The transition arrangements are detailed within the Managing Long Term Absence (including overseas postings) Procedural Instruction.

### Reintegration of Departmental employees

- 5.10.2 The employee's home division is responsible for placing a returning employee, at their substantive level and generally in their home region. Given this, employees should contact their home division, through their manager or Staff Return Agreement Coordinator, at least six months prior to their return date.
- 5.10.3 The exception to this is if the employee has been promoted or has arranged their own substantive transfer prior to their return, for which the agreed arrangements will apply.
- 5.10.4 For non-ABF employees returning from an overseas posting, a career coach will contact the employee to discuss their career path.

### Reintegration of ABF employees

- 5.10.5 Employees returning from an ABF posting will be placed in a position within the ABF.
- 5.10.6 ABF employees will be contacted by the ABF Operational Practices Command to discuss their skillset, career goals and posting preferences to identify suitable positions prior to their return.

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- 5.10.7 ABF Superintendents and Inspectors will be expected to return to Canberra at the conclusion of their posting unless otherwise negotiated and agreed, or if they are promoted.

### 5.11 Returning to Work in Australia – General provisions

#### Travel Acquittal

- 5.11.1 Employees returning to Australia from a posting are required to acquit their travel within 14 days of returning to work.
- 5.11.2 The Placements team will provide employees with an acquittal form for this process.

#### Return of Diplomatic Passports

- 5.11.3 All employees returning from a posting must return their diplomatic and endorsed passports, including those of their dependants to the Placements team for cancellation.
- 5.11.4 Diplomatic passports can either be returned to the employee following cancellation, or can be destroyed at the employee's request.

#### Systems Access

- 5.11.5 Systems access will be arranged as part of the employee's movement into an onshore position number following the overseas posting. IT Support is the appropriate contact for any issues with systems access. They can be contacted on s. 47E(d) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto: @homeaffairs.gov.au).

#### Building Access

- 5.11.6 Employees returning from post are required to submit a request for physical access to departmental sites. This is undertaken by lodging a request via the Service Request Catalogue under 'Physical Access Request'.
- 5.11.7 If an employee is having difficulties completing this while in their overseas location, the employee should liaise with their manager for them to complete this on their behalf.
- 5.11.8 Further information is available by contacting s. 47E(d) [@homeaffairs.gov.au](mailto: @homeaffairs.gov.au) or by reading the Physical Access Control Policy Statement.



Pages 111 – 150 removed

Section 22(1)(a)(ii)

Not relevant to request

## 7.7 Airfreight posts

The following posts have been designated air freight posts for the return of household goods to Australia:

Post
Islamabad
Nairobi
Nauru
Tehran

All other posts are designated as sea freight posts.

Pages 152 – 168 removed

Section 22(1)(a)(ii)

Not relevant to request