

# STATE RECORDS

of South Australia

## Proactive Disclosure of Regularly Requested Information PC035

The Department of the *Premier and Cabinet (DPC) circular 35 – Proactive Disclosure of Regularly Requested Information (PC035)* describes specific information that is required to be proactively disclosed to the public through online publication.

The existence of PC035 does not limit an agency's ability to proactively disclose other information, at the discretion of the agency Chief Executive.

This information sheet has been developed to assist agencies consistently interpret and implement PC035. In order to provide the advice in this information sheet, State Records has considered: the minimum requirements of PC035; the overall intention to provide information about government activity and expenditure; and discussions related to the initial formulation of and amendments to PC035.

Agency staff responsible for publishing information under PC035 should consider the provisions of the *Freedom of Information Act 1991* (FOI Act). If the information they are considering is likely to be exempt from disclosure under the FOI Act then the agency may wish to redact the exempt information or delay disclosure until such time as the reason for exemption ceases to be of relevance.

### Overseas Travel

*Details of Ministers' and chief executives of agencies' overseas travel arrangements including; the number of travellers, the destination, copies of itineraries, the reason for travel, the outcome of travel, the cost (excluding salary) of travel paid for out of the budgets of Ministers and/or agencies and copies of all travel receipts.*

AND

*Details of all public sector employees' [excluding chief executives'] overseas travel arrangements including; the number of travellers, the destination, the reason for travel and the total cost (excluding salary) of travel paid for out of agency budgets.*

- » All public sector agencies, as per definition of the *Public Sector Act 2009*, are required to comply with the overseas travel disclosure requirements of PC035. If an agency previously *reported overseas travel information in line with the defunct requirements of Premier and Cabinet Circular 13 – Annual Reporting Requirements*, they will now be required to publish those requirements in line with PC035.

- » The policy refers to 'Details of Ministers' and chief executives.... [public sector employee] overseas travel arrangements including cost of travel...' The use of the word 'including' suggests disclosure is not limited to cost; all travel arrangements should be published even if the costs are nil i.e. all non-financial columns of the template can still be completed. Agencies may explain in the template why the costs are nil i.e. because they were paid for out of a parliamentary allowance or by a conference organiser.
- » Copies of itineraries, the outcome of travel and copies of all travel receipts are only required to be published for Minister's and Chief Executive's travel arrangements. Summarised travel information only needs to be published for public sector employees' (excluding chief executives') overseas travel arrangements.
- » Following publication of summarised public sector employee travel information, if a member of the public seeks to access travel receipts, outcomes or itineraries, it is recommended, where possible, that this documentation be released outside of the FOI process and at no cost to the requestor. This recommendation is in line with section 3(3) of the FOI Act which provides that nothing in the FOI Act is intended to prevent or discourage the publication of information, or the giving of access to documents, in ways other than under this Act if it is proper and reasonable to do so.
- » Chief executive overseas travel information should be recorded using the 'Minister and chief executive' template only.
- » Public sector employee (excluding Chief Executives) overseas travel information should be recorded using the 'public sector employees' template only.
- » If a chief executive or other public sector employees' travel is in support of/accompanying a Minister, their travel should still be recorded in their respective templates with a notation advising that the travel was linked to the relevant Minister's travel arrangements. A notation should also be included with the Minister's disclosure details advising that where a Chief Executive or other public sector employee travels with the Minister their travel details will be disclosed by their agency using the relevant template.
- » Where staff from multiple agencies travel with the Minister, consistent wording should be used for 'reasons for travel' by each agency.
- » If consultants are travelling with the Minister or the chief executive, and their travel was organised by the Minister's Office or an agency they should be included in the 'Ministers and chief executives' template. The number of consultants should be included in the 'No of travellers' column and if the consultant's travel is paid for out of the budget of the Minister and/or an agency then the consultant's costs should be included in line with the relevant template. If their travel costs were paid for in some other way, do not include the costs.
- » It is suggested that agencies include separate hyperlinks to consolidated scanned documents containing the information for 'outcomes of travel', 'travel itinerary' and 'travel receipts' in the relevant columns within the template, where required.

- » Agencies will need to determine the level of detail they include in the 'travel outcomes' and 'travel itineraries' documentation. Ministers are required to report overseas travel outcomes to Cabinet and chief executives are required to prepare a report for their agency in line with the requirements of Commissioner's Determination 3.2. It may be efficient to use these documents as the basis for disclosure where appropriate.
- » The total actual expense incurred by the agency (in Australian dollars) should be included in the 'total cost of travel' column and a link to all receipts (where required) should be included in the 'travel receipts' column. If all receipts are not available, the total recorded in the 'total cost of travel' column will be higher than the sum of the travel receipts. When this occurs, agencies may need to explain the reason for the difference.
- » Each agency needs to determine what documents or information to include as their 'travel receipts'. This may include a copy of; the actual receipt, the relevant transactions from a credit card statement, a diary note or a financial system print out, that substantiates the amount recorded in the 'total cost of travel' column.
- » Ministerial/chief executive/public sector employee salary costs are not required to be included.

## Domestic and Regional Travel

*Details of domestic (including regional) travel arrangements of Ministers and chief executives of agencies subject to this policy, where costs are incurred. Publication should include the number of travellers, the destination, the reason for travel, copies of itineraries (where available), the total cost (excluding salaries and vehicles included within employment package arrangements) paid for out of the budgets of Ministers and/or agencies and copies of all travel receipts.*

- » Any travel outside of metropolitan Adelaide by a Minister/chief executive, where a cost is incurred and paid for out of a ministerial or agency budget, needs to be disclosed. Refer Attachment 1 to this information sheet for an extract from the SA Government Gazette which includes a map showing the Metropolitan Adelaide boundary.
- » Relevant costs may include costs associated with flights, train tickets, vehicle hire, ferry passage, accommodation, meals.
- » Where staff are travelling with the Minister/chief executive and the dominant reason for their travel is to support or assist the Minister/chief executive, then their travel details should be included. If staff would have been attending the function or event in their own job capacity as part of their own job role they do not need to be included.
- » It is suggested that agencies include separate hyperlinks to consolidated scanned documents containing the information for 'travel itinerary' (where available) and 'travel receipts' in the relevant columns within the template.
- » The total actual expense incurred by the agency should be included in the 'cost of travel' column and a link to all receipts should be included in the 'travel receipts' column. If all receipts are not available, the total recorded in the 'cost

of travel' column will be higher than the sum of the travel receipts. When this occurs, agencies may need to explain the reason for the difference.

- » Each agency needs to determine what documents or information to include as their 'travel receipts'. This may include a copy of the actual receipt, an internal travel advance form, the relevant transactions from a credit card statement, and a diary note or a financial system print out that substantiates the amount recorded in the 'total cost of travel' column.

## Mobile Phone Expenditure

*Government expenditure relating to the mobile phone usage of Ministers, ministerial staff and the chief executives of agencies subject to this policy, except where release of information would breach contractual obligations.*

- » The policy refers to 'Government expenditure relating to the mobile phone usage...' Purchasing handsets is not considered a cost of usage, but rather a set-up cost. The cost of the handset should therefore not be included in the disclosure. However data costs should be disclosed.

## Ancillary Expenses

*Government ancillary expenditure on functions or events hosted or attended by Ministers, ministerial staff and the chief executives subject to this policy, including a description, the location and associated costs.*

- » Any expenses incurred by a department related to hosting or attending functions or events that are not part of ordinary office expenditure constitute 'ancillary expenses' and should be included. Travel and accommodation to attend such events would be included if it is not included under the domestic/regional or overseas travel disclosure. Hosting visitors (individuals external to the agency) where morning tea or lunch / refreshments are provided should be included.
- » Functions and events like internal office meetings, training and staff meetings do not need to be included.

Need further assistance?

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