Sustainable Futures Travel Policy Addendum

February 2022 – This document is rescinded and is subsumed by the Travel Policy and Travel Procedure.

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) It is anticipated that many of the restrictions on travel put in place during the COVID-19 Pandemic will remain in place for a considerable period of time as Charles Sturt University (the University) addresses the budget and financial sustainability issues identified in the Sustainable Futures program.

(2) The purpose of this Policy is to:

a. prescribe the circumstances under which travel is undertaken by University travellers during the COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions and during the succeeding months until further notice;
b. assist the University in meeting its duty of care obligations to University travellers, and to ensure the welfare of the traveller is paramount; and,
c. achieve savings on the travel expenditure by ensuing the travel is prudent, necessary, appropriate, justifiable, approved and not excessive.

(3) The Policy applies to all persons travelling on approved University business, where travel arrangements are funded either in part or in full by the University and its controlled entities, regardless of the source of the funds, the duration of the travel, or the purpose of travel.

(4) Travellers are required to exercise prudent business judgement regarding expenses covered by this Policy, minimising as far as reasonable the financial cost to the University.

(5) As part of the commitment by the University to being sustainable and reducing its carbon footprint, staff should first consider alternative options to avoid the need for travel, including audio, central and desktop video conference facilities available at the University.

(6) Travellers are expected to organise their plans in a reasonable timeframe to ensure best value for money and allow time for processing. A guideline timeframe is at least two weeks in advance of the proposed travel.

(7) This policy supersedes any relevant section in the existing University Travel Policy as indicated.

Section 2 - Glossary

(8) Business Critical – Crucial to the operation of the University.

(9) Permissible Travel – Travel activities currently permissible that are crucial to the operation of the University.

Section 3 - Policy

(10) All travel expenditure transactions must meet the following four principles. Any travel expenditure must be:

a. Necessary to perform a crucial University business purpose. If required, employees must be able to identify and justify the relationship or connection between the expenditure and the official business of the University. The employee and their supervisor should have discussed the need to travel and must have considered alternative options to travel prior to submitting a request for a travel plan.
b. Reasonable and represent “value for money” in that the expenditure amount is not extravagant or excessive.
c. Appropriate in that the expenditure is suitable and fit for its intended purpose in the context of the valid business purpose.
d. Allowable according to the terms of any regulation, law, contract, or University policy and procedure. There must be evidence that University procedures have been followed to demonstrate that a prudent and defensible decision to incur the expense has been made.

(11) Consistent with the above guiding principles:

a. University funds cannot be used for private travel purposes, under any circumstances.
b. An employee is entitled to the reimbursement of approved relevant travel-related expenses they incur on behalf of the University.
c. Research grant and contract amounts received by the University are University funds and must be used for specified purposes (and according to the conditions) set out in the grants/contracts.
d. An employee cannot enter into a commitment for travel-related activities unless designated funds are available and the appropriate approval has been obtained as set out in University delegations.
e. An employee cannot approve their own travel expenditure.
f. All expenditure must be properly documented.
g. Heads of Budget Centres are responsible for monitoring travel expenditure in their Budget Centre, and are expected to be prudent and to minimise their expenditures where possible.

Section 4 - Procedures

Part A - Approval to Travel

(12) The University traveller must gain a pre-approval by their direct Supervisor prior to requesting to travel, regardless of the source of funding.

a. Exception: Any travel funded by a Research Centre and undertaken for research purposes (including field work) will require the pre-approval from the Head of School, if applicable, and the relevant Research Centre Director (Centre Director).

(13) The pre-approval must be obtained by completing the Domestic Travel Pre-Approval form and then be attached to the Domestic Travel Booking Request form upon submission.

(14) No international travel is to be undertaken or approved until such time as the current restrictions are lifted by the Federal Government and the risks associated with international travel have been assessed and managed accordingly.

(15) No conference travel is to be undertaken until such time as restrictions on the numbers of people for gatherings is lifted. Once allowed, conference travel should only be approved if a staff member is presenting a paper or the attendance at a conference is crucial to the operation of the University. Online conference registrations can be processed where there is no travel required.

(16) Permissible travel under this policy:

a. Teaching where the subject matter is not taught online;
b. Research (includes field work travel);
c. Campus to campus travel is only permitted by vehicle and for ‘business critical’ reasons.
    i. Exception: business critical travel to/from Port Macquarie can be undertaken by air travel. (Business critical does not include any activity that can be conducted via video conferencing facilities etc. e.g. Employee Development and Review Scheme, staff/team meetings);
d. Regional and/or metropolitan travel for ‘business critical’ reasons where a face to face meeting is required and cannot be conducted via video conferencing facilities;
e. Inter-state travel for ‘business critical’ activities once State border restrictions have been lifted and there no quarantine requirements;
f. Relocation travel;
g. Relief travel e.g. to relieve a staff member at another location;
h. Marketing activities that are crucial to the operation of the University;
i. Graduation travel - subject to restrictions being lifted with regards to large gatherings; and
j. Other travel deemed as ‘business critical’.

(17) Travel not meeting the requirements of this Policy may be considered to be personal travel at the traveller's own expense.

Part B - Entertainment/Hospitality

(18) Refer Travel Policy.

Part C - Corporate Travel Card

(19) Refer Travel Policy.

Part D - Air Travel

Domestic Air Travel

(20) All domestic air travel must be arranged through Travel and Expense or the University’s online booking tool (OBT). Bookings made directly with airlines and/or their associated websites are not permitted unless prior approval has been given by Travel and Expense.

(21) Travel and Expense will, in the first instance, utilise any available credit the airline is holding to facilitate ticket issuance.

(22) Any bookings made outside of this Policy using the University’s corporate travel card, may be invoiced back to the traveller as a personal expense, or may not be reimbursed if purchased on a personal credit card.

International Air Travel

(23) No international travel is to be undertaken until the Government restrictions are lifted and a proper risk assessment has been completed for the applicable destinations.

(24) Any bookings made outside of this Policy using the University’s corporate travel card, may be invoiced back to the traveller as a personal expense, or may not be reimbursed if purchased on a personal credit card.

Lowest Logical Fare of the Day

(25) The lowest logical airfare will be chosen at all times. This decision will not be influenced by the traveller's membership of an airline lounge or frequent flyer program or the perception that flexibility is required.

(26) Flexible airfares will only be purchased in extenuating circumstances and with approval from the Manager, Travel and Expense.

Changes to Air Travel

(27) If the traveller makes a change to flights due to a business reason, and where a ticket has already been issued, there will be fees associated with these changes. Any costs will be charged against the relevant approved travel plan. This will also include an administration fee charged by Travel and Expense. All changes must be approved by an authorised officer as per the Delegations and Authorisations Policy Schedule 6 (Travel Delegations). An email approval must be sent to Travel and Expense before the change can be processed.

(28) Any change must be made utilising the same airline as originally ticketed against unless there is no other option to use the same airline for the new travel.

(29) If the change to the travel arrangements is for a personal reason, Travel and Expense will assist with making any relevant changes. However, any costs involved with making changes, including administration fees, will be charged to a personal credit card of the traveller. Compassionate reasons will be managed on a case by case basis.

(30) Travel and Expense reserves the right to request information from the traveller as to the reason why they wish to make a change to determine if it is related to a business or personal reason.

(31) Any changes except those made by the airline (see clause 35 below) before or during travel made directly with the airline and not in consultation with Travel and Expense may be invoiced back to the traveller as a personal cost. Refer to the After-Hours Emergency Service, clause 36.

Airline Minimum Connection Times

(32) Airlines set minimum connection times between flights. These connection times will now take in to account time for the aircraft to be cleaned appropriately and therefore may mean that extra time between flights is required. The connection time varies by airport and airline.

(33) Travel and Expense will only book flights which adhere to the airline set minimum connection times. No exceptions to the minimum connection times will be permitted. Any previous agreements are rescinded.

(34) If a connection is not available within the required parameters then accommodation will need to be provided and budgeted for at an intermediary stop. The intermediary stop will be decided upon in relation to the itinerary, not to the traveller’s preference.

(35) Should the airlines not be able to provide the required connection due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances, then the traveller, in the first instance, must make contact with the airline to seek an alternative flight at the airlines cost. After exhausting all other avenues of assistance the traveller must make contact with the CSU Travel After-Hours Emergency Service to determine the next course of action.

After-Hours Emergency Service

(36) Travel and Expense offers an after-hours emergency service for travellers who genuinely need assistance with their travel plans. This should be only used after exhausting all other avenues of assistance, i.e. insurance provider, airline ticket counter and accommodation or service provider directly. The use of this service will incur an additional charge.

Part E - Excess Baggage

(37) The Univeristy will not fund excess baggage charges unless extenuating circumstances apply. An explanation for the excess baggage charge must accompany the appropriate tax invoice/receipt.

Part F - Airline Lounge, Loyalty Programs and Frequent Flyer Memberships

Airline Lounge Membership

(38) The University has negotiated airline lounge membership rates with the major airlines that offer a lounge facility.

(39) To be eligible to use any funding held by the University as payment for lounge membership, the following applies:

a. staff are at the level of:
    i. Chancellor;
    ii. Vice-Chancellor;
    iii. Members of the Vice-Chancellor's Leadership Team (VCLT);
    iv. Deputy Vice-Chancellors;
    v. Pro Vice-Chancellors;
    vi. Executive Deans; and
    vii. Centre Directors.

(40) All other staff must personally fund their own lounge memberships. No funding held by the University may be used for this membership. The negotiated University rate may be utilised on request.

Loyalty Club Memberships and Frequent Flyer Memberships

(41) The University will not fund loyalty club or frequent flyer memberships. This includes hotel and accommodation clubs.

(42) Loyalty points such as frequent flyer points or rewards accruing to University travellers from domestic and international air travel and accommodation, undertaken for business or study purposes, will reside with the individual traveller.

(43) Travel and Expense cannot assist in the redemption of frequent flyer points or other memberships.

Part G - Class of Travel

(44) Refer Travel Policy.

Part H - Stopovers

(45) Refer Travel Policy.

Part I - Recovery Time

(46) Refer Travel Policy.

Part J - Charter/Private Aircraft Use

(47) Refer Travel Policy.

Part K - Accommodation

(48) All accommodation must be booked through Travel and Expense, and/or the Online Booking Tool (OBT) as part of the travel request.

(49) Any accommodation bookings made outside of Travel and Expense using the University's corporate travel card, may be invoiced back to the traveller as a personal expense, or may not be reimbursed if purchased on a personal credit card.

(50) The selection of a hotel will be based on the lowest logical rate at any accommodation provider in the location relevant to the travellers travel request. The hotel will be chosen by Travel and Expense taking in to account the property's COVID-19 policies with regards to cleaning and the duty of care to their guests.

(51) On-campus accommodation should be considered, where provided, to reduce the overall costs of travel.

(52) The use of accommodation sharing websites, such as Airbnb are temporarily suspended.

(53) Remote accommodation for field work activities (including camping or caravan park facilities) may be reserved outside of Travel and Expense, but this information must be provided at the time of requesting the creation of a travel plan and must take in to account any COVID-19 cleanliness and duty of care requirements including the provision for social distancing.

(54) University travellers are not required to share a room with other travellers.

(55) If the University traveller is travelling with family members. The University will fund only the cost equivalent to a sole use room, based on the lowest logical rate at any accommodation provider in the location relevant to the travellers travel request

(56) The University recognises and accepts that there are times when staying with family or friends is a preferred option for travellers on University business. This accommodation cost must be at "no cost to the University". Any social distancing restrictions and COVID-19 issues must be taken in to account before committing to this accommodation.

(57) The University will not pay for accommodation costs for employees who stay overnight at a hotel in their home campus location without exception.

(58) Any changes to accommodation before or during travel made directly with the property and not in consultation with Travel and Expense may be invoiced back to the traveller as a personal cost. Refer to the After-Hours Emergency Service.

Part L - Ground Transportation

University Fleet Vehicles

(59) The University currently operates a pool of motor vehicles for use by University travellers at a number of campus locations.

(60) University vehicles may only be picked up on the day of travel and returned at the conclusion of the official travel.

(61) University vehicles will sanitised by Procurement and Fleet staff and quarantined for 48 hours after being returned.

(62) University travellers must use a University vehicle when they have access to the car pool and are on official University business. Other options will be considered only when a University vehicle is not available.

(63) All drivers must have a current valid driver's licence. University travellers who have permanent resident status should apply for an Australian driver's licence after three months of arrival in Australia. University travellers who are in Australia on a temporary visa must have a valid licence from the country where they are a registered citizen.

(64) If requested by Procurement and Fleet the travellers driver's license number, license expiry and mobile phone number must be advised.

Private Vehicles

(65) Where a University vehicle is not available University travellers may apply for approval to use their private vehicle for official travel. The private vehicle specified must be registered and covered by comprehensive or third party motor vehicle insurance during the period for which this approval is made.

(66) Approval to use a private vehicle will be made by the Manager, Travel and Expense.

(67) The University will not be responsible for any costs or losses associated with any damages regardless of how they are sustained to the vehicle.

(68) Approval to use a motorcycle or bicycle will not be granted for workplace health and safety reasons.

Novated Lease Vehicles

(69) Refer Travel Policy.

Car Hire Vehicles

(70) The University has negotiated rates with various car hire companies. All car rentals must be reserved through Travel and Expense and/or the Online Booking Tool (OBT).

(71) The use of a rental vehicle must satisfy all COVID-19 requirements in cleanliness before a staff member can utilise.

(72) Payment for hire cars should be made using the University Corporate Travel Card, including any fuel costs associated with the car rental. These costs cannot be pre-paid and must be made by the traveller at the time of pick up. If the traveller does not hold a University Corporate Travel Card then payment must be made on a personal card and a reimbursement sought with a copy of the valid rental agreement.

Car Hire Vehicle Insurance

(73) Refer Travel Policy.

Driving/Parking Infringements

(74) Refer Travel Policy.

Driver Safety Policy

(75) Refer Travel Policy.

Workers Compensation and Travel

(76) Refer Travel Policy.

Taxi/Ridesharing

(77) The use of taxis and ridesharing services is permitted and are the first preferences when using ground transportation. Staff should ensure that they adhere to COVID-19 social distancing guidelines and hygiene practices before committing to this type of transportation.

(78) The use of taxis and ridesharing services is not permitted for travel to and from a venue within your home location.

(79) The use of a taxi to travel to/from an airport should only be used if there is no other alternative e.g. use of your own car and parking it at the airport (N.B. no kilometre reimbursement), a partner or other person dropping you at the airport, commercial shuttle services etc.

(80) The University will continue to fund parking costs at airport locations for the duration that you are on approved University business.

Rail

(81) University travellers may travel first class on domestic long distance rail journeys. Staff should ensure that they adhere to COVID-19 social distancing guidelines and hygiene practices before committing to this type of transportation.

Public Transport Smartcards

(82) A smartcard for business travel should be purchased by the University traveller for sole use on official University business. Top ups using the Corporate Credit Card are acceptable, with approval.

(83) The CSU Corporate Travel Card should be utilised for tap on/ tap off facilities where available.

Part M - Meal Allowances

(84) Refer Travel Policy.

Part N - Incidental/Out of Pocket Expenses and Travel Reimbursements

(85) Incidental work-related expenses incurred during travel, but not normally incurred in the normal course of the working day, may be reimbursed when they are directly related to official travel. Examples of applicable incidentals are: laundry, work-related telephone calls, work-related internet access and parking (if related to business requirements). A minimum of $10.00 applies to all claims. Claims can be accumulated until the $10.00 minimum is reached.

(86) Wherever possible, incidentals should be charged to the Corporate Travel Card or included as part of the overall hotel account. An estimation for incidentals should be included when completing the Domestic Travel Booking Form.

(87) The University traveller can claim reimbursement for eligible work-related out of pocket expenses paid out of their own funds, provided legible receipts/tax invoices are provided. If receipts are unavailable, the traveller needs to provide a daily log outlining the travel and expenses incurred and complete the Lost Receipt Declaration which can be requested through Travel and Expense.

(88) Any requests for travel-related reimbursements or out of pocket expenses must be submitted within three months of the expense being incurred and within the same calendar year. Requests for reimbursements submitted outside of this timeframe will not be accepted.

Part O - After Hours Emergency Service

(89) Refer Travel Policy.

Part P - Dependent Care Support

(90) Staff who undertake work-related travel are entitled to claim dependent care expenses up to forty dollars ($40.00) per day (not per child) for care that is over and above their normal dependent care cost arrangements.

Part Q - Travel Debit Cards

(91) Refer Travel Policy.

Part R - Travel Advance

(92) Refer Travel Policy.

Part S - Combining Business and Private Travel

(93) Refer Travel Policy.

Part T - Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT)

(94) Refer Travel Policy.

Part U - Traveller Health and Safety

(95) All staff who are required to travel must refer to the NSW Government website for the latest information on travelling. Additionally the following link provides important information on how to protect yourself and others.

(96) The University's primary responsibility is to protect the safety and wellbeing of all persons when travelling on University business. It is the University traveller's responsibility while travelling to be mindful of potential risks in the local area and to act in a manner that will minimise the possibility of harm to the traveller.

(97) The University has a duty of care to ensure that it is aware of the whereabouts of all travellers so that it can contact and provide assistance to such travellers in the event of an emergency or other incident.

(98) Staff are encouraged to download the Government app “COVIDsafe” via the appropriate app store.

(99) The University reserves the right to deny travel where it considers the risk is too great.

Part V - Travel Insurance

(100) Refer Travel Policy.

Part W - Private Travel

(101) Private travel (non-University business) is not permitted in conjunction with pre-approved University business travel under any circumstances. This includes, and is not limited to, weekends and days either side of official business

travel.

(102) Where a spouse, partner or dependent accompanies a University staff member on official University travel, the traveller must:

a. notify their authorising officer prior to travel;
b. ensure that the business of the University is not compromised; and
c. COVID-19 protocols are met with regards to social distancing and hygiene.

(103) The University will not fund any cost incurred for an accompanying spouse, partner, or dependent. These costs must be paid on a personal credit card and cannot be paid using the University's Corporate Travel Card and invoiced to the staff member.

Part X - Non-Compliance to the Travel Policy

(104) Refer Travel Policy.

Public Authority

(105) Refer Travel Policy.

Status and Details

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Effective Date	22nd June 2020
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