

# Travel Exemptions – Inwards - Process Guide

Last Updated	17 February 2021 <span style="float: right;">TRIM ADD2020/5188267</span>	
<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>This document is to be used by officers processing requests for an exemption against the current travel restrictions for inwards travel to Australia. Requests are lodged online via a service delivery platform, the Travel Exemption Portal (TEP). Individuals can submit a request for a travel exemption under the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compassionate and compelling reasons</li> <li>• Critical skills</li> <li>• Urgent Medical Treatment or Evacuation</li> <li>• Assessment against an automatic exemption category</li> </ul> <p>The automatic exemption categories are described in the <a href="#">Inwards Travel Restrictions Operation Directive</a>.</p> <p>Decisions to approve or decline individual exemption requests are discretionary and must be made by an authorised Decision Maker.</p> <p>Certain prescribed requests must be referred to the Commissioner for his personal decision. These are described in the <a href="#">Commissioner’s Guidelines</a> and category-specific procedural instructions. These documents must be accessed via <a href="#">the Border Measures SharePoint site</a> or the Department’s website.</p> <p>For guidance on triage for referral to the Commissioner, please refer to <i>COVID-19 Border Measures Procedural Instruction – General</i>, section 3.2. Decision Maker (ADD2020/5279541)</p> <p>The Travel Exemptions Portal User Guide (ADD2021/655400) (the User Guide) provides additional guidance on Portal functionality including step-by-step instructions on processes not described in this document.</p>	
<p><b>Terminology</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Portal</i> – the online Travel Exemptions request form and back-end processing system.</li> <li>• <i>TER</i> – unique travel exemption request reference number (e.g. TER123456). A request may contain one or more travellers.</li> <li>• <i>TEP</i> – unique traveller reference number (e.g. TEP123456). All travellers must belong to a Request.</li> <li>• <i>An individual or traveller</i> is a person seeking exemption from travel restrictions. It is possible for an <i>individual</i> to be referenced in requests submitted by multiple <i>clients</i>.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Client or organisation representative</i> is the person who submitted the request. A <i>client</i> may submit requests relating to any number of <i>individuals</i> for any number of exemption requests. Note that a <i>client</i> may also be a <i>traveller</i>, and that <i>clients</i> or <i>travellers</i> in the Portal may also have ‘client’ records in other departmental systems such as ICSE.</li> <li>• <i>Client Additional Information (CAI)</i>: is a location in ICSE where notes should be entered.</li> <li>• <i>Assessment Officer (AO)</i>: an officer who is authorised to assess automatic exemption categories, but is not able to make a decision against a discretionary exemption category.</li> <li>• <i>Decision Maker (DM)</i>: an officer who is authorised to make decisions to approve or refuse discretionary exemption requests.</li> </ul>
<b>Navigation Pane</b>	<p>Turn on the Navigation Pane option under the View menu to use this document.</p> 

## Policy Guidance

<b>Policy documents</b>	<p>The criteria for automatic exemptions and individual/discretionary exemptions is outlined on the Department’s website and in the <a href="#">Operational Directives</a> and <a href="#">Commissioner’s Guidelines</a>. Assessing Officers and Decision Makers should regularly check the Department’s external website to maintain awareness of the exemption types and public messaging: <a href="https://covid19.homeaffairs.gov.au/">https://covid19.homeaffairs.gov.au/</a></p> <p>Policy documentation can be found on SharePoint and in TRIM. <a href="#">The Border Measures SharePoint site</a> should be used to access documents and confirm the correct TRIM reference number. Pending approval of all Procedural Instructions, the DRAFT documents in these folders should be referred to.</p>
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## Travel Exemption Portal Principles

<b>Portal Principles</b>	<p>There are number of key principles that all users of the Portal are required to follow:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Officers are responsible for the requests that appear in their list <i>My Work &gt; Cases Assigned to me</i>.</li> <li>2. Officers must finalise all requests allocated to them at the end of a shift/day. Un-finalised requests must be unassigned so that the request moves back into the relevant <i>Unallocated</i> list.</li> <li>3. Officers should regularly check their <i>Cases Assigned to me</i> list to ensure that notifications have been correctly sent, requests closed correctly etc. Requests will be automatically removed from your list once they are finalised correctly.</li> </ol>
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<p><b>Managing Groups in TEP</b></p>	<p>Each individual traveller must have his or her own TEP record and decision, noting that this can be recorded efficiently using s. 47E(d) [redacted] functionality.</p> <p>Multiple travellers can be included within the same request through the lodgement process, so that the individuals are considered together.</p> <p>s. 47E(d) [redacted] Users with the training and access to process these requests will find them in a separate workspace list.</p> <p>All requests (not just those with multiple travellers) now have the option s. 47E(d) [redacted]</p>
<p><b>Client Notifications</b></p>	<p>Client notifications sent via the Portal are also blind copied to a group mailbox. From this mailbox, they are automatically TRIMmed. If you need to find a notification, search in TRIM by title word for the TEP or TER reference number.</p>

## Overview of initial assessment

<p><b>Assessment and triage</b></p>	<p>All requests require Initial Assessment. This process includes considering the claims of each traveller in the request against the exemption category under which the request was submitted and determining one of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If the individual meets one of the automatic exemption criteria;</li> <li>2. If sufficient information has been provided to assess the request and finalise the request;</li> <li>3. That one or more individuals, and therefore the whole request, needs to be referred to a Decision Maker or Commissioner;</li> <li>4. If the request should be considered against an alternative exemption category if applicable (including automatic exemption).</li> </ol> <p>AOs should only complete the Initial Assessment. DM can complete both the Initial Assessment and make a decision.</p> <p>The below map outlines the Initial Assessment and Decision Making process.</p>
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s. 47E(d)



# Initial Assessment Process

s. 47E(d)



**2. Review individual details**

1. Review the *Traveller* information.
2. Locate each individual in ICSE or CSP.

s. 47E(d)

\*Occasionally, an individual may not have an ICSE record. In this instance, an ICSE record may need to be created. Refer to *Border Measures COVID-19 Fact Sheet – Creating a new client record in ICSE (ADD2020/4628519)* in the Processing Toolbox on [the Border Measures SharePoint site](#).

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s. 47E(d)

**3. Review the claims**

3. Determine if the individual meets any automatic exemption criteria or if they need to be referred to a DM or the Commissioner.
4. If the individual meets one of the automatic exemption criteria BUT they do not hold a current visa as their visa application has not been finalised, refer to [Awaiting visa outcome](#).

**NB:** If the individual is currently onshore but applies for an exemption to return to Australia prior to their departure, AOs/DMs may assess the case and progress it as per standard processes. Please see *COVID-19 Border Measures Procedural Instruction – General, 3.1 Categories – Pre-emptive inwards travel requests* for further information.

**4. Change Enquiry type (if necessary)**

If the request needs to be redirected for assessment by a different team, changing the enquiry type will automatically move the request to the appropriate list. See [Change Enquiry Type](#) for policy guidance.

The enquiry type must be changed before the initial assessment is recorded, as some options may change. To change the enquiry type, use the drop down menu in the Portal Request details. Select the appropriate request type, delete your name from the “assigned to” field, enter a work note to explain the reason for the change, then save.

TEP Request

Enquiry Type

Compelling or Compassionate

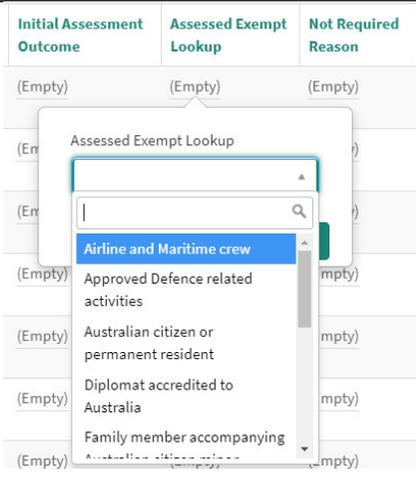
- None --
- New Zealand citizen usually resident i...
- Immediate Family
- ✓ Compelling or Compassionate
- Outbound
- Urgent Medical Treatment or Evacuation
- Critical Skills
- Event

**Note:** Inbound enquiries **should not** be changed to outbound, as the clients will not have completed the necessary departure declarations. If you believe that an inbound request is from someone who intended to request an outbound exemption, it should be finalised as “Not Required” with a not required reason of “Intended Outbound”. The system will then offer a template to notify the client that they need to lodge an outbound request.

s. 47E(d)

5. Record Initial Assessment for all travellers

s. 47E(d)

	
<p><b>6. Conduct Initial Assessment for each traveller</b></p>	<p>Determine the appropriate <i>Initial Assessment Outcome</i> for your assessment of each individual’s circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Not Referred:</b> the individual has not provided <u>any</u> supporting information to be considered further using the reason <i>Insufficient Information</i>. Refer to <a href="#">Travel Exemption Request – Processing Principles</a> for instruction on the notification.</li> <li>○ <b>Assessed Exempt:</b> Individual clearly meets any of the inward automatic exemption criteria, for example, Immediate Family of an Australian citizen or permanent resident.</li> <li>○ <b>Not Required:</b> request not required because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ client has an existing approval (use <i>Duplicate Request</i> reason); OR</li> <li>○ <b>Duplicate Request:</b> request is the <u>exact</u> duplicate of another request received for this traveller; or</li> <li>○ <b>Withdrawn:</b> client has requested a withdrawal. *Clients can withdraw requests through the Portal.</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ <b>Referred for Discretion:</b> this option <u>should</u> be used if the request needs to be <a href="#">Referred to a Decision Maker</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>7. Select the reason for the initial assessment</b></p>	<p>Choose the relevant reason for your decision from the options provided in the drop down list.</p> <p>3. <b>Assessed Exempt:</b> select the appropriate exempt category</p> <p>4. <b>Not Referred:</b></p> <p>s. 47E(d)</p>

- **Insufficient information:** the individual has not provided sufficient information to assess whether they are exempt but they may be able to if they provide more information in a new request.

Initial Assessment ^

Initial Assessment Outcome

Not Referred v

Not Referred Reason \*

-- None -- v

✓ -- None --

Does not meet guidelines

Insufficient Information

**5. Referred for discretion**

- Refer to the Procedural Instruction policy applicable to the request for advice on selecting the correct discretionary category and discretion path.

Initial Assessment ^

Initial Assessment Outcome

Referred for Discretion v

Discretionary Category \*

Recent Selections

Compassionate and compelling

National interest / Australian Government invitation

Showing 1-4 of 4

Critical medical services

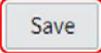
Critical Skills

Refugee and Humanitarian (Class XB) visa holders

Urgent medical treatment / evacuation

**6. Select the discretion path – Delegate or Commissioner**

s. 47E(d)

	s. 47E(d)
<p><b>9. If applicable, complete referral to a Decision Maker or the Commissioner</b></p>	<p>IMPORTANT: if required, ensure you change the <i>Enquiry type</i> in the Request prior to clicking the 'Finalise Initial Assessment' button. Refer to Change Enquiry Type.</p> <p>For any travellers in the request who are to be assessed by a Decision Maker or the Commissioner, use s. 47E(d) to record the details (see Step 5).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Select <i>Referred for Discretion</i> from the <i>Initial Assessment Outcome</i> options and then</li> <li>2. Choose the appropriate <i>Discretionary Category</i>. <b>NOTE:</b> It is important to select this correctly to enable streamlined allocation processes and accurate reporting.</li> </ol>
<p><b>10. Return to the request and save the record</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Once an initial assessment has been recorded for all travellers, click  to return to the request.</li> <li>2. Click <i>Save</i> to update the record</li> </ol> <div data-bbox="779 721 1769 774" style="text-align: center;">       </div>
<p><b>11. Finalise Initial Assessment</b></p>	<p>In the Request Details screen:</p> <p>If any Travellers have been referred for discretion and you are not a decision maker, the <i>Has Discretion Referral</i> box will be ticked</p> <p>s. 47E(d)</p>

s. 47E(d)

From this point, the process will change depending on the initial assessment outcome and your authorisation level.

- **Assessment Officers:** If one or more travellers have been referred for discretion, no further action is required.
- **All users:** If no travellers in the request have been referred for discretion, follow steps 12 - 14 to finalise the request.
- **Decision Makers:** if one or more travellers have been referred for discretion, move straight to the required steps for [Assessment by Decision Maker](#)

**12.Add Client Additional Information (CAI) note/s**

Record a CAI note so that the status of the request is clear to other departmental users.

1. On the far right of the screen are a series of buttons, select the Response Templates button and search for "CAI" to find all templates relevant to the request.

s. 47E(d)

2. From the list displayed select the relevant note for your assessment; and then click the note then click *Copy to Clipboard*
3. Paste the note into a Note in the CAI. s. 47E(d)
4. Double check against the outcomes for each traveller in the Travellers tab of the Request, to ensure you paste the correct note into each client record.

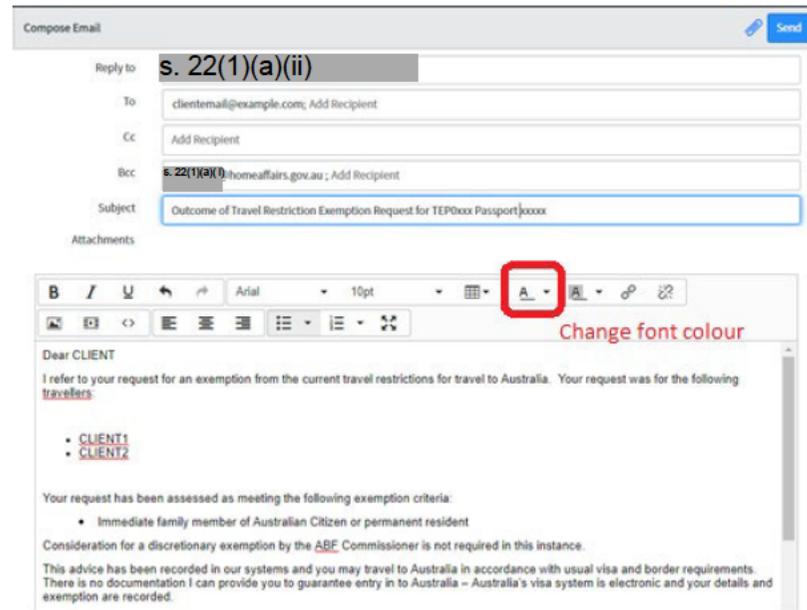
s. 47E(d)

**13.If request finalised, send notification**

Once the Initial assessment is finalised the processing state of the request will change to *Outcome Notification*.

1. In the Request, select *Send Outcome Notification* to display the *Email Template* screen. Choose the appropriate template from the drop down list.

2. The system will display the *Compose Email* screen. Check that the pre-populated details contain the correct details for all persons you expect to notify.



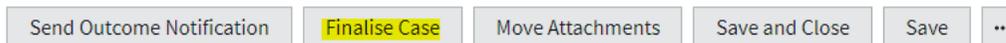
3. Review all sections in red text, remove anything that is not applicable and change font colour to Black.

4. Click *Send*. The system will send the correspondence and close the *Compose Email* screen.

**NOTE:** You should confirm the correspondence was sent before finalising the request by checking the *Activity* history in the Request Details screen. The last item should be an email that you just sent. You may need to wait a few seconds and manually refresh your view (Keyboard shortcut: F5)

#### 14. Finalise Case

Click *Finalise Case*



## Assessment by Decision Maker

<p><b>15. Decision Maker assesses a Queued for Consideration request</b></p>	<p>Requests that have been triaged by AO and have one or more travellers that require a discretionary determination will appear in the <i>Queued for Consideration</i> list.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Assign a case to yourself (<i>Travel Exemptions Portal Use guide – ADD2021/655400</i>). <i>*Some Team Leads assign cases to their team members</i></li> <li>2. In the request record review the <i>Summary for decision makers</i> provided by the AO.</li> <li>3. Assess the claims against the policy guidelines.</li> <li>4. If you are satisfied to either approve or refuse the exemption request, move to Step 16 below.</li> <li>5. If you decide that the request requires assessment by the Commissioner, follow these steps:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Add a note to the <i>Summary for decision makers</i> section explaining why it needs to be assessed by the Commissioner.</li> <li>b. Review the <i>Summary for Decision Makers</i> to ensure it is written and formatted in an appropriate manner for the Commissioner to read.</li> <li>c. Change the <i>Discretion Path</i> to <i>Commissioner</i> and <i>Save</i> the request.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<p><b>16. Record your decision</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider the claims against the guidance provided in the policy documents to determine if the individual meets grounds for an exemption.</li> <li>• <b>IMPORTANT:</b> if you are an APS6 DM, before you approve a request you must discuss the request with an EL1 or EL2 <u>and</u> you must note this in the assessment.</li> </ul> <p>Once you have reached a decision, record a Determination Outcome and Determination Notes for each traveller in the <span style="background-color: #cccccc;">s. 47E(d)</span> screen. Refer to step 5 for the options of how to record the decision using <span style="background-color: #cccccc;">s. 47E(d)</span></p>
<p><b>17. Return to the request and save the record</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Once a Determination Outcome has been recorded for all applicable travellers, click <span style="background-color: #008080; color: white; padding: 2px 5px; border-radius: 3px;">✕ Return to workspace</span> to return to the request.</li> <li>2. Click <i>Save</i> to update the record</li> </ol> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <span style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px 10px; margin-right: 5px;">Open Request</span> <span style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px 10px; margin-right: 5px;">Move to a different request</span> <span style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px 10px; margin-right: 5px;">Save and Close</span> <span style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 2px 10px; margin-right: 5px;">Save</span> <span style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px 10px; margin-right: 5px;">On Hold</span> <span style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 2px 10px;">...</span> </div>
<p><b>18. Complete request processing</b></p>	<p>Follow steps 12 to 14 to finalise the request.</p>

## Assessment by the ABF Commissioner

<p><b>Canberra Border Measures team progresses steps</b></p>	<p>Requests that have been triaged by AOs and DMs for the Commissioner, will appear in the <i>Commissioner &gt; Queued for sending</i> list.</p> <p>The Border Measures team will then Generate the Determination Template and refer the request to the Commissioner. The Border Measures team will finalise the request (send outcome notification and record CAI note) when a decision has been made by the Commissioner.</p>
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## Awaiting visa outcome

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>The process for managing requests where an individual’s visa application has not been finalised varies depending on the type of request they have lodged. Detailed process steps are included in the following sections, however broadly the differences are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Immediate Family of an Australian citizen or permanent resident OR Usually Resident NZ citizen:</b> individuals are usually required to hold a visa prior to the exemption being finalised. However, if the client has a visa application in process, you can approve the request without the visa being approved and advise the processing office that a travel exemption has been approved as per the below steps. The notification template ‘<i>Assessed Exempt – No Visa Held</i>’ should be used in these instances.</li> <li>• <b>Compelling and Compassionate:</b> individuals are required to hold a visa prior to approval of a travel exemption. Contact the processing office regarding the visa application as per the below steps. If the processing office does not respond within 48 hours or the visa is refused, the exemption request cannot be approved.</li> <li>• <b>Critical Skills:</b> these individuals are not required to have a visa prior to the approval of an exemption. Refer to <a href="https://covid19.homeaffairs.gov.au/critical-skills-and-sectors">https://covid19.homeaffairs.gov.au/critical-skills-and-sectors</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>Compelling &amp; Compassionate Process steps</b></p>	<p>Follow this process if you have assessed that the client meets the guidelines for compelling and compassionate reasons, but the individual’s visa has not been finalised:</p> <p>s. 47E(d)</p>

s. 47E(d)

**Immediate family & Usually Resident  
NZ Process steps:**

s. 47E(d)

s. 47E(d)

	Officer signature block
<p><b>Critical Skills Process steps:</b></p>	<p>An individual making a request under the critical skills or critical sector category does not need to hold or have applied for a visa at the time of requesting an inward travel exemption, or at the time of approval of an inwards travel exemption.</p> <p>Where a travel exemption request has been approved <b>AND</b> the visa application remains un-finalised, the Critical Skills Exemption Team (CSET) team will run a report daily – stored at <b>ADD2020/3612453</b>. The purpose of this reporting is to align critical skills exemption and visa processing to assist delivery teams to identify and prioritise the finalisation of the visa application once a travel exemption has been approved.</p> <p>If a visa has been granted prior to lodgement of the travel exemption request, no further action is required as the client will be notified accordingly.</p>
<p><b>Visa Applied template</b></p>	<p>s. 47E(d)</p>

## Change Enquiry Type

<b>Portal Principles</b>	<p>If you are not trained in assessing the enquiry type that a request should be considered under, OR you are going to finalise the request under a different enquiry type to which it was lodged, follow these steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Make a note in the Request <i>Work Notes (Private)</i> space explaining why the request should be/has been considered under the different Enquiry type. Choose to <i>Post the Work notes (Private)</i> so that other internal users can see it.</li></ol> <div data-bbox="837 384 1944 576"><p>Work notes (Private)</p><p>Type your Work notes (Private) here</p><p>Post Work notes (Private)</p></div> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. In the Request record, use the drop down in the Enquiry Type* field to select the new enquiry type.</li></ol> <div data-bbox="1048 667 1720 762"><p>Enquiry Type *</p><p>Compelling or Compassionate ▼</p></div> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3. Remove your name from the <i>Assigned to</i> field and <i>Save</i> the request.</li><li>4. All travellers within the request will change to the new enquiry type and the case will flow to the appropriate processing area for consideration.</li></ol>
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## Escalations and Complaints

<p><b>Client requires escalation or complains about their outcome</b></p>	<p><b>Also refer to guidance in the Procedural Instructions relating to escalating requests.</b></p> <p><b>AOs:</b> If there are genuine reasons for a client's request to be escalated to a DM or the Commissioner, escalate the email to an EL1.</p> <p>Examples of escalations include, but are not limited to: threats of self-harm, high profile cases (including media personalities, clients involved in a high profile event/incident), surrogacy, IVF or adoption related requests, requests including objectionable or offensive material, media attention, significant integrity issues and representations from a Minister's office.</p> <p>Client complaints - especially regarding decisions - should also be escalated to an APS6 or EL1. Complaints may include a request to appeal the decision. If unsure, discuss with an EL1.</p>
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