



Ministerial Submission

FOR: Senator the Hon Marise Payne
INFO: The Hon Dan Tehan MP

Action Requested By: 8 October 2021
Reason for Urgency: N/A

Review of Registrations in the Consular Registration Database

<p>Key Issues: The numbers of Australians, permanent residents and their immediate family members registered on the COVID19 Consular Crisis Information (CCCI) system continues to rise with over 47,000 actively seeking to return. These numbers do not accurately reflect the numbers of eligible registrants who are seeking assistance to return on facilitated commercial flights (FCF) before the end of 2021. ^{s 47E(d)}</p> <p>^{s 47E(d)} We propose to review the registered cohort in order to clarify their eligibility to access the FCF program and their intention to return.</p>	
<p>Recommendation: That you:</p> <p>a) Agree to review again the entire registered cohort in order to clarify their eligibility to access the FCF program, their intention to return to Australia and the timeframe in which they intend to travel.</p> <p>b) ^{s 47C(1)}</p> <p>c) ^{s 47C(1)}</p>	<p>Decision:</p> <p><u>Agreed / Not Agreed</u></p> <p><u>Agreed / Not Agreed</u></p> <p><u>Noted</u></p>
<p>Domestic/Media Considerations: Regular media interest in the numbers of Australians registered wish to return.</p> <p>Action:</p> <p>Marise Payne / /</p>	
<p>Information:</p> <p>Dan Tehan / /</p>	
<p>From: ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)} , A/g AS OCB, ISG CCD Consular Operations - COVID-19 Response</p>	<p>Contact: ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)}</p>
<p>Can this proposal be funded from within your existing <u>divisional</u> allocation (departmental/aid)? Not Applicable</p> <p>If the proposal high risk/high value (over \$100m) concept has been approved by the Aid Governance Board? Not Applicable</p>	
<p>Consultation: NIL</p>	



Background:

The COVID19 Consular Crisis Information (CCCI) database is the key tool in determining where the need for facilitated government flights (FCFs) is greatest. Our ability to ensure the FCF program is efficient and effective is therefore dependent on accurate data in CCCI which reflects where Australians, Permanent Residents and their immediate family members families are located overseas and their travel intentions.

s 47C(1), s 47E(d)

5. There is very strong and ongoing public and media interest in the number of Australians, Permanent Residents and their immediate family members registered overseas and seeking to return. We have prepared talking points (**Attachment B**) s 47C(1), s 47E(d)



Ministerial Submission

FOR: Senator the Hon Marise Payne

INFO: The Hon Dan Tehan MP

Action Requested By: 4 November 2021

Reason for Urgency: To ensure consular support systems are consistent with the National Plan

Bringing Australians Home - Registrations going forward

Key Issues: Fully vaccinated Australians will be able to travel overseas from 1 November, when the outbound travel ban is removed. On the same day, New South Wales and Victoria will allow fully vaccinated Australians, under 12s and those medically unable to be vaccinated to return to those States quarantine-free. As a result, the 46,711 Australians registered in DFAT's database as seeking to return to Australia will have greatly increased options to return. This will enable DFAT to focus on assisting those Australians overseas who are unvaccinated, unable to access a TGA recognised vaccine, or those who cannot access a commercial flight. From 1 November we recommend changes to the registration process to reflect the changed circumstances.

Recommendation:

That you:

- a) Agree that from 1 November, DFAT would only add registrations to the registration database (CCCI) on a case-by-case basis.
- b) Note that from 1 November any Australians newly seeking financial or other assistance would be supported by the relevant post as a consular case
- c) Note that we are working through the CCCI database to ensure only Australians who require assistance to return remain on the register.

Decision:

Agreed / Not Agreed

Noted

Noted

Domestic/Media Considerations: Ongoing media interest in the numbers of returning Australians

Action:

Marise Payne

/ /

Information:

Noted

Dan Tehan

/ /

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) A/g AS OCB, ISG | CCD | Consular Operations - COVID-19 Response

Contact: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Can this proposal be funded from within your existing divisional allocation (departmental/aid)? Choose an item.

If the proposal high risk/high value (over \$100m) concept has been approved by the Aid Governance Board? Choose an item.

Consultation: PM&C, Home Affairs, Legal Division, IMD



Background:

In accordance with the National Plan to transition Australia's response to COVID-19, on 1 November fully vaccinated Australians will be able to travel overseas without first seeking an ABF exemption. Commercial airlines are offering flights from many locations where large numbers of Australians are registered. Arrivals into Sydney and Melbourne will be unrestricted if passengers are fully vaccinated with a TGA recognised vaccine, are under 12, or are medically unable to be vaccinated. For unvaccinated passengers there remains a limited number of seats available on commercial flights arriving into those States within the caps (NSW 210 per week and Vic 250 per week).

2. From 1 November the 46,711 Australians, Permanent Residents and their families who are registered with DFAT seeking assistance to return to Australia will have more flight options, enabling DFAT to focus on assisting unvaccinated Australians or those vaccinated with a non-TGA recognised vaccine, and those in locations not serviced by commercial airlines.
3. In MS21-001155 you (Foreign Minister) approved a further review of the consular registration system which is now underway. The review should result in a reduction in the number of those registered, by removing those who no longer wish to return, those who have returned to Australia, or those who do not respond after the two-week window (as advised in the email). We are already seeing a significant number of cancellations on our facilitated commercial flights (FCFs). We are putting in place processes to remove from CCCI those people who decline an FCF because they have access to another flight.
4. Given Australians who leave after 1 November will not have sought an exemption, we will assume they have made sufficient arrangements to return. DFAT's travel advice framework will play a key role in encouraging Australians to take note of the risks of travel to particular locations and to plan accordingly.
5. The DFAT registration database is linked to a public facing portal and will no longer take new applications. However, existing registrations can continue to be updated as part of the registration review. The registration portal will be updated to reflect these changes.
6. Given the strong and ongoing media interest in the numbers of Australians registered with DFAT, we have prepared Talking Points ^{s 47E(d)}



Ministerial Submission

Cleared: Kathryn Campbell
12 November 2021

FOR: Senator the Hon Marise Payne
INFO: The Hon Dan Tehan MP

Action Requested By: 12 November 2021
To ensure consular support systems are consistent with the National Plan

Bringing Australians Home - Managing Registrations

<p>Key Issues: Following completion of the review of the consular registration database on 11 November 2021 (MS21-001155), the number of Australians registered as seeking to return will be 22,809, down from 46,671. This lower figure reflects the removal of those who have not accessed their registration in the last six months. We have previously sought your agreement to cease new registrations for those departing Australia after 1 November. In the week ending 19 November, we plan to remove from the list fully vaccinated Australians who are able to access commercial flights to return.</p>	
<p>Recommendation: That you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Note that 20,253 Australians are no longer registered as 'seeking to return' and the updated data is reflected in the Returning Australians Dashboard to be released to agencies today 12 November. b) Agree that no new registrations be accepted from the date of your signature (as per MS21-001322), and that any Australians needing assistance from that date be referred to the Consular Emergency Centre and relevant embassies for consular support. c) Note that DFAT will now review those remaining registered as seeking to return and will retain only those who confirm they are unvaccinated, unable to access a TGA approved vaccine, or unable to access a commercial flight. d) Note that we expect to see a significant reduction in those registered as seeking to return following these steps. 	<p>Decision:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Noted</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Agreed / Not Agreed</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Noted</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Noted</u></p>
<p>Domestic/Media Considerations: Ongoing media interest in the number of returning Australians</p> <p>Action:</p> <p>Marise Payne / /</p>	
<p>Information:</p> <p>Dan Tehan / /</p>	
<p>From: Secretary Kathryn Campbell Contact Phone Number for Clearing Officer</p>	<p>Contact: s 22(1)(a)(ii), A/g AS OCB s 22(1)(a)(ii)</p>
<p>Can this proposal be funded from within your existing <u>divisional</u> allocation (departmental/aid)? Not Applicable</p> <p>If the proposal high risk/high value (over \$100m) concept has been approved by the Aid Governance Board? Not Applicable</p>	
<p>Consultation: NIL</p>	



Background:

On 25 October DFAT launched a review of the current consular registration database (CCCI) as approved by you (Minister Payne) on 22 October 2021 (MS21-001155). The review was completed on 11 November. At the commencement of the review, 46,671 were registered seeking assistance to return. Another **20,253** have not updated their registration in the past six months, bringing the number remaining on the list to **22,809**. The Returning Australians Dashboard scheduled to be updated on Friday 12 November will reflect this change.

2. We have sought your agreement (MS21-001322) to cease permitting Australians to register on CCCI going forward, if they departed Australia after 1 November - or shortly thereafter, depending on your consideration. Australians requiring assistance overseas will be directed to seek consular assistance through the relevant embassy or through the Consular Emergency Centre. Consular officials will have the capacity to add new registrations on a case-by-case basis. This reflects the process for consular assistance that existed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Next Steps

3. An email will shortly be sent to those remaining registrants on CCCI (22,809) advising them to update their registration and their vaccination information. They will be asked to include any additional information on their ability to return on commercial flights, noting there are limited flight options from some locations overseas. DFAT will then make further adjustments to the registration numbers along the following lines:

- Those who declare they are unvaccinated, or have no access to a TGA recognised vaccine will remain registered as seeking to return
- Those who declare they are fully vaccinated, but do not have access to regular commercial flights will remain registered as seeking to return
- Those who declare they are fully vaccinated and with access to commercial flights will be removed from the register as seeking to return
- Those who do not respond will be moved off the register as seeking to return.

4. Other government departments involved in the border reopening, including PM&C, Home Affairs, Australian Border Force, and the Department of Health are aware and supportive of this planned approach.

5. Given the continuing media interest in the numbers of Australians overseas, and possible criticism of the government for moving people from the list, we will prepare media talking points on 12 November.