

## Waiting times for passport services

**Handling Note:** APO Executive Director [*Bridget Brill*] to lead on waiting times for passport services.

### Strategic Message

- Increased passport demand since the reopening of Australia's international border has resulted in longer passport processing wait times.
- In response, the department is advising customers they should allow enough time – up to six weeks – to obtain a new passport prior to any planned travel.
- The department also continues to increase staffing levels.

### Are Australians waiting longer for their passport application to be processed?

- There has been an increase in passport demand following the reopening of Australia's international border.
  - Since 1 November 2021, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has issued over 275,000 passports.
  - This is more than triple the number issued in the same period 12 months ago.
- Due to the increased demand, passports are currently taking longer to process.
  - For some years, passports have been processed within 10 working days.
  - Currently processing times are, on average, 16 working days.
- This is well short of the timeframe the public are encouraged to allow, to renew or apply for their passport – which is up to six weeks ahead of any planned travel.
- Processing timeframes for passports can depend on the complexity of the applications received and whether they have been fully completed.
  - Delays occur when customers have not provided all the necessary information.
- Passport applications in progress are at a higher level than normal – approximately 30,000 above pre-pandemic levels (about 50,000 applications).
  - DFAT expects to return to pre-pandemic levels in February.
- Most Australians that have planned international travel get in contact with the Australian Passport Office (APO) well before their scheduled departure.
  - In cases where customers need to travel urgently for compassionate reasons, the APO has processes in place to ensure they receive their passports on time (including outside business hours).
  - For an additional fee, customers also have the option of using the APO's priority processing service.

### What did the department do in anticipation of an increase in passport demand?

- Over the last 12 months, we estimate around 1.8 million Australians have either put off renewing their expired passports or applying for a passport for the first time.

- This is almost the equivalent of one year of passport demand, pre-pandemic.
- DFAT has encouraged people to renew expired passports as soon as possible.
  - Since January 2021, DFAT has sent out email and SMS messages to over 2.2 million Australians to remind them that their passport has either expired or is about to expire.
  - DFAT has also engaged key travel and tourism industry partners and provided communications materials to help remind their customers about the need to renew their passports and be 'travel ready' by renewing or applying early.
- DFAT changed its advice when the borders reopened, asking Australians to allow up to 6 weeks to receive a passport ahead of any planned travel.
- Previous advice was passport applications would take about three weeks to process.
  - This was in anticipation of a spike in demand and wait times.
  - Elsewhere (e.g. the United States and the United Kingdom) wait times increased to over 90 days when international borders reopened.
- With the announcement of international borders opening in November 2021, DFAT recruited an additional 130 staff, as well as returning large numbers of passport staff from redeployments while passport demand was low.
  - We now have more than 600 passports staff, which is comparable to pre-COVID staffing levels.
  - Recruitment will continue through 2022-23 as passport demand increases.

**Is it true customers calling the Australian Passport Office are experiencing long wait times and, if so, what is the department doing about this?**

- The increase in passport demand following the reopening of Australia's international border has led to longer wait times for customers calling our Contact Centre.
  - Through January average wait times were about 30 minutes.
  - At peak times, some customers may receive a congestion message and will be asked to try calling again at another time.
    - : This is to minimise wait times for customers.
  - We are onboarding 40 additional Contact Centre staff in February.

**Background**

- Since the start of the pandemic, passport demand has dropped to unprecedented levels.
  - From March 2020 to the end of December 2021, the department has received around 1.3 million passport applications.
  - This is well below pre-pandemic levels, where we received over 2.1 million passport applications for the 2019 calendar year.



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PDR No: s 22(1)(a)(ii)



**Supporting information**

**Questions on Notice**

No QoNs asked.

**Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests**

None.

**Recent Ministerial Comments**

No recent comments.

**Relevant Media Reporting**

- In an article, **Australians face 60% longer wait for passports as border reopening spikes demand**, published in The Guardian on 2 February 2022, journalist **Daniel Hurst** wrote that an increase in passport demand since the opening of international borders has seen wait times for passport applications increase from 10 days to an average 16 days. (Link [here](#)).

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|---|---|
| <b>Division:</b> Australian Passport Office   |   |
| <b>PDR No:</b> s 22(1)(a)(ii)   |   |
| <b>Prepared by:</b><br>s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 4 February 2022 | <b>Cleared by Branch/Division Head:</b><br>Craig Kelly, A/g Executive Director, APO<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 4 February 2022 |
| <b>Consultation:</b> N/A<br>Name: N/A   | Date: N/A<br>Mob: N/A Ext: N/A  |
| <b>Cleared by CFO / CPO:</b> N/A  | Date: N/A   |
| <b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary:</b> Yes   | Date: 4 February 2022   |



## COVID-19 – Vaccine Certificate - International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate

Handling Note: ED APO to lead on the International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate and acceptance of foreign certificates. Questions on vaccine certification within Australia, including how the international certificate relates to domestic certificates and how individuals in Australia can get a certificate, should be referred to Services Australia. Detailed questions about vaccine recognition, policy on people who can't be vaccinated for medical reasons and quarantine treatment of inbound travellers should be referred to the Department of Health. Questions about how the international certificate works at the border should be referred to the Department of Home Affairs.

### Strategic Message

- The International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate is widely accepted.
- Problems that travellers face in Europe are of Europe's making. They don't just affect Australians, but most other countries as well. Equivalence is not the solution. The Government is working hard with like-mindeds to encourage the EU and individual countries to minimise inconvenience for travellers. The trend is positive.

### Why isn't Australia's vaccination certificate accepted in Europe? What is the Government doing about it?

- Australia's International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate (ICVC) is widely accepted as an adequate proof of vaccination at international borders, including in Europe.
- Some countries additionally require proof of vaccination to access venues and services within their borders
  - European countries generally have a policy of accepting foreign certificates for this purpose, even if they're not in the EU's Green Pass format [*a.k.a. the Digital COVID Certificate or DCC*]
  - but national smartphone apps used in European countries have not been configured to read QR codes that aren't Green Passes
  - this can make venues and service providers hesitant to accept foreign certificates, causing inconvenience and distress for affected travellers
  - this problem doesn't just affect Australia, but most other countries as well, including the US, Canada, China, India, Japan and Brazil.
- This is a problem made in Europe, and Australia has been working with likeminded countries to urge the EU and member states to resolve it
  - some countries [*e.g. France, Belgium and Switzerland*] enable people with non-EU certificates can get Green Passes online or at a pharmacy
  - in other countries [*e.g. Cyprus, Finland, Malta*], the local policy of accepting printouts is widely observed and travellers are not reporting difficulties
  - in some countries [*e.g. Iceland, Norway, United Kingdom*], the issue doesn't arise as there are few or no requirements to prove vaccination domestically.
- The trend for travellers is positive
  - Ireland [*22 January*], England [*26 January*] and Denmark [*1 February*] have dropped their domestic proof of vaccination requirements
  - on 26 January, Norway dropped requirements that had prevented all non-Green Pass holders from entering the country



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- on 15 February, the Netherlands introduced *[tbc]* a system for visitors to get local 14-day vaccine passports at railway stations
- our heads of mission are making representations in the few countries where proof of vaccination remains a significant issue, particularly Italy and Greece.
- Australia is working with Canada, India, Japan, the United States, the OECD, the WHO, the Global Digital Health Partnership *[collaboration of 30 countries and the WHO on digital health records]*, the G20, the OECD, APEC and the Commons Project *[US non-profit behind North America's digital certificates]* to map out options for digital interoperability among major vaccine certificate formats
  - the Government is also working with the travel sector, including all major airlines and software providers that support the travel industry
  - private sector solutions *[such as the IATA TravelPass]* have already emerged that can verify different format certificates and allow travellers to confirm they meet the entry requirements at the country of destination
  - the World Health Organization is developing a universal verifier application that can read and authenticate certificates in different formats.

### Where in Europe are Australians having the most problems?

- Italy more than anywhere, but also Greece
  - both countries have official policies of accepting the ICVC in printed form, but public awareness is poor
  - our posts are working intensively with authorities and the travel sector to encourage practical solutions
    - : our Ambassador in Rome has engaged, among many others, the Office of the Minister of Health, the Office of the Minister for Tourism, senior officials in the MFA, the Australia-based Senator to the Italian parliament (representing the Italian diaspora in Oceania), relevant airlines, Rome airport and the missions of India, Japan, Canada and the United States
    - : to assist in interactions with vaccination certificate checkers, travellers can now download a letter from the Rome embassy website that explains in Italian and English the Italian government's policy of recognising printouts of Australian certificates.

### Where else are Australians having problems?

- There have also been reports of problems, to a much lesser degree, in Germany, Austria, Spain, Portugal, Serbia *[at the border]* and Sweden.
- Our posts are working hard in these countries, too
  - our post in Vienna has been engaging museums and other tourist venues, including by sending them samples of the ICVC, so that they are familiar with the layout and know to accept it when Australian travellers come in.

### Are there any European borders that don't accept the ICVC?

- Travellers can't use it to arrive by air in Hungary or Luxembourg, but there are no restrictions on arriving by land in those countries.
- In January, *[before the s 47F(1) matter]* there were some reports of travellers having issues entering Serbia.

## Other countries have had their certificates recognised by the EU, including New Zealand and Singapore. Why doesn't Australia do that?

- The EU offers a process called 'equivalence' through which it says it will 'recognise' third country vaccination certificates
  - this is not mutual recognition, because it requires countries to redesign their certificates in the EU format
  - like Australia, most countries, including the US, Canada, Japan, China, India, South Africa and Brazil, are not doing this
  - they do not wish to bear the duplication and expense of issuing certificates in multiple formats for use in different regions.
- We will continue to encourage the European Commission to reconsider its position
  - note the EU legislation underpinning the Green Pass has a sunset date of 30 June 2022, which the Commission has proposed [3 February] be extended for a further 12 months with no change to its main provisions.
- Issuing certificates in EU format would not help travellers to major destinations in Asia, North America and elsewhere that use other formats.

## What are all these other formats?

- There are four main formats in use around the world:
  - ICAO VDS – the international standard (used by Australia and Japan)
  - DIVOC (or 'CoWIN') – developed by India and used in four other countries
  - the EU Green Pass
  - SMART Health Cards – the only digital format used in North America.
- In addition to these, some countries use unique national formats.

## But isn't the EU format the biggest, with 60 countries on board?

- No. Besides the 27 EU members, the other 33 countries that issue Green Passes are mostly in Europe or nearby (Switzerland, Norway, the UK and Eastern Europeans) and many are small (Andorra, Monaco, Liechtenstein, San Marino, the Vatican).
- The rest of the world – which includes the United States, Canada, Japan, India, China, and most of Africa and Latin America – has collectively issued many more certificates, numbering in the billions.

## Why did the Government opt for ICAO VDS when Japan is the only other country issuing it?

- The vaccination certificate landscape only consolidated toward the end of 2021.
- Because of lead times and the need to open our border, Australia made its choice well before then [*in June 2021*] on the basis that ICAO VDS is the only standard which is truly international, rather than regional, national or managed by the private sector
  - it was developed by the world's governments, and is owned by the international community as a whole through ICAO, a UN specialised agency, responsible for setting standards for travel documents
    - : the European Commission was in the room when the standard was finalised and joined the consensus
  - ICAO VDS leverages ePassport technology used in more than 140 countries
  - it is high in technical quality, security and privacy, and unlike the EU Green Pass it conforms closely to WHO guidance.



- Opting for ICAO VDS has turned out to be a good decision
  - our certificate is accepted around the world, and ICAO VDS is widely acknowledged internationally as one of the major formats.

**You say that countries aren't willing to issue certificates in multiple formats, but Singapore and South Korea do this so that their travellers can have EU Green Passes**

- Their situation is not comparable to Australia's
  - both of them began by issuing digital certificates in unique formats that weren't among the big four international formats.

**Are EU Green Passes really that different to other certificates?**

- Yes, both technically and in their overall concept.
- For instance, unlike other certificates, holders get a separate Green Pass for every vaccination dose rather than a single certificate that lists all doses.

**Have you costed how much it would take for Australia to issue an EU Green Pass?**

- No.

**How much did it cost to develop the current certificate?**

- DFAT was allocated \$14.8m in 2021-22 for the back-end service for issuing certificate
  - as of 31 December, DFAT had spent \$5.3 million on developing and supporting this service.
- Other expenditure was incurred by Services Australia and the Department of Health.

**How much did it cost to develop the VDS-NC Checker app?**

- Around \$350,000.

**Was the work contracted out?**

- The certificate was developed in-house, in partnership with a long-standing private sector partner [*Verizon Enterprise Solutions*] that provides the encryption technology which secures Australia's ePassport chips.
- The app was designed by DFAT and developed in partnership with an existing private sector partner [*Speedwell, based in Brisbane*].

**Was there a tender for this work?**

- The work carried out with these partners was covered by existing contracts.

**Has there been a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA)?**

- Yes. Details have been published on DFAT's Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) Register on the DFAT website
  - APO and Services Australia will implement the recommendations.

**Why does DFAT issue the certificate, not Services Australia?**

- The certificate uses specialist ePassport technology, and DFAT, through the Australian Passport Office, operates this technology for the Australian Government.

## How does DFAT safeguard travellers' privacy?

- Services Australia derives the personal information for a certificate from the Australian Immunisation Register and from the passport details that travellers provide when they request a certificate
  - Services Australia sends this information to APO on the basis of informed consent
  - after issuing the certificate, APO retains none of this personal information.
- It is entirely up to travellers to decide what to do with their certificate, in the same way they decide when and to whom they present their passport.

## Who decided what personal information goes into the certificate?

- ICAO, acting on guidance from the WHO.

## Background

Australia's International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate (ICVC) became available to individuals vaccinated in Australia on 19 October 2021. As of early February, three million ICVCs have been issued.

## Supporting information

### Questions on Notice

No QoNs asked

### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

None

## Recent Ministerial Comments

- On 8 September 2021, the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment responded to questions about international travel and vaccination certificates in a press conference. The questions related to the use of a QR code for security and privacy.
- On 12 September 2021, the Prime Minister responded to a question about international travel in a press conference. The question related to conditions for international borders to reopen.
- On 12 September 2021, the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment responded to questions about international travel and vaccination certificates in an interview with Sky News. The questions related to QR codes, airlines and vaccine recognition.
- On 13 September 2021, the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment responded to questions about international travel and vaccination certificates in an interview with ABC RN Drive. The questions related to QR codes and security.
- On 22 September 2021, the Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment addressed the National Press Club and discussed the reopening of international borders and the introduction of the international standard vaccination certificate.
- On 18 October 2021, in a joint media release, the Minister for Foreign Affairs announced the international proof of vaccination to be available from 19 October 2021.



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**Relevant Media Reporting**

Australian media has reported extensively on the ICVC

- <https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2021-08-19/covid-19-vaccine-passports-international-travel-borders/100383630>
- [Coronavirus: International COVID-19 vaccine passports to be issued next month \(9news.com.au\)](https://www.9news.com.au/news/coronavirus/coronavirus-international-covid-19-vaccine-passports-to-be-issued-next-month/100383630)
- <https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/australia-vaccine-passport-intl-hnk/index.html>
- [International travel Australia: Singapore routes are first big test of Australian vaccine passport \(afr.com\)](https://www.afr.com/travel/international-travel-australia-singapore-routes-are-first-big-test-of-australian-vaccine-passport-20210819)
- [Travelling In Europe with An Australian Vaccination Certificate \(traveldaily.com.au\)](https://www.traveldaily.com.au/news/travelling-in-europe-with-an-australian-vaccination-certificate)
- [How to get a vaccine passport in Europe with an Australian vaccine certificate \(traveller.com.au\)](https://www.traveller.com.au/travel/australia/how-to-get-a-vaccine-passport-in-europe-with-an-australian-vaccine-certificate)
- [Europe COVID-19 Omicron travel restrictions: I'm locked down for Christmas \(traveller.com.au\)](https://www.traveller.com.au/travel/europe/europe-covid-19-omicron-travel-restrictions-im-locked-down-for-christmas)
- [Australia's vaccine certificates not accepted in some EU countries \(traveller.com.au\)](https://www.traveller.com.au/travel/australia/australia-vaccine-certificates-not-accepted-in-some-eu-countries)

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| <b>Division:</b> SDG   APO   Passport Integrity Branch  |   |
| <b>PDR No:</b> s 22(1)(a)(ii)   |   |
| <b>Prepared by:</b><br>s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 4 February 2022 | <b>Cleared by Branch/Division Head:</b><br>Craig Kelly (a/g ED APO)<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 4 February 2022 |
| <b>Consultation:</b> Enter Div/Branch/Section.<br>Name: Type in Officer's name.                           | Date: 4 February 2022<br>Mob: Type mobile. Ext: Type extension.   |
| <b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary:</b><br>Craig Maclachlan   | Date: 4 February 2022   |

## OFFICIAL

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Passport Operations

## Passport Operations

**Handling Note:** Australian Passport Office (APO) Acting Executive Director [Craig Kelly] to lead on passport demand, processing delays and the new R Series passport.

## Key Messages

- In 2022, we faced unprecedented demand for passports, and we continue to experience high demand in 2023 as Australians travel internationally.
- DFAT has invested significant resources to respond to this surge in demand.
- Passport processing timeframes have reduced as a result.
- Volatility in passport demand is expected to continue for at least the next 18 months.
- Australians seeking to travel in the next six months are encouraged to apply for their passports early.

## What are the current processing timeframes for passports?

- Passport processing timeframes continue to improve
  - In January 2023, around 95% of routine passports were issued within six weeks, 87% were issued within 10 days
  - around 99% of priority passport applications were issued within two business days
  - there are around 80,000 passport applications on hand, down from a peak of around 430,000 applications in September 2022.
- Average processing times (2022-23 financial year to 23 January) are:

| Passport Type                 | Number of business days              | Number of business days |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|
|                               | 2022-23 financial year to 23 January | January 23              |
| All ordinary passports        | 23                                   | 7                       |
| Adult renewals (ordinary)     | 13                                   | 4                       |
| New adults (ordinary)         | 26                                   | 9                       |
| Child applications (ordinary) | 33                                   | 8                       |
| Priority Processing Passports | 2                                    | 1                       |

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**Why do child passport applications take longer?**

- More standard checks are required to ensure each child is entitled to an Australian passport
  - This includes establishing the child has consent from everyone with parental responsibility.
- Forged parental consent remains our most common type of passport fraud.

**How many additional staff were required to meet passport demand?**

- The APO currently has more than 2000 staff (up from around 430 in November 2021 when Australia's border reopened).

**What did it cost to increase staffing levels?**

- The 2022-23 financial year APO salaries expense (including production contractors and overtime expenses) is forecast to be \$105m
  - This is fully covered under the Passport Funding Agreement with Department of Finance, as the APO staffing budget varies according to demand.
- A comparison of the APO's key financial and staffing figures for the 2019 -20 financial year (prior to COVID-19 impacts) and the 2022-23 financial year forecasts are:

|                                    | FY 2019-20 (\$m) | FY 2022-23 (\$m) *Forecast |
|------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| APO Funding                        | \$155.6          | *\$350.0                   |
| Revenue                            | \$449.3          | *\$900                     |
| Passport Allocations               | 1.7              | *3.1                       |
| Total Salary Expense               | \$47.7           | *\$105                     |
| • OT expense                       | \$0.7            | *\$1.0                     |
| Highest staffing level (Headcount) | 626              | 2,600                      |

- The APO anticipates total passport revenue for the 2022-23 financial year to exceed \$900m.
  - Passport revenue is returned to the Commonwealth's consolidated revenue fund.

**If demand is now under control, will you need to reduce staffing levels?**

- We anticipate maintaining a relatively high level of staff (compared to pre-pandemic levels), commensurate with the higher levels of demand over the next 12-18 months.

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**Is passport demand expected to remain high throughout 2023?**

- . Yes.
- . Passport demand is currently around 20% higher than pre-pandemic levels for this time of year.
- . The APO expects to issue around 3 million passports this financial year.
- . There were around 2 million customers who did not apply for or renew their passport during the COVID-19 pandemic
  - Around 1.5 million of these customers are yet to apply.

**Data breaches are a growing concern for Australians, what is the APO doing to assist impacted customers?**

- . The APO continues to work proactively with industry where data breaches involving passport information have occurred.
- . The Government provides funding to IDCARE, Australia's National Identity Support Service, to offer personalised support to individuals in taking steps to protect their personal information.

**Optus data breach (September 2022)**

- . The Optus data breach (September 2022) resulted in the exposure of around 100,000 Australian passport numbers
  - The APO assured impacted passport holders that their passports were still safe to use for international travel
  - Optus referred the passport numbers to Home Affairs, and as an additional measure these passports were blocked on the Document Verification Service (DVS)
  - Optus agreed to reimburse customers for passport replacement costs.

**How many customers affected by the Optus breach sought new passports?**

- . Optus advised it has issued 120 passport reimbursements as at 8 February 2023.

**Medibank data breach (October 2022)**

- . No Australian passports were implicated in this incident.

**Medlab Pathology data breach (October 2022)**

- . The Medlab Pathology data breach resulted in the exposure of 225 Australian passport numbers and 20 copies of Australian passports
  - Medlab Pathology contacted impacted customers and committed to reimburse customers for passport replacement costs.

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Passport Operations

**There are reports that AusPassport login credentials were located on the 'Dark Web'. What is the APO doing to address this?**

- . On 13 January 2023, DFAT became aware that 1125 AusPassport login credentials (email addresses and passwords) were listed on the dark web.
- . Investigations conducted by the department has found no evidence to suggest that these login credentials were obtained through a compromise of DFAT's systems.
- . DFAT took immediate action to initiate a forced password reset on impacted AusPassport accounts to ensure they could not be accessed
  - On 17 January, the APO published information on its website, including how customers can seek support if they have concerns about their passport.

**Do impacted customers need to replace their passport?**

- . No
  - Access to the AusPassport login credentials does not impact the security or integrity of a customer's passport.

**Background**

Following the reopening of Australia's international border, the Australian Passport Office (APO) is experiencing unprecedented demand for passports.

Onboarding additional staff has resulted in 1.7 million passports being issued in the 6-month period to the end of December 2022. The most passports issued in a full year is around 2.1 million.

Volatility in passport demand is expected to continue for at least the next 18 months. So, it is important that Australians plan ahead and get their passport applications in early.

The APO triages applications based on urgent, compelling and/or compassionate grounds, customer travel dates and the date the application was received.

The APO holds six-weekly briefings with key travel industry partners.

**Media Interest**

Passport processing delays generated a high level of media coverage and social media commentary in May and June 2022.

Media coverage in December 2022 focused on the percentage of priority passports not being completed within APO's two business day turnaround time. It also referenced projected total revenue for passport applications this financial year (i.e. \$824 million in 2022-23, including \$150 million in priority processing fees). The information and data referred to in this article was drawn from Questions on Notice (s 22(1)(a)(ii) ) published in December 2022.

On 11 January 2023, Assistant Minister Watts appeared on Channel 7's Sunrise program to outline the APO's progress in reducing passport wait times, and to remind Australians to plan their travel well ahead of time, including applying for their passport early.

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Passport Operations

## Questions on Notice

**Parliamentary Question in Writing for Senator the Hon Penny Wong (5 September 2022)**

- [In s 22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#), Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham asked for any decision briefs to the [Government recommending measures to improve passport application processing times.](#)
- [In s 22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#), Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham asked what contact the Minister or the Minister's office had with the head of the Australian Passport Office since the [election.](#)
- [In s 22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#) Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham asked about passport wait times.
- [In s 22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#), Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham asked for the Australian Passport Office's service standards for processing passport applications.

**Parliamentary Questions on Notice for Senator the Hon Penny Wong (10 November 2022)**

- [In s 22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#) Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham asked questions relating to passport processing time frames and APO staffing.
- [In s 22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#) Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham asked questions relating to passport processing, APO staffing and revenue.
- [In s 22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#), Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham requested details on meetings with the Government and APO modelling.
- [In s 22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#), Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham asked questions relating to the APO's response to the Optus data breach.
- [In s 22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#), Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham asked questions about the APO's modelling.
- [In s 22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#) Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham asked questions about the R Series passport.
- [In s 22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#), Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham asked about media statements made by the Foreign Minister and questions on the APO's response to the Optus data breach.
- [In s 22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#) Senator the Hon. Nita Green asked when DFAT advised the Minister of the APO's operational resourcing requirements.
- [In s 22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#), Senator the Hon. Nita Green asked for details on briefing to the Secretary.
- [In s 22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#), Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham asked questions on increased priority passport processing and revenue.

## Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

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- In August 2022, a media organisation (Daily Telegraph) sought access under FOI to information relating to the number of passport applications that were expected to be made to the Passport Office once international travel restrictions were lifted. On the 26 August the applicant was advised of practical refusal and invited to revise their request. No revised request was received, therefore the request was deemed to have been withdrawn.
- Also in August 2022, a media organisation (Crikey) sought access to documents exchanged between DFAT and the offices of Foreign Affairs Minister Penny Wong or Assistant Foreign Affairs Minister Tim Watts regarding delays in passport application processing for the timeframe between 21 May and 8 June 2022. This matter was finalised with release to the applicant on 27 October 2022.

## Recent Ministerial Comments

- A number of public statements have been made by Assistant Foreign Minister Watts on the Government's efforts to tackle passport demand and reduce APO's processing and call centre wait times, most recently on 11 January on Channel 7's Sunrise program.

## Relevant Media Reporting

- Since November 2022, there has been reduced media coverage relating to passport demand and processing delays.
- On 13 December 2022, a news article in The Guardian focused on the percentage of priority passports not being completed within APO's two business day turnaround time. It also referenced projected total revenue for passport applications this financial year (i.e. \$824 million in 2022-23, including \$150 million in priority processing fees). The information and data referred to in this article was drawn from Questions on Notice (SQ22-000345 and SQ22-000301) published in December 2022.
- On 31 December 2022, the Government's annual passport fee increase (scheduled to come into effect on 1 January 2023) received some media coverage. The fee increase was mentioned in The Advertiser (and other News Corp publications) as part of a general story outlining a range of price increases taking effect in Australia from the beginning of 2023. This coverage was purely factual and contained no negative commentary.
- On 11 January 2023, Assistant Minister Watts appeared on Channel 7's Sunrise program to outline the Government's progress in reducing passport wait times, and to remind Australians to plan their travel well ahead of time, including applying for their passport early.
- Since November 2022, DFAT social media accounts have also been receiving significantly fewer passport-related social media comments. While the Facebook group

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centring on passport delays (which first surfaced in June 2022) remains active, its membership (currently nearly 17,000 users) is continuing to fall – dropping by more than 150 members in the past month. There has also been a significant shift in the sentiment of the posts published in the group over the last few months. Previously, members of the group had been vocal about frustrations with delays. However, recent commentary has been more balanced. There remains some negative commentary, particularly around the lengthy time it has taken for some complex child applications to be processed. But others have shared ‘good news’ stories about receiving their passport earlier than expected.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Division:</b> ISG   APO   Specialised Cases and Enabling Branch  |   |
| <b>PDR No:</b> s 22(1)(a)(ii)   |   |
| <b>Prepared by:</b><br>s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 25 January 2023 | <b>Cleared by Branch/Division Head:</b><br>Craig Kelly Acting ED, APO<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 25 January 2023 |
| <b>Consultation:</b> Enter Div/Branch/Section.<br>Name: Type in Officer's name.                           | Date: Click or tap to enter consultation date.<br>Mob: Type mobile. Ext: Type extension.  |
| Cleared by CFO / CPO: N/A   |   |
| Cleared by Deputy Secretary: Craig Maclachlan Date: 13 February 2023                                      |   |

Questions on notice referred to within the hot topic brief:[418 – Parliamentary Question in Writing](#)[Topic: Passport decision briefs](#)[Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham](#)

## Question

1. Since the 2022 Federal election, has the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) provided any decision briefs to the Government recommending measures to improve passport application processing times; if so:
  - a. when were they received in the Minister's office;
  - b. have the submissions been returned to the department; if so, when; and
  - c. did the Government agree to DFAT's recommendations

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**Answer**

Between the 2022 Federal election and 30 September 2022, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has provided four written briefs to the Government relating to passport processing.

**430 – Parliamentary Question in Writing**

Topic: Contact between the Minister/office with the head of the Australian Passport Office

Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham

**Question**

What contact has the Minister or the Minister's office had with the head of the Australian Passport Office since the election; please detail the nature of that contact (ie email, correspondence, phone conversations, meetings) and the date it occurred.

**Answer**

Since the election, the Executive Director of the Australian Passport Office has had the following contact with the Minister or Minister's office:

Meetings – There have been six meetings in total:

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Friday 3 June 2022     | In-person briefing of Foreign Minister's Office staff on passports issues  |
| Monday 20 June 2022    | In-person meeting with Assistant Minister Watts on passport issues   |
| Tuesday 16 August 2022 | In-person meeting with Assistant Minister Watts' office staff on passport issues                                     |
| Monday 29 August       | Virtual meeting with Assistant Minister Watts and staff on passport issues   |
| Tuesday 27 September   | In-person meeting with the Foreign Minister, Assistant Foreign Minister, FMO staff and AFMO staff on passport issues |
| Thursday 29 September  | Virtual meeting with Assistant Minister Watts, AFMO staff and FMO staff on passport issues                           |

*Email and phone conversations* – The Executive Director of the Australian Passport Office is in frequent weekly contact with Assistant Minister Watts' staff by email and telephone to discuss passport issues, as well as providing a weekly dashboard report (from 26 June) and a daily sitrep (from 1 September to 30 September).

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Passport Operations

[452 – Parliamentary Question in Writing](#)[Topic: Average passport wait times and service standards](#)[Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham](#)**Question**

1. What is the average waiting time for passport applicants to receive a decision on their application.
2. What is the average waiting time for new passport applicants to receive their passport.
3. What is the average waiting time for renewal passport applicants to receive their passport.
4. What is the average waiting time for children's passport applicants to receive their passport.
5. What are the Australian Passport Office's service standards in relation to passport application processing times.

**Answer**

**1. The average processing time for all passport applicants this financial year to 1 September is:**

- 2 business days for priority applications, and
- 24 business days for routine applications.

**2. New adult applicants complete an adult passport application form. The average processing time for adult passport applicants this financial year to 1 September is:**

- 2 business days for priority adult passport applications, and
- 28 business days for routine adult passport applications.

The average processing time for child applications is provided at Question 4.

**3. The average processing time for adult renewal passport applicants this financial year to 1 September is:**

- 1 business days for priority adult renewal passport applications, and
- 16 business days for routine adult renewal passport applications.

There is no renewal process for child applicants.

**4. The average processing times for child passport applicants this financial year to 1 September is:**

- 2 business days for priority child passport applications, and
- 41 business days for routine child passport applications.

**5. The Australian Passport Office has two performance targets for passport processing.**

**These are:**

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- 95% of passports processed within 10 business days, and
- 98% of priority passports processed within 2 business days.

During the two-year COVID-19 travel ban, we estimate around two million Australians opted to delay renewing or applying for their passports. In November 2021, we anticipated the return of these customers would cause a surge in passport demand and began advising customers to allow a minimum of six weeks to receive their passport.

Customers can choose to collect their passport directly from an Australian Passport Office or have their passport despatched by mail. Mail delivery is not included in processing times.

### [453 – Parliamentary Question in Writing](#)

#### [Topic: Service standards for processing passports](#)

#### [Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham](#)

#### Question

As at 1 September 2022:

1. What are the Australian Passport Office's service standards for processing passport applications.
2. How often [%] have these service standards been met for new passport applications.
3. How often [%] have these service standards been met for passport renewal applications.
4. How often [%] have these service standards been met for children's passport applications.
5. Noting that the Australian Passport Office reported meeting all of its service standards in its regulator performance self-assessment report of 2020-21, when does the Australian Passport Office expect to report that it will again meet all service standards

#### Answer

#### 1. What are the Australian Passport Office's service standards for processing passport applications.

The Australian Passport Office has two performance targets for passport processing. They are:

- 95% of passports processed within 10 business days, and
- 98% of priority passports processed within 2 business days.

During the two-year COVID-19 travel ban, we estimate around two million Australians opted to delay renewing or applying for their passports. In November 2021, we anticipated the return of these customers would cause a surge in passport demand and began advising customers to allow a minimum of six weeks to receive their passport.

#### 2. How often [%] have these service standards been met for new passport applications.

New adult applicants complete an adult passport application form. For adult passport applications processed this financial year to 1 September:

- 70% of priority adult applications were processed within 2 business days, and

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Passport Operations

- 75% of routine adult applications were processed within 6 weeks.

The average processing time for child applications is provided at response 4.

### 3. How often [%] have these service standards been met for passport renewal applications.

For adult passport renewal applications processed this financial year to 1 September:

- 87% of priority renewal applications were processed within 2 business days,
- 95% of routine renewal applications were processed within 6 weeks.

There is no renewal process for child applicants.

### 4. How often [%] have these service standards been met for children's passport applications.

For child passport applications processed this financial year to 1 September:

- 54% of priority child applications have been processed within 2 business days,
- 42% of routine child applications have been processed within 6 weeks.

Delays in child application processing often relate to the parental consent check where parents are no longer in a relationship.

### 5. Noting that the Australian Passport Office reported meeting all of its service standards in its regulator performance self-assessment report of 2020-21, when does the Australian Passport Office expect to report that it will again meet all service standards

Following the reopening of Australia's international border, the department is experiencing unprecedented high demand for passports. The APO expects ongoing improvements in all service standards as new staff become increasingly proficient.

## [150 – Parliamentary Question on Notice](#)

### [Topic: Passports](#)

### [Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham](#)

#### Questions

1. Please provide the current number of employees of the APO as of 18 November 2022.
  - a. Please include a breakdown for the number of permanent, casual and contract employees.
  - b. Please include the number of employees seconded from other departments/agencies and which departments/agencies.
2. How many additional staff has the APO employed since 1 June 2022 to 18 November 2022?
  - a. Please include a breakdown for the number of permanent, casual and contract employees.
  - b. Please include the number of employees seconded from other departments/agencies and which departments/agencies.
3. What kind of security requirements are there for staff who work for the APO?
  - a. Are these required of casual and contract staff?

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Passport Operations

4. Please provide any correspondence between the APO and DFAT from 1 June 2022 to 18 November 2022 regarding any requests from the APO to increase staff.
5. How much revenue did DFAT raise in 2021-22 from:
- Standard passport application fees?
  - Priority passport application fees?
6. How much revenue has DFAT raised to date in 2022-23 from:
- Standard passport applications fees?
  - Priority passport application fees?
7. What is the projected total revenue for DFAT in 2022-23 from:
- Standard passport application fees?
  - Priority passport application fees?
8. Is revenue from passport applications retained by DFAT or returned to Consolidated Revenue?
- If the revenue is retained by DFAT what is it being used to fund?
9. From June 2022 until November 2022 how many passport applications have exceeded the APO's performance standard of 10 days to process?
- Please provide the same for priority passport applications of processing of 2 days.
10. Please provide for this financial year until 18 November 2022 how many passport applicants paid a priority processing fee?
- How many applicants requested a refund for not meeting the 2 day deadline?
  - Please also provide how many were refunded for not meeting the 2 day processing time, and the total amount of refunds provided.

**Answers**

1.a and b

| Staff Category                     | Headcount |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| APS – Permanent employees          | 382       |
| APS – Non-Ongoing employees        | 105       |
| APS – Casual Employees             | 0         |
| Contractor                         | 908       |
| Service Contract Staff             | 1,018     |
| APS secondees – Services Australia | 43        |

2.a and b

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Passport Operations

| Staff Category                     | Increased headcount                          |
|------------------------------------|--|
| APS – Permanent employees          | 52   |
| APS – Non-Ongoing employees        | 64   |
| APS – Casual Employees             | 0  |
| Contractor                         | 676  |
| Service Contract Staff             | 943  |
| APS secondees – Services Australia | Peak of 120, reduced to 43 by 18 November 22 |

3. The level of security clearance depends on the role. For most APO staff they are working on OFFICIAL: Sensitive classified information that does not require a security clearance. These staff are cleared via a pre-employment check (including police records check) prior to commencement.

3.a Yes

4. There were ongoing internal discussions throughout 2022, including the period June to November on staff increases as well as the necessary property and IT requirements.

5.a \$455,458,024

5.b \$58,584,915

6. Revenue raised from 1 July 2022 to 29 November 2022:

6.a \$300,319,689

6.b \$54,506,475

7. Projected total revenue for 2022 – 23 financial year:

7.a \$824,000,000

7.b \$150,000,000

8. Revenue from passport applications is returned to the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

8.a n/a.

9. Of the 1.2 million routine passports issued since 1 June 2022, around 1 million (80%) were not processed within the 10 business day timeframe.

9.a Of 241,712 priority applications received, 42,448 did not meet the two business day timeframe. All customers affected by this would be entitled to receive a full refund of the priority fee.

10. 241,712 applicants.

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Passport Operations

10.i Our current refund system does not provide a breakdown by request type. Not all customers will request a refund if their passport is provided within a reasonable margin of the two business day processing timeframe.

10.ii 306 priority processing fees have been refunded (1 July to 18 November), which amounts to \$68,782. We continue to process refund requests incurred over this period.

## [151 – Parliamentary Question on Notice](#)

### [Topic: Passports](#)

### [Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham](#)

#### Questions

1. Please explain the APO's process for recording and processing passport applications once received.
  - a. When an applicant contacts the APO via email or phone is their contact recorded on their profile?
2. Please provide the current number of employees of the APO as of 18 November 2022.
  - a. Please include a breakdown for the number of permanent, casual and contract employees.
  - b. Please include the number of employees seconded from other departments/agencies and which departments/agencies.
3. How many additional staff has the APO employed since 1 June 2022 to 18 November 2022?
  - a. Please include a breakdown for the number of permanent, casual and contract employees.
  - b. Please include the number of employees seconded from other departments/agencies and which departments/agencies.
4. What kind of security requirements are there for staff who work for the APO?
  - a. Are these required of casual and contract staff?
5. Please provide any correspondence between the APO and DFAT from 1 June 2022 to 18 November 2022 regarding any requests from the APO to increase staff.
6. How much revenue did DFAT raise in 2021-22 from:
  - a. Standard passport application fees?
  - b. Priority passport application fees?
7. How much revenue has DFAT raised to date in 2022-23 from:
  - a. Standard passport applications fees?
  - b. Priority passport application fees?
8. What is the projected total revenue for 2022-23 from:
  - a. Standard passport applications fees?
  - b. Priority passport application fees?

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Passport Operations

9. From June 2022 until November 2022 how many passport applications have exceeded the APO's performance standard of 10 days to process?

a. Please provide the same for priority passport applications of processing of 2 days.

10. Please provide for this financial year until 18 November 2022 how many passport applicants paid a priority processing fee?

a. How many applicants requested a refund for not meeting the 2-day deadline?

b. Please also provide how many were refunded for not meeting the 2-day processing time, and the total amount of refunds provided"

## Answers

1. Passport applications can be lodged at any participating Australia Post outlet across Australia, at an Australian Passport Office (located in each capital city), or overseas at an Australian diplomatic or consular mission.

Once a passport application has been lodged with fees paid, it is sent to the APO for scanning into the passport issuing system.

Each passport application undergoes a range of assessments and security checks. Once assessed and finalised, the passport is then sent for printing and despatch.

Passports are primarily printed at the APO's bulk print facilities in Melbourne. Urgent passports are printed in the passport offices located in each capital city. Emergency passports are issued and printed overseas.

a. The APO has a number of mechanisms to capture customer enquiries received via email or phone.

- Where a customer has called APO's Call Centre to enquire about the status of their application or to register travel dates, this information is either captured on the APO's Travel Date Register, the Passport Issuance and Control System (PICS), or as a file note on the customer's application record.
- The same process applies to customers who have emailed the APO's public facing mailbox (passports.clientservices@dfat.gov.au).

2.a and b

| Staff Category              | Headcount |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| APS – Permanent employees   | 382       |
| APS – Non-Ongoing employees | 105       |
| APS – Casual Employees      | 0         |
| Contractor                  | 908       |
| Service Contract Staff      | 1,018     |

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|                                    |    |
|------------------------------------|----|
| APS secondees – Services Australia | 43 |
|------------------------------------|----|

3.a and b

| Staff Category                     | Increased headcount                          |
|------------------------------------|--|
| APS – Permanent employees          | 52   |
| APS – Non-Ongoing employees        | 64   |
| APS – Casual Employees             | 0  |
| Contractor                         | 676  |
| Service Contract Staff             | 943  |
| APS secondees – Services Australia | Peak of 120, reduced to 43 by 18 November 22 |

4. The level of security clearance depends on the role. For most APO staff they are working on OFFICIAL: Sensitive classified information that does not require a security clearance. These staff are cleared via a pre-employment check (including police records check) prior to commencement.

4.a Yes

5. There were ongoing internal discussions throughout 2022, including the period June to November on staff increases as well as the necessary property and IT requirements.

6.a \$455,458,024

6.b \$58,584,915

7. Revenue raised from 1 July 2022 to 29 November 2022:

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8. Projected total revenue for 2022 – 23 financial year:

8.a \$824,000,000

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9. Of the 1.2 million routine passports issued since 1 June 2022, around 1 million (80%) were not processed within the 10 business day timeframe.

9.a Of 241,712 priority applications received, 42,448 did not meet the two business day timeframe. All customers affected by this would be entitled to receive a full refund of the priority fee.

10. 241,712 applicants.

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Passport Operations

10.a Our current refund system does not provide a breakdown by request type. Not all customers will request a refund if their passport is provided within a reasonable margin of the two business day processing timeframe.

10.b 306 priority processing fees have been refunded (1 July to 18 November), which amounts to \$68,782. We continue to process refund requests incurred over this period.

## [152 – Parliamentary Question on Notice](#)

### [Topic: Passports](#)

### [Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham](#)

#### Questions

1. Has Minister Wong or Assistant Minister Watts or their offices requested any meetings/briefing from the APO?
  - a. If so, please provide details of who was in attendance and dates.
2. Of the four decision briefs provided by the Department since the election to the Minister relating to passport processing, how many have been returned with one or more of the recommendations not agreed to?
3. What process is undertaken when a Member of Parliament requests the escalation of a passport application?
4. How many passport applications has Minister Wong or Assistant Minister Watts or their offices requested to be escalated between 1 June 2022 and 18 November 2022?
5. How many passport applications have been escalated at the request of a Member of Parliament between 1 June 2022 and 18 November 2022?
6. During Senate Estimates APO executive director Bridget Brill stated, "On the modelling we had done, based on the data received from the travel industry and other sources, we anticipated we were going to be able to meet the demand based on the modelling."
  - a. Can the Department please provide a copy of the modelling which was done?
  - b. Can the Department please explain the process by which this modelling was compiled?
  - c. Did the Department consult with any other Departments on the modelling? If yes, who, when and how?
  - d. Did the Department seek any advice external to the public service on the modelling? If yes, who, when, how, and what was the cost?
  - e. What level of demand did this modelling expect?
  - f. What steps has the Department taken to ensure more accurate modelling is done to predict demand for its services?"

#### Answers

1. Since the election, the Australian Passport Office executive group has had numerous points of contact with the Minister and Assistant Minister and their offices on passport issues.

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a. Meetings/briefings – There have been eight formal meetings/briefings in total:

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Friday 3 June 2022         | In-person briefing of Foreign Minister's Office (FMO) staff.                               |
| Thursday 9 June 2022       | Virtual meeting with Assistant Minister Watts.   |
| Monday 20 June 2022        | In-person meeting with Assistant Minister Watts.   |
| Tuesday 16 August 2022     | In-person meeting with Assistant Minister Watts' office (AFMO) staff.                      |
| Monday 29 August 2022      | Virtual meeting with Assistant Minister Watts and staff.                                   |
| Tuesday 27 September 2022  | In-person meeting with the Foreign Minister, Assistant Foreign Minister and their offices. |
| Thursday 29 September 2022 | Virtual meeting with Assistant Minister Watts, AFMO and FMO staff.                         |
| Friday 18 November 2022    | Foreign Minister's in-person visit to the Adelaide Passport Office.                        |

Email and phone conversations – the APO executive group is in contact with Assistant Minister Watts' office on a regular basis to discuss passport issues and provide updates.

2. None.
3. Passport applications referred to the APO by a Member of Parliament are addressed consistent with the triaging criteria applied to enquiries made directly by a passport applicant. The APO prioritises passport applications by:
  - priority service fee paid (\$225)
    - With payment of the priority processing fee, a passport is ready for collection or mailing within two business days of all documents being received from Australia Post.
  - compelling compassionate grounds
    - Customers with compassionate or compelling circumstances can be issued a passport immediately at no additional cost.
    - Processes are in place to ensure customers who qualify for an immediate passport are prioritised.
  - travel and lodgement dates.

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- Customers who are waiting for passports and have planned travel are encouraged to contact the APO to register their travel dates.
4. Between 1 June 2022 and 18 November 2022, Minister Wong and Assistant Minister Watts and their offices made 3,386 written passport referrals to the APO.
  5. The APO is not able to provide the total number of written referrals from Members of Parliament during this timeframe.

Referrals from Members of Parliament are received via the APO's public-facing mailbox ([passports.clientservices@dfat.gov.au](mailto:passports.clientservices@dfat.gov.au)) and also through a number of public-facing mailboxes managed by the state/territory passport offices.

Referrals from Members of Parliament were also received through the department's state offices, to individual APO staff via direct email and phone call and redirected from the Assistant Foreign Minister's office.

In mid-June 2022, the APO established a telephony queue (MP Hotline) specifically so that Members of Parliament or their offices could contact the APO on behalf of a constituent.

From 10 June through to 18 October, 14,762 calls were received through APO's priority telephony queues, which included a combination of MP Hotline calls and other priority calls. Telephony changes made from 19 October allowed APO to report on MP Hotline call volumes. Since these changes came into effect, the APO has received 630 calls from the MP Hotline.

6. (a – f)
  - a. The passport demand forecast is an internal planning document. It is reviewed and updated on a regular basis.
  - b. The APO has a specialist data team that produces its passport demand forecast. Prior to the pandemic, we used advanced, internally developed forecasting models that produced results that were within 5% accuracy around 90% of the time.

During the pandemic, we switched to scenario-based modelling, primarily focussing on the projected path to the recovery of passport demand. We developed scenarios around the timing of the international border reopening and relaxation of travel restrictions around the world and plotted the recovery using mathematical functions that best reflected the actual data. We added surge components to account for the return of customers who had delayed applying for a passport during the pandemic.

Forecast scenarios, assumptions and approaches were updated to reflect global and domestic events.

- c. Our pre-pandemic forecasting methodology was reviewed by Department of Finance and approved for use in June 2020. In June 2022, Services Australia undertook a high-level review of the methodology used by DFAT to model passport application demand and output and considered it 'robust'.
- d. Throughout the pandemic, we engaged with international partners to benchmark and influence our recovery model. We also shared information on demand trends and

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recovery paths, customer sentiment and travel intentions. We used a range of travel industry information to inform our modelling assumptions and scenarios. We continue to regularly engage with representatives of the travel industry to understand international travel trends and demand. There was no cost to this engagement. As noted above, forecast scenarios were regularly updated to reflect global and domestic events.

- e. In November 2021, APO's forecast scenarios predicted a likely upper monthly demand range of around 280,000 applications per month. The highest volume scenarios exceeded 300,000 applications per month with peaks in March/April 2022. The outbreak of the Omicron variant in Australia in late 2021 dampened demand recovery and pushed the expected timing of peak demand to late 2022. Our April 2022 forecast predicted monthly demand would peak at over 300,000 applications in October 2022. Changes in traveller behaviour and industry offerings resulted in demand peaking sooner than expected. Demand peaked at 313,000 applications in June 2022 while APO was still in the process of onboarding and training new staff.
- f. We expect passport demand to remain volatile for the next 12-24 months. APO continues to review and refine its modelling, including working closely with domestic and international partners to better inform our forecasting assumptions and approach.

## [153 – Parliamentary Question on Notice](#)

### [Topic: Passports / Optus Data Breach](#)

### [Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham](#)

#### Questions

1. On the 27 September 2022 the APO issued advice on its website for people affected by the Optus data breach with the statement the APO “weren’t responsible for the data breach.”
  - a. Who approved the advice published on the APO website?
  - b. Who approves content to be published on the APO website?
  - c. Was the Minister’s office made aware of the advice before being published?
  - d. Why was the advice changed the next day on 28 September 2022?
  - e. Who approved the change in advice?
  - f. Did the Minister’s office request the advice to be changed?
  - g. Was the Minister’s office notified of the change?
2. Please provide any correspondence regarding advice published for Optus cyber breach victims on the APO website between 22 September and 30 September 2022.

#### Answers

The department’s responses are as follows:

- a. An SES Band 1 officer in the APO.
- b. An SES Band 1 officer in the APO.
- c. Yes.

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- d. APO's website content on the Optus data breach was being updated on a daily basis in response to the evolving situation.
- e. An SES Band 1 officer in the APO.
- f. No.
- g. No.

2. The department is unclear as to what information is being sought by the Hon. Senator. We can advise that between 22 September 2022 and 30 September 2022 the APO's website was updated 22 times with Optus-related advice for customers.

## [154 – Parliamentary Question on Notice](#)

### [Topic: Passports - Modelling](#)

### [Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham](#)

#### Questions

1. During Senate Estimates APO executive director Bridget Brill stated, "On the modelling we had done, based on the data received from the travel industry and other sources, we anticipated we were going to be able to meet the demand based on the modelling."

- a. Can the Department please provide a copy of the modelling which was done?
- b. Can the Department please explain the process by which this modelling was compiled?
- c. Did the Department consult with any other Departments on the modelling? If yes, who, when and how?
- d. Did the Department seek any advice external to the public service on the modelling? If yes, who, when, how, and what was the cost?
- e. What level of demand did this modelling expect?
- f. What steps has the Department taken to ensure more accurate modelling is done to predict demand for its services?

#### Answers

Refer to the answers provided to questions 6. a - f in QoN 152.

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[155 – Parliamentary Question on Notice](#)[Topic: R Series Passports](#)[Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham](#)

## Questions

1. When did the APO notify the current government of the transition to the new 'R Series' passport?
2. Who approved the decision to transition to the 'R Series' passport from September 2022?
  - a. Did the APO have contingency plans in place to delay the transition?
3. Please provide any correspondence between the APO and the Foreign Minister or the Assistant Foreign Minister regarding the 'R Series' passport.

## Answers

1. A reference to the new 'R Series' passport was made in the Incoming Government Brief.
2. The decision on the transition date for the R Series was made by the R Series Board, which includes the APO Executive Director and the department's Chief Information Officer. The last blank P Series was manufactured in January 2022 and its assembly line dismantled to begin R Series production.
  - a. The APO needed to begin issuing R Series passports before its P Series stock was exhausted. The exact date when this needed to occur depended on overall passport issuance.
3. The APO has provided three R Series briefs to ministers.

[156 – Parliamentary Question on Notice](#)[Topic: Passports / Optus Data Breach](#)[Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham](#)

## Questions

1. Please provide copies of any media or parliamentary statements where Minister Wong has discussed passport processing delays.
2. When did the Department first contact Optus regarding the company paying for replacement passports for Australians impacted by the Optus cyber breach?
3. When did the Foreign Minister or Foreign Minister's office first contact Optus regarding the company paying for replacement passports for Australians impacted by the Optus cyber breach?
4. When did the Foreign Minister or Foreign Minister's office first contact the APO for advice on how the Optus data breach would affect passports?
5. When did the Foreign Minister first write to Optus regarding the company paying for

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replacement passports for Australians impacted by the Optus cyber breach?

6. When did Optus reply? Please provide a copy of the response.

**Answers**

1. Minister Wong's media statements can be accessed via [www.foreignminister.gov.au](http://www.foreignminister.gov.au). The Minister's Parliamentary remarks can be accessed via Hansard.
2. Senior APO staff met with members of the Optus senior management team on six occasions (29 September 2022, 30 September 2022, 4 October 2022, 6 October 2022, 11 October 2022 and 28 October 2022). There were also a number of phone discussions during this period.
3. On 28 September 2022, Minister Wong wrote to the Optus CEO seeking confirmation that Optus will pay the application fee of any customers affected by the breach whose passport information was disclosed and who choose to replace their currently valid passport. The Prime Minister tabled the letter in Parliament on the same day.
4. On 27 September 2022.
5. On 28 September 2022.
6. On 15 October 2022, the Optus CEO formally responded to Minister Wong.

**[174 – Parliamentary Question on Notice](#)****[Topic: Passports – APO Resourcing](#)****[Senator the Hon. Nita Green](#)****Question**

Ms Brill: We worked internally, so it's an operational decision around staffing. We worked with the Secretary at the time around what we required. The way the office operates is through a funding agreement based on demand. So we predicted, based on our forecasted modelling, we were going to need to at least double our staffing by May, which we did.

Senator GREEN: When did you let the Minister [Payne] know that you would need that resourcing?

Ms Brill: I'd have to take that on notice, Senator, in terms of our information briefing to the Minister at that time. We were certainly working closely with the Secretary around our operational requirements, which is generally what we do in the Passport Office, given it's demand driven. So our staffing profile moves up and down quite regularly, even in a pre-COVID environment, depending on demand."

**Answer**

Prior to the borders reopening in November 2021, the APO provided regular operational briefings to the then Secretary, covering a range of surge scenarios that would necessitate staffing increases in order to meet increased demand for passports. As demand for passports

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surged in early 2022, operational briefings to the Secretary (verbal and written) and through to the then Foreign Minister's office occurred more frequently.

### [175 – Parliamentary Question on Notice](#)

#### [Topic: Passports – provision of updates to Ministers office](#)

#### [Senator the Hon. Nita Green](#)

##### Question

Ms Brill: We regularly brief the secretary of the department on the increasing demand APO was likely to get.

Senator GREEN: Every month?

Ms Brill: Yes, I would have to check, but it would be at least every month. Then, as we went into surge, there were verbal updates weekly and then daily.

Senator GREEN: And would those updates go to the Minister's office as well?

Ms Adams: I would say not necessarily in terms of normal operational information.

Senator Wong: We'll take it on notice. I think the question was: did you advise the previous Minister's office of the uptick in demand. Was that it? I'm paraphrasing.

Senator GREEN: Yes, that was the question. You're paraphrasing correctly, Minister.

##### Answer

Prior to the borders reopening in November 2021, the APO provided regular operational briefings to the then secretary, covering a range of surge scenarios that would necessitate staffing increases in order to meet increased demand for passports. As demand for passports surged in early 2022, operational briefings to the secretary (verbal and written) occurred more frequently.

### [218 – Parliamentary Question on Notice](#)

#### [Topic: Passports – fees and revenue](#)

#### [Senator the Hon. Simon Birmingham](#)

##### Question

"Senator BIRMINGHAM: Compared with pre-COVID trends, what's been the increase in applications that are priority applications?

Ms Brill: Around seven to eight per cent pre-COVID made up our priority applications. It's now sitting at around 18 to 20 per cent.

Senator BIRMINGHAM: It's now sitting at around 18 to 20 per cent of those coming in.

Perhaps, on notice, you can let me know what that means in terms of increased fees and revenue."

##### Answer

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In the 2019 calendar year (the last full year not affected by COVID) the government received Priority Processing Fee (PPF) revenue of \$36,200,654. At this time, PPF applications represented 8 to 9 percent of the total passport caseload.

In the 2022 calendar year to date (up to 29 November), the government has received PPF revenue of \$54,506,475. This is representative of 20 percent of the total passport caseload.

This money is returned to consolidated revenue.

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## COVID-19 – Foreign Vaccination Certificates

**Handling Note:** ED APO to lead. Detailed questions about recognising vaccines and what it means to be fully vaccinated should be referred to the Department of Health. Detailed questions about border operations, including why airlines are checking vaccination certificates, should be referred to the Department of Home Affairs.

### Strategic Message

- Australia's approach to foreign vaccination certificates is a clear and well-judged component in a wider system of risk mitigations.

### Does Australia accept vaccination certificates issued by other countries?

- Yes.
- Fully vaccinated eligible travellers must present a foreign vaccination certificate if they were vaccinated overseas and do not have an Australian International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate.
- The certificates have to show a full course of vaccines approved or recognised by Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration.
- Airlines inspect the certificates at check-in, confirm that they meet Australia's requirements and confirm that the biodata match the holder's passport
  - Most foreign vaccination certificate formats are acceptable
    - : certificates can be paper or digital
    - : they need to be in English or accompanied by a certified translation.
  - where possible, airlines are strongly encouraged to digitally authenticate foreign certificates using widely available industry and foreign government apps
  - most foreign certificates can be digitally authenticated.
- The certificates are one component in a series of risk mitigations that also includes:
  - Australia's high vaccination rates
  - pre-departure COVID testing for all inbound travellers
  - a legally-binding attestation of each traveller's vaccination status in the Digital Passenger Declaration
    - : penalties apply for false and misleading information, including potentially criminal prosecution and hotel quarantine at a traveller's own expense.
- Travellers aged under 12 years count as fully vaccinated.
- Travellers who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons need to provide evidence as to why they cannot be vaccinated.
  - Questions relating to policy around travellers who cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons should be directed to the Department of Health
- Australia's position is iterative, in line with developments in certificates, standards and systems globally.

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### **Won't these lax criteria endanger public health? How can they stop the next harmful variant from being introduced into Australia?**

- Reject the proposition that the criteria are lax.
- The criteria for foreign vaccination certificates amount to a base level of evidentiary proof that a certificate belongs to the holder, and that the course of immunisation complies with Australia's definition of what it means to be fully vaccinated
  - similar criteria are used by the US, Canada and New Zealand.
- Noting there is community transmission of COVID-19 in Australia, these criteria operate as part of a system of risk mitigations that also includes:
  - high vaccination rates in Australia
  - pre-departure PCR testing
  - formal attestations.
- The criteria and other risk mitigations are designed to reduce the risk of unvaccinated travellers entering Australia, but cannot eliminate risk entirely
  - Vaccinated travellers are at a lower risk of carrying COVID-19 but can still carry and pass it on
- Arrival checks by the ABF since the criteria have been in place have found very high levels of compliance
  - Of 23,402 travellers who arrived between 16 and 25 November, 5620 were checked for compliance with just 14 certificates found to be non-compliant (0.25 per cent)

### **The attestations won't stop anyone from lying, so why don't we require digital authentication of vaccination certificates?**

- Airlines will manually check all certificates and are strongly encouraged to digitally authenticate foreign certificates where possible
  - we estimate that 82 per cent of the world's population has access to digital vaccination certificates which can be authenticated.
  - Only accepting vaccination certificates that can be digitally authenticated would mean shutting out travellers from countries, including the United States, that do not yet have access to digital certificates.

### **What about children?**

- All children aged under 12 years and 3 months count as fully vaccinated for inbound travel purposes.
- Special arrangements apply for certain returning Australian children aged 12-17 years who are not fully vaccinated
  - Further questions should be directed to the Department of Health.

### **Does Australia accept EU vaccination certificates even though the EU doesn't recognise ours?**

- Australia's International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate (ICVC) is widely accepted as an adequate proof of vaccination at international borders, including in Europe



Senate Additional Estimates: 1 April 2022

- the issue with some countries requiring digital verification is not one of a lack of recognition but of European smartphone apps not been configured to read QR codes that aren't in the EU format.
- EU certificates comply with Australia's criteria for foreign vaccination certificates and are therefore accepted as adequate proof of vaccination at Australia's border.
- Australia's criteria for foreign vaccination certificates is universal and not taken on the basis of mutual recognition
  - this is because the approach is based on sound public health risk management principles and not on the basis of reciprocity
    - : this is in line with likeminded countries (US, Canada and New Zealand)
  - it's not clear that discriminating against travellers with EU certificates would change the EC approach to interoperability
    - : but would unfairly restrict the prospects of vaccinated Australians in European countries from returning home.

### **Can foreign vaccination certificates be used for proof of vaccination requirements domestically within Australia?**

- Individual state governments are responsible for proof of vaccination requirements within their borders

### **Why is the passport office deciding all this?**

- We're not:
  - the criteria have been developed in close collaboration with the Department of Health and the Department of Home Affairs
  - we're involved because our role in issuing Australia's international vaccination certificates and work with the ICAO standard has given us a good understanding of foreign vaccination certificates.

## **Background**

### **Recognition of COVID-19 Vaccines**

The Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) continues to assess what vaccines will be recognised by Australia for the purposes of inbound travel. Currently, ten vaccines are recognised by the TGA for the purposes of determining a traveller as fully vaccinated: Comirnaty (Pfizer), Vaxzevria (AstraZeneca), Spikevax/Takeda (Moderna), COVID-19 Vaccine Janssen-Cilag (Johnson & Johnson), Coronavac (Sinovac), Covishield (AstraZeneca – Serum Institute of India), Covaxin (Bharat Biotech), Sinopharm BBIBP-CorV (for people under 60 years of age), Sputnik V (Gamaleya Research Institute) and Nuvaxovid (Novavax/Biocelect).

### **State proof of vaccination requirements**

#### *New South Wales*

- You no longer need to show evidence of your vaccination status, unless you are at an airport, work in certain industries or are attending a music festival with more than 1000 people.

#### *Tasmania*

- You no longer need to show evidence of your vaccination status in most cases in Tasmani. Where you do : 'People vaccinated overseas can present certificates in

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formats that meet the criteria outlined on the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Guidance on foreign vaccination certificates.

#### *Victoria*

- For entry to domestic venues, where required: International visitors need two things to prove their vaccination status:
  - Evidence of vaccination or valid medical exemption. This can be either:
    - An ICVC; or
    - A copy of a paper or digital certificate issued by an overseas government authority or an accredited overseas government vaccination provided that [follows the minimum criteria].
  - Evidence of sighting by the Australian Government. This can be either:
    - An Australian Traveller Declaration; or
    - A COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing declaration for travel to Australia.

#### *Queensland*

- To enter a business or establishment in Queensland, travellers can provide:
  - An international COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate:
    - in a printed or electric form from the Department of Home Affairs that confirms completion of an Australian Travel Declaration and vaccination against COVID-19 overseas; or
    - through Medicare online account through MyGov or the Medicare mobile app; or
    - an official record of vaccination provided to the person when vaccinated against COVID-19 overseas.

#### *Australian Capital Territory*

- Businesses or other organisations are not required to seek proof of vaccination status to access public settings or private businesses other than in high-risk settings identified by the ACT Chief Health Officer such as hospitals and health care facilities.

#### *Northern Territory*

- You may be asked to show proof of vaccination when checking in to a range of businesses, venues, places and events.
- Proof of vaccination includes:
  - The Territory Check-In App with a link to the COVID-19 digital certificate
  - A COVID-19 digital certificate, stored on a mobile phone or printed
  - An Immunisation History Statement, either stored on a mobile phone or printed
  - An International COVID-19 Vaccination certificate for overseas travel.

#### *South Australia*

- You may be required to show proof of your COVID-19 vaccination status at your workplace or when entering some businesses and venues.
  - No information on SA website on foreign proof of vaccination certificates. Only mentions Australia's certificates.

#### *Western Australia*

- Proof of vaccination is now required for entry into a range of businesses across Western Australia.

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- Acceptable forms of proof of vaccination:
  - Customers can show proof of vaccination via: the Service WA app; Medicare app; COVID-19 digital certificate; or immunisation history statement.
- 'COVID-19 Coronavirus: Getting proof of COVID-19 vaccinations' (link) – advises that travellers vaccinated overseas can have their vaccinations recorded on the AIR to get a certificate; no mention of acceptance of foreign vaccination certificates.

## Supporting information

### Questions on Notice

No QoNs asked

### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

None

### Recent Ministerial Comments

- On 13 September 2021, the Minister for Home Affairs and the Minister for Employment, Workforce, Skills, Small and Family Business announced the introduction of the Digital Passenger Declaration. The Minister for Home Affairs said 'the DPD will support the safe re-opening of Australia's international borders, by providing digitally-verified COVID-19 vaccination details.'

### Relevant Media Reporting

- On 19 October 2021, the [ABC](#) reported the requirements for foreign vaccination certificates: the certificate must be in English or accompanied by a certified translation, showing a person's name, date of birth or passport number, the vaccine they received and the date they were vaccinated
- On 29 September 2021, the [Sydney Morning Herald](#) reported that the initial release [of the VDS-NC checker app] only authenticates vaccination certificates issued by Australia, but future updates will authenticate certificates issued by other countries.
- On 15 September 2021, [The Conversation](#) reported it was not clear 'what documents' inbound travellers will be able to upload to declare their COVID-19 vaccination status via the DPD.
- On 13 September 2021, the [Australian Financial Review](#) reported the Digital Passenger Declaration will be designed so border officials can 'collect and verify' vaccination status of international travellers and returning Australians, and share it with state authorities

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| Division: SDG   APO   Passport Integrity Branch |   |
| PDR No: s 22(1)(a)(ii)                          |   |
| Prepared by:<br>s 22(1)(a)(ii)                  | Cleared by Branch/Division Head:<br>Bridget Brill |



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| Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)    Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 24 March 2022       | Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)    Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 24 March 2022   |
| <b>Consultation:</b> COCID-19 Coordination Unit<br>Name: s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Date: 18 January 2022<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)    Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) |
|   |   |
| <b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary:</b>                                     | Date:   |

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## **APO SUPPORTING OVERSEAS PASSPORT SERVICES DURING COVID-19**

### ***How has COVID-19 impacted passport services overseas?***

- . From the start of the pandemic there has been a decrease in overseas applications for passports.
  - A decrease of 37% from 2018-19 (112,672 pre-pandemic) to 2020-21 (71,401 post-pandemic).
- . While demand remains below pre-pandemic levels, it does vary from country to country depending on COVID responses each country has in place, including the opening and closing of borders.
  - So far in FY 2021-22, to 31 January, we have received more than 48,000 overseas applications.
    - This is around 20% higher than the same period the previous year.
- . Being flexible in our response to passport services overseas has been essential as countries have responded to the pandemic and as our customers and staff have been affected.
  - In some countries, customers have not been able to meet the in-person lodgement requirements for an Australian passport.
  - Our own staff have also been impacted by lockdowns, restrictions and infection.

### ***How has APO responded to support services overseas?***

- . APO has been focussed on supporting our overseas missions to balance the provision of passport services within local COVID-19 limitations.
  - Where there are COVID impacts, we allow passports to be issued without the need for a face-to-face interview.
  - To support this, we have implemented a digital upload function for customers unable to attend a face-to-face interview in countries with interrupted or compromised mail services.
    - As at 31 January 2022 this function has been utilised by India, Vietnam, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

### ***How has APO assisted the Australian High Commission's passport office in London (London Passport Office)?***

- . To support customer demand while moving out of lockdown, measures were implemented to work through built-up demand while

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allowing the London office to focus efforts on supporting urgent applications.

- Mail in applications were accepted and were processed in Australia.
- These measures were implemented in Copenhagen and Rome to also assist with the delivery of passport services, while additional support was needed.
- As of 31 January 2022, APO has processed 12,741 passports in Australia under these measures.

***What is next for overseas passport services impacted by COVID-19?***

- APO continues to work closely with overseas missions to understand local COVID 19 restrictions, and the impact this has on the ability to deliver passport services.
- APO will continue to modify and adapt passport services accordingly while continuing to maintain the integrity of Australian travel documents.

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|--|--|
| <b>Prepared by:</b>                          | <b>Cleared by:</b>                           |
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| Date: 08 February 2022                       | Date: 08 February 2022                       |



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Ref 1.3

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**PASSPORT RENEWAL REMINDER SERVICE**

*See also the separate brief: 10.2 – Passport fee schedule 2022*

- . One of the department's business-as-usual services is to notify existing passport holders if their passport has expired or is going to expire.
- . Since January last year, the department has sent out passport renewal reminders via email and SMS to almost 2.3 million Australians
  - over 375,000 (16 per cent) of these customers have since applied for a new passport.
- . Most passports are valid for ten years and many Australians would not know their passport was about to expire without a reminder.
- . In fact, for many customers, passports are often forgotten until they're just about to travel
  - prior to introducing the reminder service, we even saw some cases where customers weren't aware that their passport had expired until they'd arrived at the airport.
- . Our past experience has shown that the majority of our customers support receiving passport renewal reminders
  - this is borne out by our market research, in which more than two-thirds (69 per cent) of respondents (2,255 out of 3,387) want to receive these reminders once their passport expires or is close to expiring.

***Have you been swamped since the border reopening?***

- . Following the reopening of Australia's international border, DFAT has been experiencing an increase in passport demand.
- . Since 1 November 2021, the department has issued over 320,000 new passports.
  - this is almost triple the number issued compared to the same period 12 months ago.
- . This increased demand is in part due to the large number of people who opted not to get a new passport while travel restrictions remained in place
  - over the past 12 months, we estimate around 1.8 million Australians have either put off renewing their expired passport or applying for one for the first time.

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REF 1.3

Additional Estimates February 2022

## OFFICIAL

Ref 1.3

- 
- . As a result of the increased demand, passports are currently taking longer to process.
    - at present, processing times are, on average, around 16 business days (compared to within 10 business days previously).
  - . This is well short of the timeframe the public are encouraged to renew their passport – which is up to six weeks ahead of their planned travel.
  - . This is also much shorter than the average processing times seen in the United States and the United Kingdom following the reopening of their own international borders, with many customers waiting in excess of 90 days to receive their passport.

***When did you start sending these reminders?***

- . On 19 January 2021.
- . We're not alone in sending out these reminders.
- . New Zealand's Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) launched its own reminder service in December 2020
- . Since mid-2021, the United Kingdom has also been sending text messages to customers whose passports are nearing expiry to let them know to allow more time to renew
  - at around the same time, the UK's passport office announced that the turnaround time for processing applications for a British passport would increase from 3 weeks to 3 months.

***Who have you been sending them to?***

- . Customers who receive our reminders includes those whose passports are due to expire within the next six to nine months
  - as well as customers whose passports expired nearly three years ago and will soon miss out on our streamlined renewal service as a result.
- . Only adult passport holders receive these reminders
  - that is, if they were 18 or over at the time of their most recent passport application.

***Can people opt out if they don't want to receive reminders?***

- . Customers can notify us if they do not wish to receive any reminders and we will adjust their records accordingly.
- . Most passports are valid for 10 years so customers will only receive these messages as their passports near expiry.

REF 1.3

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- . Our service is about helping Australians be ‘travel ready’
  - it’s not about cluttering inboxes.

***Aren’t these reminders a breach of passport holders’ privacy?***

- . Our service complies with the Privacy Act.
- . We use the contact details that customers provided last time they applied for a passport.
- . The reminder messages contain no personal information.

**Background**

As at 31 January 2022, we had issued passport renewal reminders to over 2.3 million Australians (i.e. those whose passports had either expired in the preceding 12 months or were about to). Over 16 per cent of these customers have since applied for passports.

Our reminders have, in the main, been positively received by our customers. As at 31 January 2022, we had received only 48 pieces of negative commentary, mostly via social media and our website’s feedback form, suggesting the vast majority of Australians support receiving such reminders.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Prepared by:</b>                          | <b>Cleared by:</b>                           |
| s 22(1)(a)(ii)                               | Craig Kelly                                  |
| Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) |
| Date: 8 February 2022                        | Date: 8 February 2022                        |

REF 1.3

Additional Estimates February 2022



## APO PERFORMANCE

### *How is the APO tracking against its Portfolio Budget Statements performance criteria?*

- . APO met all its performance targets in 2020-21.
- . At 1 February 2022, we are on track to meet **four out of seven** targets this financial year.

### *Will APO be able to meet the performance criteria this financial year?*

- . Passport demand is very hard to forecast however, on current volumes, it is unlikely we will recover them this financial year.
- . This could change should a spike in passport demand occur ahead of the European summer.

| Target  | 2020-21  | 2021-22<br>(at 1 February 2022)   |
|---|--|---|
| <b>95 per cent</b> of passports processed within 10 business days                                 | <b>Achieved: 98 per cent</b> of passports were processed within ten business days.                       | <b>Not on track: 73 per cent</b> of passports have been processed within ten business days.   |
| <b>98 per cent</b> of priority passports processed within two business days                       | <b>Achieved: 99 per cent</b> of priority passports were processed within two business days.              | <b>Not on track: 86 per cent</b> of priority passports are processed within two business days.  |
| <b>100 per cent</b> of identified high risk passport applications scrutinised by specialist staff | <b>Achieved: 100 per cent</b> of high-risk applications were scrutinised by specialist staff.            | <b>On track: 100 per cent</b> of high-risk applications were scrutinised by specialist staff.   |
| <b>90 per cent</b> of administrative investigations finalised within five business days           | <b>Achieved: 100 per cent</b> of administrative investigations were finalised within five business days. | <b>On track: 100 per cent</b> of administrative investigations were finalised within five business days.  |
| <b>95 per cent</b> of referrals to prosecuting authorities accepted for prosecution               | <b>Achieved: 100 per cent</b> of referrals to prosecuting authorities accepted for prosecution.          | <b>Not on track: 50 per cent</b><br>Prosecuting authorities have assessed two referrals this year – accepting 1 referral and rejecting 1 referral. Other referrals remain under assessment. |
| <b>60 per cent</b> of applications commenced online.  | <b>Achieved: 82 per cent</b> of clients applied online.  | <b>On track: 83 per cent</b> of clients have applied online so far this financial year.   |
| <b>85 per cent</b> satisfaction rate of overall passport service from client survey               | <b>Achieved: 94 per cent</b> satisfaction rate of overall passport service from client survey.           | <b>On track: 94 per cent</b> satisfaction rate of overall passport service from client survey.  |

**BACKGROUND**

DFAT's Portfolio Budget Statements (Program 2.2) outline the APO's high level performance information for current and ongoing programs as well as expected performance for the current year (**Attachment A**).

These measures are included in DFAT's 2021-22 Corporate Plan (**Attachment B** – refer measures 6.1 and 6.4).

**Attachment C** outlines a detailed description of the targets and the APO methods for quantifying performance against the specified targets.

**Attachment D** shows APO's monthly performance against each target for 2021-22 year to date.

| <b>Prepared by:</b>                          | <b>Cleared by:</b>                           |
|--|--|
| s 22(1)(a)(ii)                               | s 22(1)(a)(ii)                               |
| Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) |
| Date: 3 February 2022                        | Date: 4 February 2022                        |



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## Ref 1.4 – Attachment A

**PBS PERFORMANCE CRITERIA -  
APO, OUTCOME 2, PROGRAM 2.2 (FY 2021-22)**

*DFAT Budget Statements*

**Table 2.2.3: Performance criteria for Outcome 2 (continued)**

| <b>Program 2.2 (continued) – Passport Services</b> provide Australians access to secure international travel documentation through the delivery of high-quality passport services. |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| 2021–22  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The department maintains a high standard in processing passport applications, investigating and prosecuting fraud.</li> <li>Clients are satisfied with passport services, including online services.</li> </ul> | <p>Through assessments, surveys, evaluations, audits or other measures, DFAT will demonstrate whether these performance criteria are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieved</li> <li>On track</li> <li>Partially on track</li> <li>Not on track</li> </ul> <p>Specific targets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>95 per cent of passports processed within 10 business days.</li> <li>98 per cent of priority passports processed within two business days.</li> <li>100 per cent of identified high-risk passport applications scrutinised by specialist staff.</li> <li>90 per cent of administrative investigations finalised within five business days.</li> <li>95 per cent of referrals to prosecuting authorities accepted for prosecution.</li> <li>60 per cent of applications commenced online.</li> <li>85 per cent satisfaction rate of overall passport service from client survey.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Purposes</b>  | To help make Australia stronger, safer and more prosperous by promoting and protecting our interests internationally and contributing to global stability and economic growth, particularly in the Indo-Pacific region.                                |   |



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## Ref 1.4 – Attachment B

## APO PERFORMANCE TARGETS DFAT CORPORATE PLAN 2021-22

### PERFORMANCE

| What will be measured  | Target  |  |
|--|---|--|
|  | 2021-22   | 2022-23 to 2024-25                         |
| <b>Effectiveness measures</b>  |   |  |
| 6.1 The department maintains a high standard in processing passport applications, investigating and prosecuting fraud.   | 95 per cent of passports processed within 10 business days.<br>98 per cent of priority passports processed within two business days.<br>100 per cent of identified high risk passport applications scrutinised by specialist staff.<br>95 per cent of referrals to prosecuting authorities accepted for prosecution.<br>90 per cent of administrative investigations finalised within five business days. | Forward targets to be set in future years. |
| <u>Methodology:</u> Data on processing times and client satisfaction from the Australian Passport Office's passport systems.   |   |  |
| 6.2 A responsive consular service through our 24/7 global network, focusing on Australians most in need.   | Relevant support provided to Australians overseas in need, including those who seek to return to Australia and/or have been impacted by COVID-19 and restricted by international travel or border settings.   | Forward targets to be set in future years. |
| <u>Methodology:</u>  |   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports on consular cases from the department's Consular Information System and related systems.</li> <li>• Data on call volumes and wait times from the department's Consular Emergency Centre.</li> </ul> |   |  |
| 6.3 Australians have information to prepare for safe travel overseas.  | 100 per cent of Travel Advisories reviewed bi-annually for posts in a volatile risk environment and/or where there are high Australian interests.<br>100 per cent of Travel Advisories reviewed annually for all other posts.   | Forward targets to be set in future years. |
| <u>Methodology:</u> Data analytics and reporting from the department's Smartraveller website.  |   |  |
| <b>Efficiency measure</b>  |   |  |
| 6.4 Clients are satisfied with passport services, including online services.   | 60 per cent of applications commenced online.<br>85 per cent satisfaction rate of overall passport service from client survey.  | Forward targets to be set in future years. |
| <u>Methodology:</u> Data on processing times and client satisfaction from the Australian Passport Office's passport systems.   |   |  |

\* From 2021-22 DFAT Corporate Plan, page 24

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Ref 1.4 – Attachment C

## PBS PERFORMANCE CRITERIA - MEASURES AND DESCRIPTIONS

| Specified targets:  | Description   |
|---|---|
| <b>95 per cent</b> of passports processed within 10 business days                                 | Number of passports processed within 10 working days from scan date to date of print quality pass (excluding time on application hold) as a portion of all passports despatched in the period   |
| <b>98 per cent</b> of priority passports processed within two business days                       | Number of priority passports processed within 2 working days from scan date to date of print quality pass (excluding time on application hold) as a proportion of all priority passports despatched in the period.  |
| <b>100 per cent</b> of identified high risk passport applications scrutinised by specialist staff | All high risk applications identified and referred to a specialist unit and reviewed (triaged) by specialist staff in the period. Identified 'high risk' applications include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• alleged or suspected case of application fraud,</li> <li>• possible falsified identities detected using biometric data,</li> <li>• applications matched against alert profiles including child sex offenders</li> <li>• Complex cases* involving the rights of an individual to consent to a passport being issued to a child and in certain circumstances an adult.</li> </ul> |
| <b>90 per cent</b> of administrative investigations finalised within five business days           | Percentage of administrative actions taken by the APO against an applicant in response to an alleged, suspected or confirmed case of application fraud where a criminal response was not warranted.<br>An action will meet the 5 business day KPI where the delegate makes their final decision on the outcome of an administrative investigation within 5 days of the investigation being completed.   |
| <b>95 per cent</b> of referrals to prosecuting authorities accepted for prosecution               | Percentage of briefs submitted to the CDPP that were accepted for prosecution as a proportion of total CDPP decisions to accept or reject a submission for prosecution.<br>Briefs submitted awaiting a CDPP decision on acceptance are not included.  |
| <b>60 per cent</b> of persons applying online   | Percentage of passport applications lodged that were generated online at Passports.gov.au (including new application checklists) as a proportion of all applications lodged in the period.  |
| <b>85 per cent</b> satisfaction rate of overall passport service from client survey               | Overall, average satisfaction score of 8.5 or above for the last survey conducted in the reporting period   |

\* 'High risk' complex cases are defined in the Integrated Passport Assessment Risk Model (IPARM) – refer [2017 Complex Case Review - Implementation Assessment](#).



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Ref 1.4 – Attachment D

## APO PBS PERFORMANCE SCORECARD At 31 January 2022

### Year to Date

| 2021-22 Portfolio Budget Statement Performance Targets                                     | Target | YTD<br>2021-22 |
|--|--------|----------------|
| 95 per cent of passports processed within 10 business days                                 | 95%    | 73%            |
| 98 per cent of priority passports processed within two business days                       | 98%    | 86%            |
| 100 per cent of identified high risk passport applications scrutinised by specialist staff | 100%   | 100%           |
| 90 per cent of administrative investigations finalised within five business days           | 90%    | 100%           |
| 95 per cent of referrals to prosecuting authorities accepted for prosecution               | 95%    | 50%            |
| 60 per cent of applications commenced online   | 60%    | 83%            |
| 85 per cent satisfaction rate of overall passport service from client survey               | 85%    | 94%            |

### Month by Month

| 2021-22 Portfolio Budget Statement Performance Targets                                     | Jul 21 | Aug 21 | Sep 21 | Oct 21 | Nov 21 | Dec 21 | Jan 22 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| 95 per cent of passports processed within 10 business days                                 | 96%    | 98%    | 98%    | 92%    | 59%    | 39%    | 57%    |
| 98 per cent of priority passports processed within two business days                       | 100%   | 100%   | 98%    | 98%    | 73%    | 81%    | 99%    |
| 100 per cent of identified high risk passport applications scrutinised by specialist staff | 100%   | 100%   | 100%   | 100%   | 100%   | 100%   | 100%   |
| 90 per cent of administrative investigations finalised within five business days           | 100%   | 100%   | 100%   | 100%   | 100%   | -      | 100%   |
| 95 per cent of referrals to prosecuting authorities accepted for prosecution               | -      | -      | -      | 100%   | -      | 0%     | -      |
| 60 per cent of applications commenced online   | 84%    | 84%    | 84%    | 83%    | 82%    | 81%    | 82%    |
| 85 per cent satisfaction rate of overall passport service from client survey               | 94%    | 94%    | 94%    | 93%    | 93%    | 94%    | 94%    |

**REF 1.4**  
**Senate Estimates February 2022**

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## **APO RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

### ***How has COVID-19 affected passport demand?***

- . The onset of COVID-19 and travel restrictions saw passport demand drop by around 70 per cent since the start of the pandemic.
- . From March 2020 to the end of January 2022, APO expected to receive over 4.3 million passport applications. However, due to the pandemic, we received just under 1.5 million applications.
- . There has been an increase in passport demand following the reopening of Australia's international border.
  - Since 1 November 2021, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has issued over 275,000 passports.
  - This is more than triple the number issued in the same period 12 months ago.

### ***How has APO responded to COVID-19?***

- . While fewer staff were needed to process applications, APO redeployed passport staff to support the broader Australian Government response to the pandemic.
  - Since the start of the pandemic over 240 APO employees – just over 40 per cent of the total APO staff – were redeployed to other roles, helping Australians in need.
- . Since April 2020, APO has also taken over the delivery of the Australian Passport Information Service (APIS) call centre service, previously delivered by Services Australia.
  - Taking over this function has freed up additional resources for Services Australia to provide vital COVID-19-related support to Australians in need.
- . APO met all Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in FY 2020-21.
  - We processed 98 per cent of normal passports within 10 business days and 99 per cent of priority passports within two business days.
- . Protecting the health of clients and staff is a high priority for APO with measures in place per Commonwealth and State requirements. These include hygiene, social distancing and isolation measures within our State and Territory offices.

### ***How has APO assisted Australians overseas?***

- . APO has worked closely with Australia's diplomatic and consular missions around the world to provide passport services to Australians overseas.



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Ref 1.5

- . Temporary measures to streamline the passport application process were introduced for Australians who, due to their extraordinary circumstances, were not able to interact with us in person.
- . This has included conducting application interviews ‘virtually’, accepting mailed or scanned applications, access to a digital upload function and processing payments on behalf of overseas posts.
- . As at 31 January 2022, 19,678 Australians have been issued with a passport under these measures.
- . In addition, APO has provided practical support to Australians through:
  - priority processing of QANTAS crew members conducting repatriation flights
  - assisting Australians by processing payments for tickets on chartered flights from South America
  - providing additional telephony support in the Consular Emergency Centre for Australians seeking to return home
  - assisting Australians with children born under surrogacy arrangements by expediting passport applications
  - assisting Australians applying for Overseas financial assistance while seeking to return to Australia

***What are the impacts of COVID-19 on APO?***

- . APO calculates that, as at the end of January 2022, around 1.8 million Australians have put off renewing or applying for passports due to COVID-19.
- . As travel restrictions have eased and Australians choose to apply for a passport, this pent-up demand has posed challenges for our systems.
  - We are actively working through ways to minimise the impact and identify opportunities for efficiencies

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Prepared by:</b>                          | <b>Cleared by:</b>                           |
| s 22(1)(a)(ii)                               | Craig Kelly                                  |
| Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) |
| Date: 08 February 2022                       | Date: 08 February 2022                       |

REF 1.5

Senate Estimates October 2021

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Ref 1.6

## **PASSPORT FEES, REFUNDS & EXTENSIONS DURING COVID-19**

### ***Why don't we extend the validity of passports, give refunds or reduce fees to make up for COVID-19 travel restrictions?***

- . Passports are subject to international standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)
  - Our passports have the maximum validity ICAO recommends, which is also reflected in our legislation
  - Exceeding it could cause Australians' problems at international borders.
- . Technologically it is not possible to extend the validity of current passports. The passport would need to be reproduced and reissued as
  - The expiry date is written onto each document's electronic chip
  - Amending the chip makes the passport unusable.
- . Passport fees are levied as application fees
  - COVID-19 has not reduced the cost of processing applications and the production of Australian passports
  - Approximately 10 – 15,000 passports a week were still being issued up until Australia opened its borders for international travel on 1 November 2021.
  - Since 1 November 2021, approximately 24,000 passports a week are being issued.
- . Passports are far from worthless during the pandemic
  - Australians travelling overseas and/or intending to return to Australia and/or with permission to depart Australia can continue to use their existing valid passports
  - Australians continue to use their passports as secure identification for accessing government services, opening bank accounts and connecting to utilities etc.
    - : In fact, Australian passports can be used in Australia for this purpose for up to three years after their expiry.

### ***We understand that the Department of Home Affairs may look to extend visas or offer refunds for certain individuals who are unable to travel to Australia. Why can't the same apply to passports?***

- . We are not able to comment on Australia's visa programs, given that is the portfolio responsibility for the Department of Home Affairs.

REF 1.6

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## OFFICIAL

Ref 1.6

- . The technical reasons for why it is not possible to extend the validity of current passports has been outlined above (e.g. chip). These would not apply to visas.
- . As has been previously mentioned, Australian passports have a variety of uses other than for travel, in particular as a form of secure identification.
- . Our position is in line with other countries. To our knowledge, no other country is extending validity or offering discounts to individuals.

**BACKGROUND**

Since the first enquiry regarding the possibility of a refund for unused validity, or an extension to a passport expiry date due to restrictions arising from the COVID-19 pandemic (April 2020), APO has responded to a number of written enquiries (486 approximately).

- 9 enquiries received by PLR section directly
- 44 enquiries received through the APO feedback portal
- 22 enquiries received through PDMS (either directly to APO or via the Foreign Minister's Office
- Telephone enquiries received (if any) directly through APO Contact Centre relating to the above are also not reflected in this count.

***Extending Australian Visas due to COVID-19 – to be addressed by Home Affairs***

The Department of Home Affairs' website states that some visa holders impacted by Australia's COVID-19 travel restrictions will soon be able to access a refund or a waiver of their Visa Application Charge (VAC).

Visa extension measures are also available to Prospective Marriage visa holders under certain scenarios.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Prepared by:</b>                          | <b>Cleared by:</b>                           |
| s 22(1)(a)(ii)                               | Troy Kaizik                                  |
| Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) |
| Date: 4 February 2022                        | Date: 9 February 2022                        |

REF 1.6

Senate Estimates February 2022



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Ref 1.7

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## PROTECTING PASSPORTS DATA

**Handling Note:**

Please note the following **Attachment:**

‘A’ – DFAT privacy breaches (supplementary points to CLO brief – **not on hand**)

**What is the department doing to protect passports data?**

- . Protecting privacy and the data of Australian citizens is a core focus of the APO
  - we employ cybersecurity and privacy controls and regularly review data risks and risk treatments to ensure they remain fit for purpose.
  
- . The foundation of our **cybersecurity** controls is a mature and robust passport IT system, developed and sustained in close consultation with the department’s cybersecurity specialists
  - APO IT systems sit within the DFAT firewall
  - each system has its own security risk management plan, approved by the department’s cybersecurity specialists, with which we comply
  - we monitor critical services in real-time
  - we promptly and assiduously patch passport systems to address security vulnerabilities
  - our systems and policies are configured to ensure high availability and safeguard data against loss, corruption and compromise
  - robust backup and business continuity capabilities allow us to recover quickly and smoothly from disruption
  - because of these measures, **passport systems score well against the Essential Eight** cybersecurity strategies mandated by the Australian Signals Directorate.
  
- . We also have robust **privacy** controls in place. For example:
  - we implement privacy-by-design and conduct privacy impact assessments of planned new external-facing systems to ensure that they represent best practice and meet disclosure requirements in the *Australian Passports Act 2005* and the *Privacy Act 1988*
  - we comply with a range of specific additional privacy provisions, such as the exhaustive, legally binding requirements of the Identity Matching Services Participation Agreement

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REF 1.7

Senate Estimates February 2022

## OFFICIAL

Ref 1.7

- 
- staff complete mandatory security awareness and privacy training before accessing our specialist passport systems and sign an acknowledgement of their responsibility to protect data against unauthorised use
  - we grant each staff member only as much access as required for their duties and log all user access to our passport database
  - we conduct regular privacy audits
  - our systems notify us automatically of all access to the records of customers who have been pre-identified as being of a greater privacy risk (i.e. VIPs)
  - specialist staff assess suspicious activities, and where we cannot link an activity to a legitimate business reason, APO's professional passport investigators work with People Division's Employee Conduct and Ethics Section to resolve the matter
  - APO complies with DFAT's Privacy Breach Response Plan.
- .
- Although these treatments make the risks to our data manageable, we are acutely conscious of the residual risk
    - where there is resource contention, we prioritise investments in IT data security over other passport IT activity.

***Have there been any passport-related privacy breaches this FY? If so, what you have done to mitigate the risk of repeat events?***

- .
- Yes. There have been nine (9) incidents involving passport information. For privacy reasons, I am not able to discuss specific details of each event other than:
    - two (2) incidents involved a locally engaged staff at different overseas posts
    - the remaining seven (7) incidents involved a passport officer in Australia
    - each incident was due to an unintentional administrative action
      - : remedial action was taken in each case
      - : None constituted an eligible data breaches under the Notifiable Data Breach Scheme to be reported to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner
      - : Seven (7) cases were reported internally.

REF 1.7

Senate Estimates February 2022

## OFFICIAL

Ref 1.7

**BACKGROUND**

CLO is leading on this issue (see Attachments 'A' and 'B'). Detail of the **nine (9) passport-related privacy breaches** are summarised below. The details are not in the public domain.

- . A locally engaged staff member (LES) at post provided the personal details of a customer to a third party by using an incorrect email address. The customer was notified of the event by a third party.
- . A locally engaged staff member (LES) at post circulated the personal details of a customer to several third parties by inadvertent email circulation.
- . There were three (3) cases of Passport Case Officers (PCO) in Australia providing the personal details of a customer to a third party by using an incorrect email address.
- . A staff member in Australia sent a legalised document belonging to a customer to a third party, who contacted APO to advise that they had received their own legalised document plus a document for another customer in same envelope. The customers were unknown to each other.
- . A notification of a delegate's decision to refuse an "All Rights Reserved" signature was invertedly sent to a customer with the application and form number of another customer in the subject of the email. No response has been received from the incorrect recipient.
- . A staff member incorrectly copied her personal email (instead of her DFAT email) into an email containing the personal information of a passport client. s 47F(1)
- . A passport was incorrectly posted to the wrong recipient. The cause was identified as an error in printing the envelope. The passport was returned to APO and delivered to the correct customer.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Prepared by:</b>                             | <b>Cleared by:</b>                              |
| s 22(1)(a)(ii)                                  | Troy Kaizik                                     |
| Mobile: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Mobile: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) |
| Date: 9 February 2022                           | Date: 9 February 2022                           |

REF 1.7

Senate Estimates February 2022

As at 18 January 2022

## Attachment A: Summary of DFAT Privacy Breaches (FY2020-21 and 2021-22)

| FY2021-22 to date |                |               |                       |                               |                             |                        |               |
|-------------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|---------------|
| No.               | Date of breach | Business area | Description of breach | Type of information disclosed | No. of affected individuals | Notifiable Data Breach | OAIC engaged? |
| s 22(1)(a)(ii)    |                |               |                       |                               |                             |                        |               |





As at 18 January 2022

|                 |          |     |   |          |   |   |
|-----------------|----------|-----|---|----------|---|---|
| 9.              | s 47F(1) | APO | An email was sent to a passport client with the personal information of an unrelated child client in the subject line.  | s 47F(1) | N | N |
| s 22(1)(a)(iii) |          |     |   |          |   |   |
| 11.             | s 47F(1) | APO | Staff member incorrectly copied her personal email (instead of her DFAT email) into an email containing the personal information of a passport client. s 47F(1) | s 47F(1) | N | N |
| 12.             |          | APO | An email was sent to a passport client with the personal information of an unrelated client in the subject line.  |          | N | N |
| 13.             |          | APO | Passport was sent to the incorrect client after the relevant envelope was mislabelled.  |          | N | N |
| 14.             |          | APO | Original documents in respect of which the department was providing a legalisation (notarial) service were put in an incorrect                                  |          | N | N |

As at 18 January 2022

| s 47F(1)       |                  |   |          |   |   |
|----------------|------------------|---|----------|---|---|
| 15.            | APO              | envelope and sent to another passport client.<br>An email containing the personal information of a passport client in the subject line was sent to an incorrect external email address. | s 47F(1) | N | N |
| s 22(1)(a)(ii) |                  |   |          |   |   |
| 17.            | APO              | An email containing the personal information of a passport client in the subject line was sent to an incorrect external email address.  | s 47F(1) | N | N |
| s 22(1)(a)(ii) |                  |   |          |   |   |
| 19.            | s 47F(1)<br>post | An email including personal information of a passport client was inadvertently sent to an Australian Government attached agencies email distribution list at post.                      | s 47F(1) | N | N |
| s 22(1)(a)(ii) |                  |   |          |   |   |

As at 18 January 2022

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

|              |                  |   |          |
|--------------|------------------|---|----------|
| 23. s 47F(1) | s 47F(1)<br>post | s 47F(1) post emailed an invoice for passport services to an incorrect email address. The invoice included the personal information of a passport client. | s 47F(1) |
| 24.          | APO              | An email was sent to a passport client with the personal information of an unrelated client included in the title bar                                     |          |

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

|   |   |
|---|---|
| N | N |
| N | N |



As at 18 January 2022

FY2020/21

| No. | Date of breach | Business areas | Description of breach | Type of information disclosed | No. of affected individuals | Notifiable Data Breach | OAIC engaged |
|-----|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------|
|-----|----------------|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|--------------|

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

|    |          |     |  |          |  |   |   |
|----|----------|-----|--|----------|--|---|---|
| 3. | s 47F(1) | APO | An email attaching a passport client's passport application and supporting documents was sent to an incorrect email address. | s 47F(1) |  | N | N |
| 4. |          | APO | An email attaching correspondence intended for a passport client was sent to another passport client.                        |          |  | N | N |

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

As at 18 January 2022

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

|             |                  |   |          |
|-------------|------------------|---|----------|
| 7. s 47F(1) | s 47F(1)<br>post | An email attaching correspondence intended for a passport client was sent to an incorrect external email address. | s 47F(1) |
| 8.          | APO              | An email intended for a passport client was sent to an incorrect external email address.                          |          |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| N | N |
| N | N |

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

|              |     |  |          |
|--------------|-----|--|----------|
| 11. s 47F(1) | APO | An email containing the personal information of a passport client was sent to an incorrect external email address. | s 47F(1) |
|--------------|-----|--|----------|

|   |   |
|---|---|
| N | N |
|---|---|

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

As at 18 January 2022

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

|              |     |   |
|--------------|-----|---|
| 20. s 47F(1) | APO | Personal information of passport client inadvertently sent to an external recipient instead of an internal mailbox s 47F(1) |
|--------------|-----|---|

|   |   |
|---|---|
| N | N |
|---|---|

As at 18 January 2022

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

|                |          |     |  |          |   |   |
|----------------|----------|-----|--|----------|---|---|
| 22.            | s 47F(1) | APO | s 47F(1)   | s 47F(1) | N | N |
| s 22(1)(a)(ii) |          |     | APO inadvertently sent the passport information of another individual. |          |   |   |





As at 18 January 2022

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

|              |     |   |          |
|--------------|-----|---|----------|
| 37. s 47F(1) | APO | An email intended for an APO client regarding a child passport application was sent to an incorrect external email address.     | s 47F(1) |
| 38.          | APO | An internal email containing details of a child passport application inadvertently sent to an unrelated external email address. |          |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| N | N |
| N | N |

As at 18 January 2022

|                |                  |   |          |   |   |
|----------------|------------------|---|----------|---|---|
| 39. s 47F(1)   | s 47F(1)<br>Post | Letter regarding a child's passport application intended for the applicant's non-lodging parent was incorrectly addressed s 47F(1)            | s 47F(1) | N | N |
| s 22(1)(a)(ii) |                  |   |          |   |   |
| 41. s 47F(1)   | APO              | An APO officer inadvertently forwarded an internal email to a passport client which contained the information of a DFAT staff member s 47F(1) | s 47F(1) | N | N |
| s 22(1)(a)(ii) |                  |   |          |   |   |
| 43. s 47F(1)   | s 47F(1)<br>Post | An email sent by post s 47F(1) inadvertently contained personal information of the applicant and non-lodging parent.                          | s 47F(1) | N | N |

As at 18 January 2022

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

|              |     |  |   |   |
|--------------|-----|--|---|---|
| 45. s 47F(1) | APO | Passport renewal form for a passport client s 47F(1) was put in an incorrect envelope and sent to another passport client. | N | N |
|--------------|-----|--|---|---|

s 22(1)(a)(ii)



---

## Third Party Data Breach

### ***When was DFAT notified of the data breach?***

- . The department was notified on 5 January to the existence of a listing on the 'Dark web' containing the personal details of several Australians, including their passport information.
- . The original notification came by IDCARE and later the Australian Federal Police, who confirmed the listing's existence.
  - (IDCARE is a not-for-profit organisation established to support the Australian community in responding to identity theft).
- . AFP advised the listing was located on a Russian language cybercriminal forum.

### **What information was leaked?**

- . The department was provided a spreadsheet containing 83,742 lines of data (entries); some of them duplicated
  - 4,797 (6%) also included the individual's name, date of birth, mobile and valid Australian passport number
  - there was no other passport detail (e.g. place of birth, issue or expiry date) in these records

### ***What did DFAT do?***

- . The department immediately commenced an investigation and liaised with partner agencies to determine the source of the leak.
- . The department established that this listing was not sourced through a breach of its own systems.
- . The data breach source was a foreign airline(s).
- . The department is commencing a process to notify individuals of the foreign airline data breach and where individuals can get assistance
  - IDCARE – free government-funded service that provides advice on next steps as well as general information on protecting information ([www.idcare.org](http://www.idcare.org) or call IDCARE on 1800 595 160)
  - The Department of Home Affairs offers a comprehensive range of information relating to cybercrime. Their Identity Matching Service ([www.idmatch.gov.au](http://www.idmatch.gov.au)) compares personal information on an individual's identity document against existing government records, such as passports, driver licences and birth certificates. They can be used to help verify identity, and in limited cases, to identify unknown people

- 
- The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) provides information on steps individuals can take straight away to limit the damage and protect themselves from further loss, as well as report scams ([www.scamwatch.gov.au](http://www.scamwatch.gov.au))
  - The Australian Cyber Security Centre also provide advice and information about how to protect individuals in an online context
  - The Office of the Australian Information Commissioner ([www.oaic.gov.au](http://www.oaic.gov.au)) has general information about how to manage the risks of a data breach affecting individuals.

***Where did the information come from?***

- . The data breach was not from departmental staff or systems
- . We believe the source of the information as Lion Air. This airline suffered a mass data breach in 2019.
- . Passports are a key identity document, and are routinely requested and collected by a range of public and private sector organisations
  - for instance, such information is shared widely with travel industry bodies such as airlines, cruise ship operators, hotels and travel agents.

***What are you doing to help people impacted by this leak?***

- . The department will work with IDCARE to support victims impacted by this breach.
- . IDCARE provide services for government and private sector organisations to prevent and respond to data breaches and compromises. This includes:
  - notifying victims of the breach,
  - referring victims to IDCARE for tailored support to protect them from further identity compromise or misuse,
  - publishing advice on APO's website ([passports.gov.au](http://passports.gov.au)), and
  - flagging customer records (on consent) of those impacted by the breach to ensure when identities apply again that extensive checks are conducted to ensure the identity is not being compromised.

***Will the department provide free replacement passports for those affected by the breach?***

- . No. If the passport book remains in the possession of the holder, they can still use it for travel.
- . Passport holders can choose to replace their passport if they wish at their own expense.

***Can someone now use these details to obtain a passport?***

- . No. This would be identified by the department's face recognition technology as the new applicant's image would not match the victim's existing/former passport record.

***Can someone use these details to travel?***

- . No. This would require having physical possession of the passport.

***How do I know if my passport details have been compromised?***

- . The department is contacting customers whose valid passport numbers were listed to advise on how they can take steps to protect their identity (explained earlier).

***What is DFAT doing to combat identity fraud?***

- . Identity fraud is a significant threat that we take seriously.
- . The passport issuing system contains strict controls designed to meet its legal obligation to issue passports only to people who can satisfy us of their true identity. This includes:
  - requiring applicants over 16 years of age to apply in person
  - requiring applicants to provide original birth certificates and citizenship certificates, which we verify with the issuing agency
  - requiring applicants to provide secondary or supporting identity documents such as driver licences
  - using biometric face recognition technology and human face recognition specialists to ensure that an applicant:
    - : does not hold a passport in a different, undisclosed identity, and
    - : renewing a passport is the same person as the holder of the previous passport
  - checks to ensure an identity is not deceased
  - developing business rules to implement the capability to apply compromised/fraud flags within APS's systems which can be used to notify APO of a compromised identity.
  - sophisticated fraud profiling that identifies suspect applications and sets them aside for closer scrutiny
  - a team of professional investigators who work closely with law enforcement agencies to prosecute passport-related identity fraud

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**Ref 1.8**

- maintaining records that are identity-centric, not transaction-centric – this reduces the scope for people to have passports in multiple identities
- working with like-minded countries, including through the Passport 6 Anti-Fraud Working Group, to identify and counter trends in passport identity fraud.

***What is the department doing to protect identity information?***

- . Protecting privacy and the data of Australian citizens is a core focus of the APO
- . We employ cybersecurity and privacy controls and regularly review data risks and risk treatments to ensure information held by the APO is secure.
- . The department continually monitors its network for cyber security threats to prevent and mitigate cyber-attacks targeting the department
  - this includes securing its information and ICT systems in line with the Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC) Information Security Manual (ISM) and industry best practice.
- . The department has in place rigorous anti-fraud measures that ensure the security and integrity of the Australian passport
  - for example, since 2005, the department has used face recognition technology to help ensure people do not obtain passports in multiple identities and that anyone renewing a passport is the same person who held the original passport.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Prepared by:</b>                          | <b>Cleared by:</b>                           |
| s 22(1)(a)(ii)                               | Troy Kaizik                                  |
| Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) |
| Date: 9 February 2022                        | Date: 9 February 2022                        |

**REF 1.8****Senate Estimates February 2022**



## February 2022 Senate Estimates - PDF Zip File

| #    | Brief  | Pgs. |
|------|--|------|
| 0.1. | February 2022 Senate Estimates – HTB Waiting times for passport services                             | 3    |
| 0.2. | February 2022 Senate Estimates – HTB International Covid-19 Vaccination Certificate                  | 6    |
| 1.1. | February 2022 Senate Estimates - Foreign Vaccination Certificate                                     | 6    |
| 1.2. | February 2022 Senate Estimates - Supporting Overseas Passport Services During Covid 19               | 2    |
| 1.3. | February 2022 Senate Estimates – Passport Renewal Reminder Service                                   | 3    |
| 1.4. | February 2022 Senate Estimates - APO Performance Metrics   | 2    |
| 1.4. | February 2022 Senate Estimates - Attachment A - APO PBS Performance Targets                          | 1    |
| 1.4. | February 2022 Senate Estimates - Attachment B - DFAT Corporate Plan - APO Performance Targets        | 1    |
| 1.4. | February 2022 Senate Estimates - Attachment C - APO PBS Performance Targets and Measure Descriptions | 1    |
| 1.4. | February 2022 Senate Estimates - Attachment D - APO PBS Performance Targets Month By Month           | 1    |
| 1.5. | February 2022 Senate Estimates - APO Response to COVID   | 2    |
| 1.6. | February 2022 Senate Estimates - Passport Fees Refunds Extensions during Covid-19                    | 2    |
| 1.7  | February 2022 Senate Estimates - Protecting Passports Data   | 3    |
| 1.7a | February 2022 Senate Estimates – Attachment A Summary of DFAT Privacy Breaches                       | 13   |
| 1.8  | February 2022 Senate Estimates – Third Pary Data Breach  | 4    |
| 2.1  | February 2022 Senate Estimates – Restricting Known Child Sex Offenders                               | 1    |
| 3.1  | February 2022 Senate Estimates – Passport Cancellations  | 4    |

|                                  |   |           |
|----------------------------------|---|-----------|
| 4.1                              | February 2022 Senate Estimates – APO Contact Centre   | 5         |
| 5.1                              | February 2022 Senate Estimates – Cost of an Australian Passport                                 | 3         |
| 5.2                              | February 2022 Senate Estimates – Cost of Producing an Australian Passport                       | 1         |
| 6.1                              | February 2022 Senate Estimates – Identity Fraud   | 2         |
| 7.1                              | February 2022 Senate Estimates – Face Matching Services and Digital Identity                    | 5         |
| 8.1                              | February 2022 Senate Estimates – Issuance Statistics  | 3         |
| 8.2                              | February 2022 Senate Estimates – Staffing Numbers   | 1         |
| 8.3                              | February 2022 Senate Estimates - Top 10 Contracts   | 3         |
| 8.3a                             | February 2022 Senate Estimates – Market Approaches Commenced or Completed Since 1 November 2021 | 3         |
| 10.1                             | February 2022 Senate Estimates – Passport Facts 2020-2021 v 2021-2022                           | 1         |
| 10.2                             | February 2022 Senate Estimates – Passport Fee Schedule  | 4         |
| 10.3                             | February 2022 Senate Estimates – Passport Documentation Requirements                            | 3         |
| X                                | February 2022 Senate Estimates – Media Enquiry  | 2         |
| <b>Total including this page</b> |   | <b>91</b> |

## Passports – Third party data breaches

**Handling Note:** APO ED to lead on passport issues. CLO to lead on legal issues, including privacy. FAS IMD to lead on cyber security issues.

### Strategic Messages

- We understand data breaches such as Optus, have been very stressful for millions of Australians.
- Australian passports remain safe for international travel and a third party cannot replace it using the holder's identity.
- Robust controls are also used to protect passports from identity takeover, including facial-recognition technology.
- The APO continues to work proactively with industry where data breaches involving passport information have occurred.

### Optus

#### What steps did the APO undertake after Optus' 22 September announcement of the breach?

- On 23 September 2022 (following day), the APO published FAQs to our website
  - this was regularly updated over the following weeks.
  - The APO assured impacted passport holders that their passports were still safe to use for international travel.
- APO briefed the Foreign Minister's Office who wrote to the CEO of Optus (28 September), seeking earliest confirmation Optus would cover passport replacement fees (\$193) of any customers affected by this breach whose passport information was disclosed and who choose to replace their currently valid passport.
- The APO engaged with the Department of Home Affairs, who established a Commonwealth Credential Protection Register ("Register") to protect victims of this breach from misuse of their passport through the Document Verification Service (DVS). The Register was used to block impacted passports blocked through the DVS on 14 October.
- Senior APO staff were involved in a twice daily Optus Interdepartmental Committee led by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet and a weekly Optus Data Breach Working Group led by the Attorney-General's Department.
- APO Senior Executive also worked directly with Optus Executives, Andrew Sheridan (Vice President, Regulatory and Public Affairs), Rebecca Treloar (Senior Manager, Government Affairs), Gary Roach (Director, Group Risk Credit) and Sally Oelerich (Director, Corporate Affairs) to ensure a streamlined model for Australians seeking a replacement passport.

### How often did you meet with Optus senior management?

- . Senior APO staff met with members of the Optus senior management team on six occasions (29/9, 30/9, 4/10, 6/10, 11/10 and 28/10)
- . APO Senior Executive also worked directly with Optus Executives, Andrew Sheridan (Vice President, Regulatory and Public Affairs), Rebecca Treloar (Senior Manager, Government Affairs), Gary Roach (Director, Group Risk Credit) and Sally Oelerich (Director, Corporate Affairs) to ensure a streamlined model for Australians seeking a replacement passport.
  - there were a number of phone discussions during this period
  - the discussions focused on impacts to passport holders, the need for Optus to reimburse affected customers, data transfer arrangements with the Department of Home Affairs and related matters.

### Did Optus influence Australian Passport Office messaging to discourage impacted passport holders from replacing their passports?

- . No. Our messaging highlights the integrity of the Australian passport
  - if the passport book is in the holder's possession, then it is still safe to use for travel
  - information without a physical passport book could not assist international travel by a third party using a holder's passport details
  - our biometrics (facial recognition) means that passport numbers and even accompanying identity information would not be sufficient for a third party to renew a passport.
- . As an additional measure, Optus provided compromised data to the Department of Home Affairs to enable blocking of the compromised passport numbers in the Document Verification Service (DVS)—a secure online system that electronically verifies Government-issued documents
  - this means any attempt to validate a compromised passport number before granting access to health and welfare payments or financial services (such as home loans) will be blocked.
- . If an impacted individual is still nervous, they can replace their Australian passport

### How many customers had Australian passport details compromised through the Optus breach and have lodged new applications or made enquiries with the APO?

- . Optus has advised it has issued 120 reimbursements as of 8 February 2023.



### How much will it cost for impacted customers to replace their Australian passport?

|                            |  | 2022  | 2023  |
|----------------------------|--|-------|-------|
| Passport Valid<br>> 2years | Replacement (for<br>time remaining on<br>Passport) | \$193 | \$204 |
| Passport Valid<br>< 2years | Full ten-year<br>Passport                          | \$308 | \$324 |

### Why does the holder have to pay for a new passport when the breach wasn't their fault?

- . On 30 September, at the request of the Prime Minister, Optus confirmed it will cover the cost of replacing Australian passports impacted by its breach.
- . Customers will need to pay to replace their passport upfront and then seek a reimbursement from Optus
  - customers should contact Optus customer service directly on 133 937 for the latest update.

### Once an Australian passport has been blocked through the DVS, can it still be used as a form of identity in Australia?

- . Yes. If the holder takes their passport physically with them to an institution or establishment as proof of identity, it can be used.
- . However, they won't be able to use it to verify their identity online
  - for example, if using it to apply for a home loan online.

### Can impacted customers still get an International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate (ICVC) if their Australian passport has a DVS block on it?

- . Yes. The easiest way to get an ICVC is by using your Medicare account through myGov or the Express Plus Medicare mobile app
  - As myGov is password protected and requires two-factor authentication, no-one can view a customer's vaccination data
  - customers experiencing difficulties obtaining an ICVC should call the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) on 1800 653 809 (in Australia) or +61 2 8633 3284 (from overseas).

### What about foreign passport holders?

- . They will need to contact the diplomatic or consular mission of the country that issued the passport.

## Medibank and Medlab Pathology data Breach

### Were Australian passports impacted by the Medibank data breach in October?

- No. Medibank Private have advised the Australian Passport Office (APO) that no Australian Travel Document information was compromised in this breach.
- Foreign passports for international students were compromised through this cyberattack. Medibank Private contacted the foreign passport holders that were impacted directly.

### Were Australian passports impacted by the Medlab Pathology data breach in October?

- Yes. We have been advised that up to 225 Australian passport numbers and 20 copies of passports were exposed in the breach of Medlab Pathology systems.
- Customers have been contacted by Medlab with advice on replacing their passports.
- Medlab will reimburse customers who wish to replace their Australian passport.

## Online Passport Application (AusPassport) Login Credentials

- On 13 January 2023, DFAT became aware that 1125 login credentials (email addresses and passwords) were listed on the dark web.
- Investigations conducted by the department has found no evidence to suggest that these login credentials were obtained through a compromise of DFAT's systems.
- DFAT proceeded with immediate action to initiate a forced password reset for impacted AusPassport account holders.

### Do impacted customers need to replace their passport?

- No. Customers do not need to replace their passport.
- Access to the AusPassport login credentials does not impact the security or integrity of a customer's passport.

## Background

The Government provides funding to IDCARE, Australia's National Identity Support Service, to offer personalised support to individuals in taking steps to protect their personal information.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Division:</b> SDG   APO   Passport Strategy and Modernisation Branch                                      |   |
| <b>PDR No:</b> PDR number  |   |
| <b>Prepared by:</b><br>s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)    Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 8 February 2023 | <b>Cleared by Branch/Division Head:</b><br>Craig Kelly, A/g ED APO<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)    Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 27 January 2023 |
| <b>Consultation:</b> Enter Div/Branch/Section.<br>Name: Type in Officer's name.                              | <b>Date:</b> Click or tap to enter consultation date.<br><b>Mob:</b> Type mobile. <b>Ext:</b> Type extension.                             |
| <b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary:</b><br>Craig Maclachlan  | <b>Date:</b> TBC  |

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Ref 2.1

**RESTRICTING KNOWN CHILD SEX OFFENDERS**

**Handling Note:** APO to lead. DFAT is coordinating the legislation overall and leads on implementing the passport measure. Home Affairs leads on implementing the Commonwealth offence in coordination with AFP.

***What's happening to stop overseas travel by child sex offenders?***

- Under the *Passports Legislation Amendment (Overseas Travel by Child Sex Offenders) Act 2017* (the Act) which came into force on 13 December 2017
  - The Minister for Foreign Affairs must deny passports to reportable offenders when a competent authority requests this.
  - If a reportable offender attempts to depart Australia without permission from a competent authority (even if they hold a valid passport), they commit a Commonwealth offence and are turned around at the border.
- A competent authority is generally a State or Territory law enforcement body responsible for managing reportable offenders.

***Have these measures been effective?***

- Yes. Since the travel restrictions took effect on 13 December 2017, the Minister has<sup>1</sup>:
  - cancelled 365 passports
  - ordered the surrender of 11 foreign passports
  - received requests to deny Australian passports to 4077 reportable offenders who do not have current passports, of whom 42 applied for and were denied a passport.
- Reportable offenders are turned around at the border if they attempt to leave Australia without permission, even if they have a current passport
  - Australian Border Force's last update (31 December 2021) advises that this happened to 46 offenders.

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Prepared by:</b>         | <b>Cleared by:</b>                                  |
| s 22(1)(a)(ii) _____        | Troy Kaizik   |
| Phone: s 22(1)(a)(ii) _____ | Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) _____ Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) _____ |
| Date: 31 January 2022       | Date: 9 February 2022                               |

<sup>1</sup> As at 31 January 2022



## R Series Passport

**Handling Note:** ED APO to lead. CIO to support on aspects related to IT integration. Refer also to Hot Topic brief on passport demand, processing delays and the new R series.

### Strategic Message

- The R Series was a very long-term project, which has delivered a highly secure, innovative travel document of which Australians can be proud.

### What was the point of the R Series?

- All countries routinely update their passports with new security features:
  - Australia began issuing the P Series passport in 2014
  - it was one of the world's most secure and respected passports
  - this contributed to the visa-free access that Australians enjoy in many countries
  - but we could not afford to rest on our laurels.
- The new passport is even more secure than the P Series:
  - in an Australian first, the R Series has a high-security photo page made of polycarbonate, which is layered plastic fused together at high temperature
  - polycarbonate is more durable than laminated paper and allows the use of innovative security features.
- Security features in the polycarbonate include:
  - the blue core of the polycarbonate turns red under ultraviolet light
  - a raised map of Australia covers the lower-left part of the bearer's primary photo
  - a second photo of the bearer is laser-engraved into a transparent window in the polycarbonate.
- The R Series also represents a major refresh of the overall passport design
  - the visa pages show 17 iconic Australian landscapes in spectacular true colour
  - under ultraviolet light, they transform into unique nightscapes, revealing high-definition images of local native fauna.

### That's all very well, but why introduce it in 2022, when the passport office was swamped?

- The R Series was a very large-scale project with long lead times:
  - planning for the R Series began in 2015
  - the decision to issue the R Series from mid-2022 was made in February 2020, before the border closed in March 2020
  - once borders closed, COVID-related supply chain issues ruled out bringing the R Series start date forward
  - production of the P Series passport wound down in 2021, and we needed to start issuing the new passport before P Series stock ran out.

## Who approved the R Series?

- Foreign Ministers Julie Bishop and Marise Payne.

## Why did the R Series take so long?

- Passport redesigns are always long-term projects:
  - moving to polycarbonate added additional complexity
  - the United States took eight years to start issuing its first polycarbonate passport in 2021.
- Our brief to the R Series designers was to develop an innovative and distinctive product, prioritising quality and uniqueness over haste:
  - they delivered on these requirements:
    - : the blue coloured core on the photo page and the photo-realistic high-security printing on the visa pages that brings the iconic Australian landscapes to life, use technology that has not appeared before in any other country's passport
    - : perfecting novel features such as these takes time.
- COVID-19 restrictions added to the timeline by interrupting the development, testing, refinement, shipping and proofing of passport components.

## Did release of the R Series cause delays to passport customers?

- Delays in issuing passports in 2022 were largely due to unprecedented demand
  - to minimise delays from introducing the R Series passport, we took a phased approach to rolling out R Series hardware and software
  - some intermittent IT disruptions occurred as part of the transition
  - there were also intermittent IT issues due to the extremely large volume of applications the system was handling
  - to support our processing efforts, we prioritised system performance and stability.
- Overall, the R Series did not change how we process or manage passport applications.
- We urge Australians to plan ahead of travel and allow at least six weeks to apply for or renew your passport.
- An external adviser (Deloitte) conducted an assurance review for implementation readiness before we started issuing the R Series.

## Does the new passport refer to King Charles III?

- Not yet.
- There are long lead times for making blank passports, and pages for more than a million R Series had already been printed before the death of Her Majesty the Queen:
  - we will use up existing stock before issuing passports with revised text that reflects the accession of His Majesty King Charles III



- this is consistent with practice in other Commonwealth countries where the Queen was head of state.

#### How long until the R Series refers to King Charles III?

- This change will happen during 2023.

#### When was the first R Series printed?

- On 9 September 2022.

#### How many R Series passports have been issued?

- As at 23 January 2023, more than 800,000 R Series passports have been issued.

#### Are you still issuing P Series passports?

- Yes, but only to customers:
  - with old applications that can only be printed in P Series format, or
  - who need an emergency passport overseas.
- Until mid-2023 we are also still issuing P Series travel documents to diplomats, officials, refugees and non-citizens eligible for a certificate of identity.

#### How much did the R Series cost? Why can't I see it in the PBS?

- DFAT funded the R Series from departmental appropriations.
- The forecast capital cost as at 30 December 2022 is \$21.9 million over the three FYs 2020-21, 2021-22 and 2022-23:
  - the operational forecast expenditure is \$2.9 million over the same period.

#### R SERIES - TOTAL FORECAST COST OF OWNERSHIP

| Financial Year | Capital Expenditure | Operating Expenditure |
|----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 2020-21        | \$8,564,047         | \$242,485             |
| 2021-22        | \$6,247,206         | \$1,140,469           |
| 2022-23        | \$7,104,041         | \$1,586,032           |
| <b>TOTAL</b>   | <b>\$21,915,294</b> | <b>\$2,968,986</b>    |

#### But the project started in 2015. How was it funded before 2020-21?

- There was no capital expenditure before 2020-21.
- DFAT operational expenditure before 2020-21 was part of normal running costs
  - working with Note Printing Australia (NPA) to develop a new passport series is business as usual activity for DFAT.

#### What was the capital for?

- Most of it (\$14.3 million) was for the procurement of machines that:
  - personalise polycarbonate data pages by laser engraving them and envelope passports in bulk.

**Who were the primary suppliers?**

- Note Printing Australia, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of Australia, designs and produces blank passports for DFAT.
- German company Mühlbauer [*MOOL-bower*] provides the machinery that DFAT uses to personalise passports in Australia.

**Do Australians pay a different fee for the new passport?**

- No. The *Australian Passports (Application Fees) Determination 2015* makes no distinction between different series of passports.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Division:</b> ISG   APO   Passport Integrity Branch  |  |
| <b>PDR No:</b> PDR number   |  |
| <b>Prepared by:</b><br>s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 13 January 2023 | <b>Cleared by Branch/Division Head:</b><br>Craig Kelly A/g<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: Click or tap to enter a date. |
| <b>Consultation:</b> IMD<br>Name: Belinda Duffy   | Date: Click or tap to enter consultation date.<br>Mob: Type mobile. Ext: Type extension.   |
| <b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary:</b>   | <b>Date:</b>   |



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**PASSPORT CANCELLATIONS****Handling Note:** APO to lead on passports**On what basis can the Minister cancel or refuse to issue a passport on security grounds?**

- Under the *Australian Passports Act 2005*, a competent authority can request the Minister for Foreign Affairs to cancel (or refuse to issue) a passport to an individual where the authority suspects on reasonable grounds that if a passport was issued to a person, the person might prejudice the security of Australia or a foreign country.
  - ASIO and AFP are two legislated competent authorities.
- For example, the Minister may cancel or refuse where ASIO assesses a person would likely engage in politically motivated violence (PMV) on behalf of a terrorist group if they were to hold or continue to hold an Australian travel document.
- A person subject to a passport cancellation or refusal would be formally notified of the decision and have the right of review (unless the Minister for Home Affairs issues a certificate under the *ASIO Act 1979* to withhold notification).
- Cancelling or refusing passports are an important means of preventing Australians from travelling overseas to engage in activities prejudicial to national security
  - such as to train, support or participate in terrorism.
- Questions concerning specific security-related cancellations should be directed to the competent authority.

**What happens to suspected foreign fighters who have their Australian passport cancelled while overseas?**

- Before being returned to Australia, assessments must be made about the security implications of their presence in Australia, and their potential for prosecution for activities whilst overseas
  - they can be issued a limited validity travel document restricted to one-way travel to Australia.

**Are border control officials informed of passport cancellations?**

- Updates on the status of all Australian passports are automatically provided to the Department of Home Affairs for use at the border.
- Information on Australian passports recorded as lost, stolen or cancelled is also reported to Interpol daily
  - foreign border control officials have access to this information to assist with their management of passenger movements.

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**Is it possible to prevent Australians from returning to Australia?**

- In July 2019, the government introduced legislation to prevent Australians from returning to Australia under a Temporary Exclusion Order (TEO)
  - Questions relating to TEOs (including numbers) should be directed to the Department of Home Affairs.

**Does the Foreign Minister have any powers concerning Australians of security interest who may also hold a foreign passport?**

- Under Section 15 of the *Foreign Passports (Law Enforcement and Security) Act 2005*, a competent authority may make a request to the Foreign Minister to order the surrender of a foreign passport where the competent authority suspects on reasonable grounds that if a passport was issued to a person, the person might prejudice the security of Australia or a foreign country.
- The example provided above for Section 14 also applies here. That is, where ASIO assesses that the individual would likely engage in PMV or acts in support of PMV offshore on behalf of a terrorist group if they were to continue hold a foreign travel document.

**Background (as at 31 January 2022)**

Since 1 September 2012, 231 passports have been cancelled pursuant to a competent authority request under Section 14 (reasons relating to potential harmful conduct that might prejudice the security of Australia or a foreign country) of the *Australian Passports Act 2005* (APA 2005).

The current government has **cancelled** 215 passports under Section 14:

- FM Payne – 18
- Acting FM Birmingham - 2
- FM Bishop - 191
- Acting FM Brandis – 1
- Acting FM Payne - 3

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Since 1 July 2018, the Minister has **refused** to issue 5 passports under Section 14 APA 2005.

Since 1 December 2014, the Minister has **suspended** 42 passports under Section 22A APA 2005:

- 27 of these suspensions have proceeded to cancellation
- the remaining 15 passports have been returned to customers.

Since 1 September 2012, the Minister has made 24 orders for the **surrender** of foreign travel documents under Section 16 of the *Foreign Passports (Law Enforcement and Security) Act 2005* (FPA 2005).

Since 1 December 2014, the Minister has made 8 orders for the **temporary surrender** of foreign travel documents under Section 16A FPA 2005:

- 5 proceeded to permanent orders
- the remaining 3 expired with no further action.

Since 1 December 2014, the Minister has issued 127 welfare advice notices for passport customers who have had their passport either cancelled or refused.

| <b>Prepared by:</b>   | <b>Cleared by Branch Head:</b>              |
|-----------------------|---|
| s 22(1)(a)(ii)        | Troy Kaizik                                 |
| Phone: s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) 483 Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) |
| Date: 31 January 2022 | Date: 9 February 2022                       |

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**PASSPORT REFUSAL REQUESTS AND PASSPORT CANCELLATIONS  
ON LAW ENFORCEMENT AND/OR SECURITY GROUNDS (as at 31/01/2022)**

| Section of APA 2005 | Description  | Cancel    |           |           |           | Refusal  |          |          |          |
|---------------------|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
|                     |  | 2018-19   | 2019-20   | 2020-21   | 2021-22   | 2018-19  | 2019-20  | 2020-21  | 2021-22  |
| s12                 | Reasons relating to Australian Law Enforcement matters                   | 39        | 52        | 26        | 46        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        |
| s13                 | International Law Enforcement  | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        |
| s14                 | Security/Potential Harmful Conduct<br><i>Reasons – National Security</i> | 12        | 5         | 0         | 0         | 2        | 2        | 1        | 0        |
| s14                 | Security/Potential Harmful Conduct<br><i>Reasons – Harmful Conduct</i>   | 0         | 2         | 1         | 0         | 0        | 0        | 0        | 1        |
| s14                 | Potential Misuse   | 15        | 2         | 0         | 0         | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        |
|                     | <b>Totals</b>  | <b>66</b> | <b>61</b> | <b>27</b> | <b>46</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>1</b> |

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## February 2023 Senate Estimates - PDF Zip File

| #            | Brief Name  | Pgs.      |
|--------------|---|-----------|
| 1            | Hot Topic Brief   | 25        |
| 1a           | Question Time Brief   | 6         |
| 2            | Third Party Data Breach   | 5         |
| 3            | R Series Passport   | 4         |
| 4            | Passport Call Centre (final)  | 3         |
| 5            | Passport Surge Supplementary  | 9         |
| 6            | APO Service Recovery and Complaint Handling (final)                                 | 3         |
| 7            | APO Staffing and Property   | 5         |
| 7.1          | Senate Estimates February 2023 – Attachment for 7.0 APO Staffing and Property index | 1         |
| 8            | APO Performance Metrics (final)   | 5         |
| 9            | COVID-19 Vaccine certificates (final)   | 4         |
| 10           | Passport Renewal Reminder Service (final)   | 2         |
| 11           | APO Top 10 Service Contracts by Value (final)                                       | 4         |
| 12           | Identity Fraud (final)  | 2         |
| 13           | Restricting known child sex offenders (final)                                       | 2         |
| 14           | Passport Cancellations (final)  | 3         |
| <b>Total</b> |   | <b>83</b> |

## Australian Passport Office Call Centre

**Handling Note:** APO ED to lead on passport issues.

### Strategic Message

- We currently answer around 20,000 calls per week. This is similar to pre-COVID (2019) levels.
- The service peaked at around 50,000 calls answered per week in September 2022.
- This financial year, customers calling the Australian Passport Office have their called answered in less than 5 minutes on average.
- We have, within a few months, built an ongoing call centre capability that will meet customer demand now and into the future.

### How is the Australian Passport Office call centre performing?

- Between 1 July 2022 and 31 January 2023 (2022-23 financial year), we answered over 900,000 calls to the Australian Passport Office (APO) call centre with an average speed of answer (ASA) of less than 5 minutes.
- In the 2021-22 financial year when we answered 304,000 calls with an ASA of around 33 minutes.

### How many staff do you currently have in the call centre?

- We have over 500 staff trained to work in the APO call centre. This workforce is a mix of APS and contractor staff.
- The exact number of staff answering calls varies on a day-to-day basis as customer demand fluctuates.

### What hours does the call centre operate?

- The call centre operates from 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, for each Australian time zone.
- The call centre is closed on nationally observed public holidays.

### Long wait times to the APOCC have been reported in the past. What did the department do to fix this?

- The increase in passport demand, particularly in May and June 2022, led to longer wait times for customers calling our call centre.
- We scaled up our call centre capability between May and July, resulting in rapid increases in the number of calls answered, and reduced wait times.
  - In early-May, we contracted Datacom to assist with our call centre.
  - In June, we increased staffing at our Adelaide and Perth call centres to provide extended end of day services.

- By early July, over 300 staff from Datacom were trained to take passport calls.
- The Datacom contract has been established to be as flexible as possible with availability of staff, allowing the passports call centre to flex up and down, as required.
- To highlight the service improvements
  - In May 2022, we answered 25,000 calls with an average speed of answer of over 75 minutes.
  - At peak, in September 2022, we answered over 190,000 calls with an average speed of answer of 5 minutes.
  - In January 2023, we answered 75,000 calls with an average speed of answer under 1 minute.

#### What kind of training did you provide to Datacom?

- Onboarding and training were completed in 'waves' of staff to ensure all call agents were fully trained and operational in passport systems and policy prior to calls being taken.
- Training takes between half a day for simple call types and 10 days for more complex passport processing activities. We have now trained most call centre staff in passport processing duties so we can flexibly allocate our workforce to operational areas where resources are most required.

#### What system access do Datacom staff have? What security clearances do they have and why?

- Datacom staff have access to all passport systems required to complete all call types and processing activities.
- All staff have successfully completed police checks, allowing them to access information up to "official".
- 

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Division:</b> SDG   APO   Passport Strategy and Modernisation Branch                                      |   |
| <b>PDR No:</b> PDR number  |   |
| <b>Prepared by:</b><br>s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)    Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 7 February 2023 | <b>Cleared by Branch/Division Head:</b><br>Craig Kelly<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)    Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: Click or tap to enter a date. |
| <b>Consultation:</b> Enter Div/Branch/Section.<br>Name: Type in Officer's name.                              | Date: Click or tap to enter consultation date.<br>Mob: Type mobile.    Ext: Type extension.   |
| <b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary:</b><br>Craig Maclachlan  | Date: TBC   |

## CALL CENTRE MONTHLY STATISTICS

## Routine Calls

|                               | Jan-22 | Feb-22 | Mar-22 | Apr-22 | May-22 | Jun-22 | Jul-22  | Aug-22  | Sep-22         | Oct-22  | Nov-22  | Dec-22 | Jan-23  |
|-------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|----------------|---------|---------|--------|---------|
| Answered                      | 28,000 | 31,000 | 31,000 | 24,000 | 25,000 | 43,000 | 109,000 | 190,000 | <b>193,000</b> | 167,000 | 105,000 | 65,000 | 75,000  |
| Abandoned                     | 16,000 | 18,000 | 20,000 | 20,000 | 34,000 | 33,000 | 16,000  | 25,000  | 21,000         | 8,000   | 500     | 300    | 300     |
| Average Speed of Answer (ASA) | 31 min | 26 min | 34 min | 60 min | 77 min | 46 min | 10 min  | 6 min   | 5 min          | 2 min   | < 1 min | <1 min | < 1 min |

## Priority Service (includes MP line established on 10 June 2022)

|                               | Jan-22 | Feb-22 | Mar-22 | Apr-22 | May-22 | Jun-22  | Jul-22  | Aug-22 | Sep-22  | Oct-22  | Nov-22  | Dec-22  | Jan-23  |
|-------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Answered                      | -      | -      | -      | -      | -      | 2,000   | 2,000   | 4,000  | 4,000   | 2,000   | 400     | < 200   | < 200   |
| Average Speed of Answer (ASA) | -      | -      | -      | -      | -      | < 3 min | < 1 min | 1 min  | < 1 min | < 1 min | < 1 min | < 1 min | < 1 min |

## Definitions:

**Answered** - Calls routed to an APO call centre operator (Datacom or APOCC)

**Abandoned** - Callers who have hung up while waiting in queue to be answered

**ASA (Average Speed of Answer)** – the average time a caller is on hold until their call is answered



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**AUSTRALIAN PASSPORT OFFICE CONTACT CENTRE*****Is it true customers calling the Australian Passport Office are experiencing long wait times and, if so, what is the department doing about this?***

- The increase in passport demand following the reopening of Australia's international border has led to longer wait times for customers calling our Contact Centre.
  - Through January customers are experiencing average wait times of around 30 minutes. (Refer to table 1 in background)
- At peak times some customers may receive a congestion message and will be asked to try calling again at another time. (Refer to table 2 in background).
  - This is standard industry practice to minimise wait times.
- Refer to Attachment A (in background) for call flow and call treatment explanation
- We are in the process of onboarding around 40 additional Contact Centre staff in February. This will nearly double the number of staff we have working in our Contact Centre.
- We have already increased staffing levels from 24 FTE in October to 36 FTE in December 2021.

**There have been reports of callers not being able to get through to the APO Contact Centre or being hung-up on, what is the issue and what is being done to resolve it?**

- The APO Contact Centre is underpinned and support by a telephony system with a fixed number of phone lines.
- During times of high caller demand, when a high number of calls are queued waiting to be answer and all available lines are being utilised, new calls trying to enter the queue may be played an engaged signed (refer to Table 2 in background, trunk limit exceeded)
- There is work currently underway to migrate to a system that will provide a higher number of phone lines. The is planned to be delivered by the end of April 2022. Following this change customers will no longer receive an engaged signal.
- Congestion messaging was introduced on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November to taper demand and reduce the number of calls queuing for extended periods, reducing the load on the telephony system.
- 30% of the inbound calls to the APO Contact Centre are played a Congestion Message before the call is answered by the Interactive Voice Response (IVR). The Congestion

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message treatment is also be applied to calls after leaving the IVR if the Estimated Wait Time (EWT) is greater than 54 minutes. (Refer to table 2 in background, Congestion pre-IVR and Congestion post-IVR)

**BACKGROUND****Table 1: Call Performance Data**

For the previous 3 months, by month:

|             | Answered | Abandoned | ASA (mins) | Max Wait (mins) |
|-------------|----------|-----------|------------|-----------------|
| November 21 | 22,076   | 26,199    | 48         | 89              |
| December 21 | 28,732   | 15,014    | 29         | 70              |
| January 22  | 28,499   | 15,669    | 31         | 73              |

**Answered** - Calls routed to APO CC staff in Adelaide, Melbourne or Perth

**Abandoned** - Callers who have hung up while waiting in queue to be answered

**Table 2: Demand Tapering and System Limitations**

For the previous 3 months, by month:

|              | Total calls to 131232 | Congestion, pre-IVR | Offered to APO | Trunk limit Exceeded | Received | Congestion, post-IVR |
|--------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------|----------------------|
| November 21* | 77,346                | 22,332              | 37,450         | 5,702                | 31,748   | 20,436               |
| December 21  | 218,639               | 63,692              | 111,316        | 35,181               | 76,532   | 33,512               |
| January 22   | 197,996               | 58,069              | 98,611         | 30,264               | 68,347   | 24,111               |

- Congestion commenced on 23 November. Reporting is limited to the period 23 – 30 November.

**Total Calls 131232** - All calls made to 131232 (blocked calls + successful IVR entry)

**Congestion, pre-IVR**- 30% of calls played congestion message before being answered by the IVR

**Offered to DFAT** - Number of calls that exit APIS IVR and are transferred to APO Pilot Numbers

**Trunk limit exceeded**- calculated statistic as data not available, calls 'offered' minus calls 'received' – call receives an engaged signal

**Received** - Calls that enter the APO Pilots on the Alcatel ACD platform

**Congestion, post-IVR** - Calls rejected upon entering ACD pilot, EWT for that call exceeds 54 min 36 sec (system threshold) - call is played the congestion message and terminates

**Table 3: Call Answered Data**

Between February 2021 – January 2022:

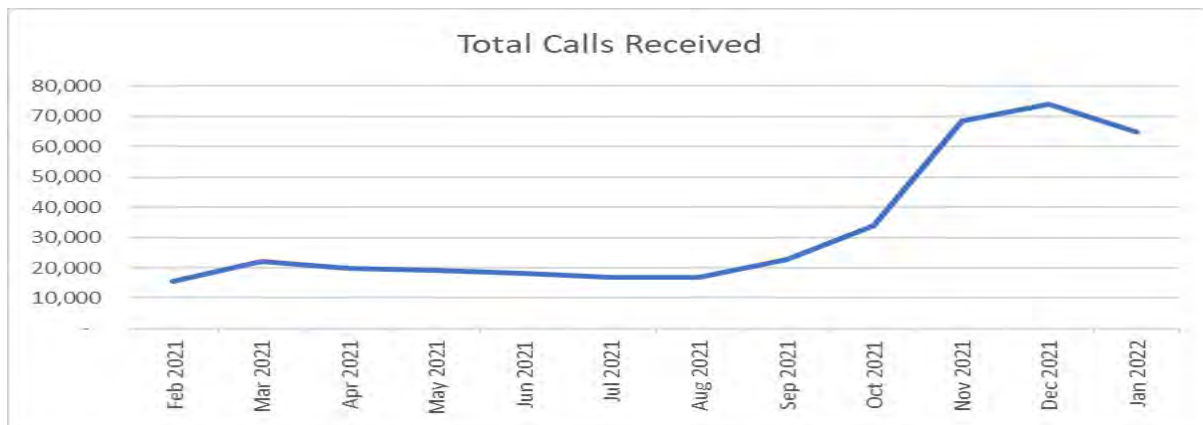
|                | Current Period (Feb 21 – Jan 22) | Previous Period (Oct 20 – Sept 21) |
|----------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Calls received | 392,684                          | 206,237                            |
| Calls answered | 239,391                          | 194,884                            |

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**Chart showing breakdown of calls received**

- This Australian Passport Information Service was provided on behalf of DFAT by Services Australia (SA) until 28 April 2020. The impacts of COVID-19 required that SA staff were re-tasked to undertake other duties.

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**Attachment A: Current Call and Customer Experience Flow.**

| Customer Action or Journey      | Customer Experience  | Reason for treatment   |
|---------------------------------|--|--|
| Caller dials APIS Number 131232 | <p><b>30% of Calls - Congestion Message</b><br/>           “Welcome to the Australian Passport Information Service.</p> <p>We are currently experiencing very high call demand and we are not able to service your call at this time. You can start your application online, and find answers to common passport questions on our website at <a href="http://www.passports.gov.au">www dot passports dot gov dot au</a> Alternatively please try again later, thank you for your call.<br/>           Goodbye.”</p>  | <p>Current demand exceeds our capacity to service all callers, 30% of callers are played the Congestion message to try and taper the demand and encourage callers to consider using alternative contact channels.</p> <p>Implemented on 23 November 2021</p> |
|                                 | <p><b>70% of Calls - APIS IVR call flow</b><br/>           Welcome to the Australian Passport Information Service.</p> <p>Make sure you have your passport ready well ahead of any planned travel dates. You should allow up to six weeks after lodgement to receive your new passport.</p> <p>If you need to travel urgently, you may be able to use our priority service for an additional fee when lodging your application.</p> <p>You can start your application online, and find answers to common passport questions on our website at <a href="http://www.passports.gov.au">www dot passports dot gov dot au</a> Blank forms to apply for a new passport, and appointments to lodge your passport application are also available at many Australia Post outlets. To make an appointment at Australia Post, phone 137 678 or go to <a href="http://auspost.com.au">auspost dot com dot au</a></p> <p>For enquiries on citizenship and visas, departing Australia, returning from overseas travel or transiting through Australia during COVID-19 restrictions, you will need to contact the Department of Home Affairs by visiting <a href="http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au">www dot homeaffairs dot gov dot au</a></p> <p>Please listen carefully to the following options.</p> <p>We are currently managing high demand for our services and long wait times are being experienced. You can start your application online, and find answers to common passport questions on website at <a href="http://www.passports.gov.au">www dot passports dot gov dot au</a></p> | <p>Normal business hours operation</p>   |

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|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  | <p>Alternatively, please stay on the line and we will answer you call as soon as possible.</p> <p>To hear about renewing or applying for a new passport, press 1<br/> For help with online applications, press 2<br/> To check progress of your application, press 3<br/> For information on the International COVID 19 vaccination certificate, press 4</p>   |  |
| Caller navigates through the APIS IVR and makes a selection from the menus | Caller navigates through the APIS IVR and makes a selection from the menus   | Normal business hours operation, no system or capacity restraints.   |
|  | <b>Caller is played an engaged signal.</b><br>No available trunks  | Once a call exits the Services Australia IVR it is transferred to the DFAT Trunk groups. Each trunk group has a fixed number of trunks or channels, if the demand is high and all available trunks are in use to service queued calls then new calls are unable to enter and are played an engaged signal. |
|  | <b>Caller is played a Congestion Message</b><br>Estimated Wait Time over 54 minutes.<br>“Welcome to the Australian Passport Information Service.<br>We are currently experiencing very high call demand and we are not able to service your call at this time. You can start your application online and find answers to common passport questions on our website at w w w dot passports dot gov dot au<br>Alternatively please try again later, thank you for your call.<br>Goodbye.” | Prior to entering the APO queues on the DFAT infrastructure the Alacatel Routing engine completes a queue saturation check. If the Estimated wait time for the queue exceeds 54 mins the call cannot be accepted (system limitation) and the Congestion Message is played.                                 |

|                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Prepared by:</b>   | <b>Cleared by:</b>     |
| s 22(1)(a)(ii)        | Craig Kelly            |
| Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)   | Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)    |
| Date: 7 February 2022 | Date: xx February 2022 |

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## Passport Surge Supplementary

**Handling Note:** APO ED to lead on passport issues.

### Strategic Messages

- We understand long wait times for passports has been very stressful for many Australians.
- The department has significantly increased staffing levels to manage passport demand.
- Several strategies have been applied to increase service capacity and build a resilient service delivery model to meet the expected increase in demand over the next few years.
- Since the border reopened the APO has expanded its staff from 545 to 2,407 and its property footprint from eight to 18 sites to meet the ongoing high demand for passports. This includes around 1,034 staff through third party provider arrangements and secondees from Services Australia.

### Key Surge Facts:

- Since the border reopened on 1 November 2021 to 31 January 2023, the APO has issued over 3.1 million passports.
- In this financial year alone, to 31 January 2023, the APO has:
  - issued around 1.9 million passports, only 200,000 fewer than our previous financial year record of 2.1 million in 2018-19,
  - answered over 900,000 calls, with an average speed of answer of less than 5 minutes, and
  - served over 375,000 customers at one of the APO's domestic offices or pop-up collection sites.

### Staff growth and operational impact – October 2021 (before borders opened) vs January 2023

|                          | October 2021 | January 2023                              |
|--------------------------|--------------|---|
| Staff (headcount)        | 430          | 2,407 (total) including 1,810 contractors |
| Passport Demand / Inflow | 136,000      | 250,000                                   |
| Passports Issued         | 83,000       | 240,000                                   |
| Calls Answered           | 14,000       | 75,000                                    |



|                                 | October 2021 to January 2022 | October 2022 to January 2023 |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Avg Staffing (headcount)</b> | 554                          | 1,357                        |
| <b>Passport Demand / Inflow</b> | 470,000                      | 850,000                      |
| <b>Passports Issued</b>         | 400,000                      | 1.1 million                  |
| <b>Calls Answered</b>           | 100,000                      | 410,000                      |

### How much passport demand do you anticipate this year?

- We expect around 3 million customers could lodge a passport application this financial year.
  - This is the highest demand ever seen by the APO, which previously issued up to 2.1 million passports each year.
  - We estimate there were more than 2 million customers who did not apply for or renew their passport during the COVID19 pandemic. The majority are yet to apply.

### Are you meeting the 6 week wait time?

- Not in all cases.
- For the 2022-23 financial year to 31 January 2023, 73% of routine passports were processed within 6 weeks.
- This is improving. In January 2023, 95% of passports were processed within 6 weeks.

### When do you expect to meet the PBS service level standards?

- We expect to recover our performance targets in 2023–2024.
- Recent staff increases mean we are well placed to manage expected peaks in passport and customer contact demand while maintaining our performance targets.

### Why didn't you predict the surge in passport demand?

- APO forecasted that there would be a surge in 2022, with annual demand forecast at 2.8 million applications. We received 2.6 million applications – an error of around 7% across the year.
- We predicted monthly demand could peak at just over 300,000 applications. However, the timing of the surge was out by 2-3 months, which meant that peak demand occurred while we were still training vast numbers of new staff and led to significant delays.
  - In November 2021, APO's forecast scenarios predicted a likely upper monthly demand range of around 280,000 applications per month. The highest volume scenarios exceeded 300,000 applications per month with peaks in March/April 2022.

- We expected the outbreak of the Omicron variant in Australia in late 2021 would dampen the demand recovery and pushed our expected timing for peak demand to later in 2022. Our April 2022 forecast predicted monthly demand would peak at over 300,000 applications in October 2022.
- However, Australia and the majority of countries around the world did not re-introduce the travel restriction despite the new outbreak. As a result, the actual peak demand occurred in June (three months earlier than expected) when 313,000 customers lodged their passport applications.
- The peak in June 2022 also coincided with wide media coverage of passport delays, and there is a possibility that this event could have brought forward the lodgement of some of our customers, further contributing to the surge.
- The APO planned in advance for an expected surge once the border opened. This included a range of activities from encouraging Australians to be 'travel ready' and renew their passport, through to detailed operational planning including additional staff.
- The larger than expected demand over May, June and July occurred at the same time we were training vast numbers of new staff (many of our experienced staff offline) and experiencing a range of IT systems performance issues that resulted in system outages (primarily due to load on the system).

#### APO's property expansion in response to surge

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>June 2022</b>      | Perth (26 staff) onboarded and operational<br>Six pop-up collection sites established in:<br>Adelaide    Brisbane    Canberra<br>Melbourne   Sydney    Perth              |
| <b>July 2022</b>      | Melbourne stage 1 - 90 staff onboarded and operational  |
| <b>August 2022</b>    | Brisbane stage 1 - 45 staff onboarded and operational<br>Sydney - 80 staff onboarded and operational  |
| <b>September 2022</b> | Melbourne stage 2 - 90 staff onboarded and operational<br>Melbourne stage 3 - 90 staff onboarded and operational<br>Brisbane stage 2 - 60 staff onboarded and operational |

#### How did the department communicate delays to customers?

- During the pandemic, passport demand fell to record lows. We estimate more than 2 million Australians chose not to renew their Australian passport throughout 2020 and 2021
- the department pursued a number of communication initiatives during this time to help bring forward as much of this unmet demand as possible.



- For example, in January 2021, the APO began sending passport renewal reminders (via email and SMS) to Australians with an expired passport, or with one due to expire in the next six to nine months
  - to date, it has sent around 3.1 million reminders to Australians.
- Ahead of Australia's November 2021 border reopening, DFAT promoted consistent public messaging foreshadowing that, once COVID travel restrictions were lifted, this would likely lead to higher passport demand and longer processing times
  - the APO's messaging at that time strongly encouraged Australians to renew their passport beforehand.
- In addition, as Australia's border reopened, the APO began advising customers 'to allow up to six weeks' to get a new passport or renew an existing passport
  - this advice was subsequently changed to 'allow a minimum of six weeks' from 9 June 2022.
- The APO has continued to actively promote, via a range of different communication channels, key public messages including:
  - If you're planning to travel in the next six months – apply for or renew your passport now.
  - Where possible, don't book travel without a valid passport.
  - If you need to travel urgently, you can use our priority passport processing service.
- First-time adult passports and child passports can take longer to process because they require additional security checks, and all supporting documents need to be verified.

### **What engagement has the department had with Industry?**

- The APO has engaged regularly with key industry partners, particularly in the travel sector, both in the lead up to and following the reopening of Australia's border
  - key airlines, travel industry peak bodies and our delivery partner, Australia Post, have worked closely with the APO to incorporate passports messaging into their own communications.
- The APO has developed a 'Stakeholder Digital Toolkit' with tailored editorial and graphic design content to support stakeholder promotion of key messages.
- The APO also holds six-weekly meetings with these industry partners to seek their insights into traveller behaviour, booking windows and customer sentiment
  - these meetings have provided valuable information on the reopening of key outbound travel destinations for Australians, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region, and how these are likely to impact passport demand going forward.

### **How is the APO prioritising passport applications?**

- The APO prioritises passport applications by:
  - priority service fee paid (\$237)
  - compelling compassionate grounds
  - travel and lodgement dates.

- Customers with compassionate or compelling circumstances can be issued a passport immediately at no additional cost.
- Processes are in place to ensure customers who qualify for an immediate passport are prioritised.

### Priority Processing

- When a customer cannot wait for a passport, there is an option to pay for the APO's priority processing service (\$237) upon lodgement.
- With payment of the priority processing fee, a passport is ready for collection or mailing within two business days of all documents being received from Australia Post.
  - Historically, around 7- 8% of customers opted for priority processing.
  - Since borders reopened, priority applications increased to 20-24% of all passport applications. As at January 2023, this has reduced to around 11%.
  - As of 31 January 2023, over 307,000 priority applications have been lodged this financial year.
- To assist Australians to meet their travel commitments, the APO extended the option for customers to pay the priority processing fee post lodgement.
- This has enabled customers who booked travel ahead of receiving their passport, to have certainty around when their passport will be issued.
- If the priority processing timeframe of two business days is not met, customers can request a refund of the priority processing fee.
- 520 priority processing fees were refunded from 1/7 to 31/12.

### Why has there been a delay with processing applications for children?

- Child applications take longer to process as there are more standard checks required to ensure they are entitled to an Australian passport.
- This includes establishing the child has full parental consent from everyone with parental responsibility or whether court orders exist that meet certain requirements and where neither are provided, attempting to gain the consent
  - Forged parental consent remains our most common type of passport fraud.
- Child passport applications with court orders, or without full parental consent take even longer to process
  - To issue a child a passport with court orders or without full parental consent, the APO must first ensure the application meets requirements under passport legislation
  - This may include having an authorised delegate issue the passport under special circumstance such as child welfare law (court orders) or where there is evidence of family violence
  - All child applications without full parental consent are managed by specialist cases officers.
- Since Australia's borders reopened in November 2021, the APO has increased its number of trained, specialist case officers from 19 to 86 (as at December 2022).

*NB: Refer child application case studies at the end*

### Overseas operations

- The unprecedented volume of passport applications increases demand on Australia's consular services, as Australians in overseas renew or apply for passports to travel or meet residency requirements.
- During the pandemic, the APO applied several measures to support overseas passport operations and many of these measures have been maintained, including:
  - mail lodgement in all countries for renewals and child applications
  - digital lodgement in some countries for renewals and child applications and
  - tailored social media messaging that allow posts to manage customer expectations.
- Overseas passport demand is around 5% of our total demand.

### Case Study 1 – child application delayed due to locating parent and confirming consent.

- A mother lodged an application for her 13-year-old child who had not previously held a passport. Consent had not been obtained from the father due to lost contact.
- This case took nearly nine (9) weeks to complete, with a passport issued for the child. This is a typical case where factors other than APO processing times impact the timing of issuance
- \*Gap between days 1 to 21 was due to the application awaiting the triage process by a specialised case officer.

| Day | Action   |
|-----|--|
| 1*  | Passport application lodged without father's consent   |
| 21* | Allocated to an APO specialised case officer. Contacts mother for further information                            |
| 35  | After not hearing from the mother, a second contact is made  |
| 40  | Mother provides a possible overseas address for the father<br>APO tasks our overseas Post to write to the father |
| 43  | Post writes letter to father (given 15 days to respond due to Christmas)   |
| 60  | Response receive consent from father. APO advised  |
| 61  | Passport issued  |

### Case Study 2 – child application delayed due to incomplete parental consent

- . A mother lodged an application for a 16-year-old child without the consent of the father. She claimed violence (against herself) and gave consent for APO to contact the father.
- . This case took seven (7) weeks to complete, with a passport issued for the child. Timings are impacted due to factors including surge and the complexity of a case.
- . \*Gap between days 1 to 24 was due to the application awaiting the triage process by a specialised case officer.

| Day   | Action  |
|-------|---|
| 1*    | Passport application lodged without father's consent  |
| 24*   | Allocated to an APO specialised case officer. Contacts mother for further information                           |
| 25-26 | Efforts made to contact father by phone (unsuccessful)  |
| 27    | APO write to father seeking consent (given 10 business days)  |
| 38    | No contact from father. Application provided to an APO Delegate for consideration under 'special circumstances' |
| 46    | APO Delegate contacted mother as part of deliberations  |
| 49    | Delegate approves issuance of passport  |



|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Division:</b> SDG   APO   Passport Strategy and Modernisation Branch                                   |  |
| <b>PDR No:</b> PDR number   |  |
| <b>Prepared by:</b><br>s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 23 January 2023 | <b>Cleared by Branch/Division Head:</b><br>Craig Kelly, Acting ED, APO<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: |
| <b>Consultation:</b> Enter Div/Branch/Section.<br>Name: Type in Officer's name.                           | <b>Date:</b> Click or tap to enter consultation date.<br><b>Mob:</b> Type mobile. <b>Ext:</b> Type extension.              |
| <b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary:</b><br>Craig Maclachlan   | <b>Date:</b> TBC   |

## End of month statistics – 2022/23

|                                 | Jan 22 | Feb 22 | Mar 22 | Apr 22 | May 22 | Jun 22 | Jul 22 | Aug 22 | Sep 22 | Oct 22 | Nov 22 | Dec 22 | Jan 23 |
|---------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| <i>Staffing – APO Headcount</i> | 361    | 360    | 361    | 370    | 388    | 408    | 422    | 438    | 453    | 467    | 489    | 489    | 493    |
| <i>Staffing – Contractor</i>    | 262    | 255    | 287    | 269    | 344    | 433    | 608    | 636    | 787    | 906    | 929    | 879    | 776    |
| <i>Total Headcount</i>          | 623    | 615    | 648    | 639    | 722    | 841    | 1,030  | 1,074  | 1,240  | 1,373  | 1,418  | 1,368  | 1,269  |

|                                  |         |         |         |         |         |                |         |         |                |                |                |                |                |
|----------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|---------|---------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| <i>Passport Demand</i>           | 102,000 | 140,000 | 193,000 | 203,000 | 260,000 | <b>314,000</b> | 272,000 | 267,000 | 253,000        | 243,000        | 201,000        | 160,000        | 250,000        |
| <i>Total Passports Issued</i>    | 106,000 | 127,000 | 158,000 | 156,000 | 193,000 | 269,000        | 245,000 | 204,000 | <b>306,000</b> | <b>386,000</b> | <b>332,000</b> | <b>188,000</b> | <b>243,000</b> |
| <i>Priority Passports Issued</i> | 10,000  | 17,000  | 30,000  | 31,000  | 56,000  | <b>76,000</b>  | 51,000  | 51,000  | 56,000         | 57,000         | 43,000         | 29,000         | 29,000         |

|                                      |        |         |         |         |         |         |         |                |         |         |        |        |        |
|--------------------------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| <i>Total Paid WIP (End of Month)</i> | 95,000 | 110,000 | 148,000 | 198,000 | 268,000 | 317,000 | 349,000 | <b>414,000</b> | 363,000 | 222,000 | 96,000 | 72,000 | 81,000 |
|--------------------------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|

|                       |        |        |        |        |           |        |         |         |                |         |         |        |        |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-----------|--------|---------|---------|----------------|---------|---------|--------|--------|
| <i>Calls Answered</i> | 28,000 | 31,000 | 31,000 | 24,000 | 25,000    | 43,000 | 109,000 | 190,000 | <b>193,000</b> | 167,000 | 105,000 | 65,000 | 75,000 |
| <i>ASA (min)</i>      | 31     | 26     | 34     | 60     | <b>77</b> | 46     | 10      | 6       | 5              | 2       | < 1     | < 1    | < 1    |

|                          |        |        |        |        |        |                |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| <i>Customers at STOs</i> | 24,000 | 25,000 | 33,000 | 35,000 | 59,000 | <b>113,000</b> | 61,000 | 67,000 | 67,000 | 58,000 | 52,000 | 36,000 | 34,000 |
|--------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|

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Ref 5.1

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## AUSTRALIAN PASSPORT FEES & REVENUE

**Handling Note:** See **Ref 1.6** for material on COVID-related responses to reducing the cost or extending the validity of passports as compensation.

### ***How much has COVID-related restrictions affected passport revenues received by Government?***

- . Passport revenue received has improved in 2021-22, with current revenue collected as at 31 December 2021 amounting to \$161,792,212.
  - Revenue received from passport fees in 2020-21 was \$170.6m, down from a pre-COVID estimate of \$588m (-\$417m).
  - Revenue received from passport fees in the 2018-19 and 2019-20 financial years totalled \$542.8m and \$449.3m respectively.

### ***Why are passports so expensive?***

- . The Australian passport is respected internationally as a high-quality travel document
  - this is a key reason why Australians receive visa-free travel to some countries.
- . The Australian passport is technologically sophisticated and backed by rigorous anti-fraud measures to ensure its integrity
  - passport fees (which include an annual increase to reflect inflation) are consistent with this.
- . A ten-year passport costs less than a driver licence in a number of Australian states and territories. As examples:
  - a ten-year licence costs \$352 in NSW, and \$381.10 in the ACT
  - a five-year licence in Queensland costs \$187.10.

### ***Is Australia's passport the most expensive in the world?***

- . No, other countries have set higher fees for their passports. However, direct comparisons are difficult, as foreign fees are derived differently and influenced by country-specific domestic factors such as cost of living, cost of production and exchange rates.

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REF 5.1

Senate Additional Estimates February 2022

## OFFICIAL

Ref 5.1

***How does the cost of an Australian passport compare to other countries?***

| Country          | Comparative 10 year cost (AUD) | Cost in local currency | Validity (years) |
|------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|------------------|
| Lebanon          | \$464                          | 500,000 LL             | 10               |
| <b>Australia</b> | <b>\$308</b>                   | <b>308 AUD</b>         | <b>10</b>        |
| Switzerland      | \$240                          | 158 CHF                | 10               |
| Mexico           | \$239                          | \$3,505 MXN            | 10               |
| USA              | \$231                          | 165 USD                | 10               |
| United Kingdom   | \$180                          | 95 GBP                 | 10               |
| Turkey           | \$178                          | 1,703.30 TRY           | 10               |
| New Zealand      | \$178                          | 191 NZD                | 10               |

***Why have passport fees increased, and keep increasing all the time?***

- . Since 2011 Australian travel document fees have been subject to annual CPI indexation. The Australian Passports (Applications Fees) Determination 2015 provides for annual indexation based on the All Groups Consumer Price Index, as published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- . Fees for Australian travel documents are imposed as taxes, and all revenue is paid into the Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF)
  - No passport revenue is retained by the Department.
- . The Government can also determine increases that exceed the annual CPI indexation.

REF 5.1

Senate Additional Estimates February 2022



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Ref 5.1

**BACKGROUND**

Fees from 1 January 2022 as compared to the year before are:

| <b>Travel Document</b> | <b>2021</b> | <b>2022</b>  |
|------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| 10 year adult (16+)    | \$301       | <b>\$308</b> |
| 5 year child (or 75+)  | \$152       | <b>\$155</b> |
| Emergency passport     | \$189       | <b>\$193</b> |
| PPF                    | \$220       | <b>\$225</b> |
| O/S surcharge, adult   | \$135       | <b>\$138</b> |
| O/S surcharge, child   | \$66        | <b>\$67</b>  |

| <b>Prepared by:</b>                          | <b>Reviewed by:</b>                          |
|--|--|
| s 22(1)(a)(ii)                               | s 22(1)(a)(ii)                               |
| Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) |
| Date: 2 February 2022                        | Date: 18 October 2021                        |

REF 5.1

Senate Additional Estimates February 2022

OFFICIAL

Ref 5.2

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## COST OF PRODUCING AN AUSTRALIAN PASSPORT

### ***How much does it cost to produce an Australian passport?***

- . There is no single answer to that question.
- . There are different elements to a passport, its production, and delivery that would influence the cost. The cost of these elements would also vary markedly between Australian domestic locations and our posts overseas.
- . Section 5(3) of the *Australian Passports (Application Fees) Act 2005* provides that ‘an application fee need not bear any relationship to the cost of issuing an Australian travel document’
- . All passport fee revenue is deposited directly into the Consolidated Revenue Fund; the Department does not retain this revenue.
  - DFAT receives a separate operating budget to manage passport production expenses via the *Passport Services Funding Arrangement*, a direct agreement made with the Department of Finance.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Prepared by:</b>                          | <b>Reviewed by:</b>                          |
| s 22(1)(a)(ii)                               | s 22(1)(a)(ii)                               |
| Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) |
| Date: 2 February 2022                        | Date: 18 October 2021                        |

REF 5.2

Senate Additional Estimates February 2022

## APO Service Recovery and Complaint Handling

**Handling Note:** APO ED to lead on passport issues. CLO to lead on Ombudsman, ARHC and CDDA caseload.

### Strategic Messages

- Since borders reopened in November 2021, the APO has experienced an increase in customer complaints.
- Primary drivers for passport-related complaints have been longer processing timeframes and delays in connecting with the APO call centre.
- We understand long wait times for passports has been very stressful for many Australians.

### What has DFAT done to address the complaints since the re-opening of international borders?

- The APO is committed to resolving customer complaints as quickly as possible.
- The APO's Client Service Charter commits to a response timeframe of 14 days for all written complaints and enquiries received.
  - In cases where this is not possible, the APO will contact the customer to provide an anticipated response timeframe, which may vary depending on the complexity of the case.
- The APO established a dedicated mailbox ([passports.clientservices@dfat.gov.au](mailto:passports.clientservices@dfat.gov.au)) in June 2022 to give customers the option to email in their enquiries and complaints.

The APO has maintained a 24 to 48-hour response timeframe for this mailbox.

### How many passport-related complaints has the APO received since January 2022?

- The APO has received 20,292 complaints through its online feedback portal (located on the passport webpage) for calendar year 2022.
  - Around one quarter of these complaints were related to the APO's contact centre.
- The APO also receives a small number of complaints through direct written correspondence from customers, through PDMS and our customer facing mailbox ([passports.clientservices@dfat.gov.au](mailto:passports.clientservices@dfat.gov.au)).
- Overall, the percentage of complaints against the number of passport applications received is extremely low (see table below). However, we accept that many Australians have had to wait longer than expected to receive their passport.

### Complaints received via the APO's feedback portal (located on [passports.gov.au](https://passports.gov.au))

| Month  | Complaints Received | Complaints Closed | Daily Average Received | Passport Demand | Percentage of demand |
|--------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Jan 22 | 1,954               | 1,954             | 63.0                   | 96,000          | 2.04%                |
| Feb 22 | 1,077               | 1,077             | 38.5                   | 139,000         | 0.77%                |
| Mar 22 | 1,496               | 1,496             | 48.3                   | 193,000         | 0.78%                |



|               |               |               |             |                  |               |
|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|------------------|---------------|
| Apr 22        | 1,672         | 1,672         | 55.7        | 203,000          | 0.82%         |
| May 22        | 4,222         | 4,221         | 136.2       | 259,000          | 1.63%         |
| Jun 22        | 3,558         | 3,557         | 118.6       | 314,000          | 1.13%         |
| Jul 22        | 1,026         | 1,026         | 33.1        | 273,000          | 0.38%         |
| Aug 22        | 1,912         | 1,912         | 61.7        | 267,000          | 0.72%         |
| Sep 22        | 1,558         | 1,558         | 51.9        | 253,000          | 0.62%         |
| Oct 22        | 1,123         | 1,123         | 36.2        | 244,000          | 0.46%         |
| Nov 22        | 449           | 388           | 15.0        | 201,000          | 0.22%         |
| Dec 22        | 245           | 51            | 7.9         | 161,000          | 0.15%         |
| <b>Totals</b> | <b>20,292</b> | <b>20,035</b> | <b>55.6</b> | <b>2,603,000</b> | <b>x0.74%</b> |

\*x values are total averages.

#### Complaints received via the APO's feedback portal for January 2023

|        |     |     |     |         |       |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|---------|-------|
| Jan 23 | 242 | 142 | 7.8 | 250,000 | 0.10% |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|---------|-------|

#### External Survey Services – Customer Satisfaction Surveys

- The APO engages an external survey services provider (Orima) to conduct customer satisfaction surveys each quarter.
- External annual (2021-2022 FY) customer service survey results:
  - Q1 – 94% overall customer satisfaction
  - Q2 – 83% overall customer satisfaction
  - Q3 – 85% overall customer satisfaction
  - Q4 – 59% overall customer satisfaction (lowest result attributed to passport delays)
- Annual – 80% overall customer satisfaction (high of 94% in Q1 and a low of 59% in Q4)
- Q1 (2022-23) – 71% overall customer satisfaction

#### External complaints referral (to be addressed by CLO)



Commonwealth Ombudsman

- In 2022, DFAT received 10 complaint referrals from the Commonwealth Ombudsman regarding passport matters.

Scheme for Compensation for Detriment caused by Defective Administration (CDDA)

- DFAT is currently considering 13 passport-related claims for compensation under the CDDA Scheme (for 2022-23 FY up to 23 January 2023).

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Division:</b> SDG   APO   Passport Strategy and Modernisation Branch                                   |   |
| <b>PDR No:</b> PDR number   |   |
| <b>Prepared by:</b><br>s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 25 January 2023 | <b>Cleared by Branch/Division Head:</b><br>Craig Kelly, A/g ED, APO<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 27 January 2023 |
| <b>Consultation:</b> Enter Div/Branch/Section.<br>Name: Type in Officer's name.                           | Date: Click or tap to enter consultation date.<br>Mob: Type mobile. Ext: Type extension.  |
| <b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary:</b>   | Date:   |

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## IDENTITY FRAUD

### ***What is DFAT doing to combat identity fraud?***

- . Identity fraud is a significant threat that we take seriously.
- . The passport issuing system contains strict controls designed to meet its legal obligation to issue passports only to people who can satisfy us of their true identity. This includes:
  - requiring applicants over 16 years of age to apply in person
  - requiring applicants to provide original birth certificates and citizenship certificates, which we verify with the issuing agency
  - requiring applicants to provide secondary or supporting identity documents such as driver licences
  - using biometric face recognition technology and human face recognition specialists to ensure that an applicant:
    - : does not hold a passport in a different, undisclosed identity, and
    - : renewing a passport is the same person as the holder of the previous passport
  - checks to ensure an identity is not deceased
  - sophisticated fraud profiling that identifies suspect applications and sets them aside for closer scrutiny
  - a team of professional investigators who work closely with law enforcement agencies to prosecute passport-related identity fraud
  - maintaining records that are identity-centric, not transaction-centric – this reduces the scope for people to have passports in multiple identities
  - working with like-minded countries, including through the Passport 6 Anti-Fraud Working Group, to identify and counter trends in passport identity fraud.

### ***What about photo morphing?***

- . To date, we have seen no instances of photo morphing (also known as photo merging) in Australian passport applications.
- . Our requirement that all applicants over 16 years of age apply in person, where their photos are compared to their faces in a live environment, assists in alleviating the threat.
- . To further improve our defences against morphing, we will shortly introduce live capture for overseas applicants [through Atlas Mobile Capture], and then explore this option for application domestically.

***Is there much passport identity fraud?***

- . Because of the stringent controls we have in place, successful passport identity fraud is rare:
  - : in FY 2020-21, we identified eight (8) cases of passport identity fraud, of which six were historic
  - : Three (3) cases have been identified in FY 2021-22 so far
  - : Cases may be identified in live applications though these are rare. Historic cases—some dating back many years—are detected by internal projects or are often referred by external and partner agencies.
- the most significant kind of passport fraud **does not involve identity**, but rather fraud or dishonesty matters involving forged parental consent for child passports
  - : there were 37 confirmed such cases in FY 2020-21, all of which were identified during processing stage
  - : in FY 2021-22, there have been six (6) cases to date
  - : all cases result in the refusal of the application, retention of the fee and criminal or administrative sanction, depending on the circumstances of the case.

***What is the penalty for criminals who conduct identity fraud?***

- . The *Australian Passports Act 2005* provides significant penalties for passport fraud offences, with maximum penalties of 10 years' imprisonment or 1000 penalty units (currently \$210,000).
- . We work closely with other agencies to identify related offending for identity fraud cases.
- . This joint approach to investigations/prosecution delivers stronger sentencing outcomes than prosecuting passport fraud alone.
- . In recent years we have seen individuals sentenced to terms of imprisonment.
  - One recent case that occurred in 2020 involved a Tasmanian resident lodging a passport application in another identity that was identified by passport facial recognition.
    - : On 3 November 2021, at the Hobart Supreme Court, in relation to the Commonwealth offences the defendant was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Prepared by:</b>                          | <b>Cleared by:</b>                           |
| s 22(1)(a)(ii)                               | Troy Kaizik                                  |
| Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) |
| Date: 3 February 2022                        | Date: 9 February 2022                        |

## Australian Passport Office – staffing numbers

**Handling Note:** APO ED to lead on passport issues.

### Strategic Message

- The APO significantly increased its staffing numbers and property footprint to meet current and future demand for passport services.

**How many staff has the APO onboarded and trained since borders reopened on 1 November 2021? How many are APS vs contractors?**

- As at 23 January 2023, 1,269 people were engaged directly in our State and Territory Offices across Australia.
  - 106 non-ongoing APS and 387 permanent APS (headcount).
  - The DFAT enterprise agreement defines a non-ongoing APS as an employee engaged for a specific term or task. A permanent APS employee is engaged as an ongoing APS employee. The difference between non-ongoing vs permanent is these staff have a defined timeframe related to their employment.
  - 776 contractors engaged via seven labour-hire agencies nationally (Adecco, Chandler Macleod, Hays, Ignite, McArthur, Randstad and SOS Recruitment)
  - This is a reduction from a peak of 1,418 in November 2022.
- We have entered into an agreement with a third party service provider, allowing us to draw on an additional 622 people (as at 23 January 2023) to assist with continuing volatile demand.
- We have also utilised an additional 412 people (as at 23 January 2023) from Services Australia to assist with reducing application backlogs. This includes staff employed through their third party service provider arrangement.

**Does the APO anticipate a reduction in staffing levels?**

- We do not foresee any changes to APO's staffing numbers while passport demand remains high.
- In mid-2022, Services Australia made staff available to the APO to support the passport surge. This included staff employed through Services Australia's third-party service provider arrangement.
- As passport processing demand stabilises, the surge support arrangement with Services Australia will reduce in line with the APO's operational requirements.



Table 1. Permanent APS, Non-Ongoing APS, and Contractor numbers by STO (excluding third party providers)

| Location                         | APS FTE      | Ongoing HC | APS Temporary HC | APS Headcount | Contractor | FTE TOTAL       | H/C Total    |
|----------------------------------|--------------|------------|------------------|---------------|------------|-----------------|--------------|
| <i>Adelaide Passport Office</i>  | 23.79        | 25         | -                | 25            | 64         | 87.79           | 89           |
| <i>Brisbane Passport Office</i>  | 38.4         | 29         | 10               | 39            | 156        | 194.4           | 195          |
| <i>Canberra Passport Office</i>  | 79.26        | 27         | 54               | 81            | 8          | 87.26           | 89           |
| <i>Darwin Passport Office</i>    | 6.8          | 6          | 1                | 7             | 1          | 7.8             | 8            |
| <i>Hobart Passport Office</i>    | 12.94        | 12         | 3                | 15            | 4          | 16.94           | 19           |
| <i>Melbourne Passport Office</i> | 59.78        | 62         | 2                | 64            | 250        | 309.78          | 314          |
| <i>Bulk Print Facility</i>       | 8            | 8          |                  | 8             | 33         | 41              | 41           |
| <i>Perth Passport Office</i>     | 22.6         | 20         | 4                | 24            | 54         | 76.6            | 78           |
| <i>Sydney Passport Office</i>    | 63.52        | 49         | 16               | 65            | 157        | 220.52          | 222          |
| <i>Complex Case Management</i>   | 12.8         | 8          | 5                | 13            | -          | 12.8            | 13           |
| <i>Consular (PFA Subsidy)</i>    | 7            | 7          |                  | 7             | -          | 7               | 7            |
| <i>Central Passport Office</i>   | 142.71       | 134        | 11               | 145           | 49         | 191.71          | 194          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                     | <b>477.6</b> | <b>387</b> | <b>106</b>       | <b>493</b>    | <b>776</b> | <b>1,253.60</b> | <b>1,269</b> |

Table 2. Increase in APS numbers month-by-month (excluding third party providers)

| Month /year | APO staff<br>(cumulative headcount) | Property expansion  |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Nov 21      | 545                                 |   |
| Dec 21      | 630 (+85)                           |   |
| Jan 22      | 623 (-7)                            |   |
| Feb 22      | 615 (-8)                            |   |
| Mar 22      | 648 (+33)                           |   |
| April 22    | 638 (-10)                           |   |
| May 22      | 722 (+84)                           | Datacom onboarded   |
| Jun 22      | 836 (+114)                          | Perth surge site<br>6 x pop up collection sites                   |
| Jul 22      | 1,014 (+178)                        | SA secondees onboarded<br>Serco onboarded<br>Melbourne surge site |
| Aug 22      | 1,074 (+60)                         | Sydney surge site<br>Brisbane surge site                          |
| Sep 22      | 1,240 (+106)                        |   |
| Oct 22      | 1,373 (+133)                        |   |
| Nov 22      | 1,418 (+45)                         |   |
| Dec 22      | 1,368 (-50)                         | Services Australia secondees returned                             |
| Jan 23      | 1,269 (-99)                         |   |



**What is the overall expected cost of these additional staff?**

- 2022-2023 forecast APO salaries expense is \$105m.

**How much are the third-party service providers costing?**

- Estimates are that these arrangements will not exceed \$35m per contract in 2022-23.

**Have you compromised security arrangements in order to onboard so many people in a relatively short period?**

- No. The APO conducts full pre-employment checks (including a police record check) for all new starters prior to commencement.
- This includes applicants providing proof of identity, proof of Australian citizenship, and clearing a full police records check (including overseas checks where applicable).
- The APO ensures all new starters are aware of their obligations under the Privacy Act 1988, the APS Code of Conduct, and DFAT Values, and staff are regularly reminded of their responsibilities in this area.
- The APO has implemented initiatives to protect the information it holds on systems, and our staff from being cultivated or influenced by outsiders. Some of these initiatives are:
  - Hire Right Police Checks as part of pre-onboarding procedures
  - No mobile phones at desks policy
  - Restricted access to both physical offices and networks
- The department has measures in place for staff to report unusual approaches by members of the public and staff are made aware of their responsibilities to report in regular messaging sent to the network.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Division:</b> SDG   APO   Passport Strategy and Modernisation Branch                                   |  |
| <b>PDR No:</b>  |  |
| <b>Prepared by:</b><br>s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 19 January 2023 | <b>Cleared by Branch/Division Head:</b><br>Craig Kelly, A/g ED APO<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 27 January 2023 |
| <b>Consultation:</b> Enter Div/Branch/Section.<br>Name: Type in Officer's name.                           | Date: Click or tap to enter consultation date.<br>Mob: Type mobile. Ext: Type extension.   |
| <b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary:</b><br>Craig Maclachlan   | Date: TBC  |



| City       | Main Office                             | Surge/Additional Office                  | Pop Up Collection Site  |
|------------|---|--|---|
| Adelaide   | Level 1,<br>55 Currie Street            |  | Level 5,<br>55 Currie Street  |
| Brisbane   | Level 17,<br>150 Charlotte Street       | Levels 9 & 14,<br>333 Ann Street         | Ground floor,<br>150 Charlotte Street                                 |
| Canberra   | Level 2,<br>44 Sydney Avenue            |  | Level 1, 44 Sydney<br>Avenue  |
| Darwin     | Level 5,<br>22 Mitchell Street          |  |   |
| Hobart     | Level 1,<br>111 Macquarie Street        |  |   |
| Melbourne  | Tower 3, Level 2,<br>747 Collins Street | Levels 10, 11 & 12, 55<br>Collins Street | 707 Collins Street  |
| Perth      | Level 1,<br>140 William Street          | Level 10,<br>s37 St George Terrace       | Australia Post<br>Cloisters Post Office<br>863 Hay Street<br>Perth WA |
| Sydney     | Level 7,<br>280 Elizabeth Street        | Level 7,<br>26 Lee Street                | Ground floor,<br>26 Lee Street  |
| Bulk Print | 1-9 Potter Street,<br>Craigieburn       | 4 View Road, Epping                      |   |

APO sites (18) + bulk print (2)

February 2023

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## Face Matching Service and Digital Identity

### ***What is the Passports Bill and where it is up to?***

- The Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs re-introduced the *Australian Passports Amendment (Identity-matching Services) Bill 2019* (the Passports Bill) on 31 July 2019.
  - The Passports Bill will provide a clear legal basis for the department to make Australian travel document data available for all the purposes of the identity-matching services
    - : the Intergovernmental Agreement signed at COAG on 5 October 2017 identifies the purposes as: preventing identity crime; general law enforcement; national security; protective security; community safety; road safety; and identity verification.
- The Passports Bill will also authorise the Minister for Foreign Affairs to arrange the automated decision making that is intrinsic to how the identity-matching services operate. The Passports Bill will also make provision for automation to enable for better customer outcomes. For example:
  - By matching images in Home Affairs' citizenship database against images submitted in support of passport applications, or
  - Automatically issuing a passport (for instance a renewal) in straightforward cases.
- Automation will only apply to decisions generating **positive or neutral outcomes** for customers.
- These measures will help protect Australians from criminal activities, including terrorism and identity crime.
- **The Current status** is that the PJCIS delivered its advisory report on 24 October 2019.
  - The only PJCIS recommendation specific to the Passports Bill was to limit in legislation (not just in policy) the automation of passport decisions to those generating positive or neutral outcomes for customers. The PJCIS advised that if this change was made, it would not need to see the Passports Bill again.
  - The Government accepted this recommendation, APO made those changes and is awaiting progress of the cognate Identity-matching Services Bill 2019 (the IMS Bill)
    - : Questions on the progress of the cognate IMS Bill should be directed to the Department of Home Affairs.

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***What privacy protections does the department have in place for the Face Matching Services?***

- A core criterion for participation in the Identity Matching Services (IMS) is **compliance with robust and effective privacy procedures**
  - including independent Privacy Impact Assessments (PIAs) conducted by all data requesting agencies.
  - Based on DFAT legal advice, we commissioned AGS to undertake a PIA regarding our participation in the FMS—being finalised.
- IMS data sharing will only take place where it is authorised by law
  - the *Australian Passports Act 2005* and the *Privacy Act 1988* provide for certain personal information to be collected by the APO and be disclosed for specific purposes, including for law enforcement.
- **Most FVS transactions will occur with the consent** of the person concerned, and will simply confirm the authenticity of images that the person has voluntarily provided to the data requesting agency
  - in this respect, among many others, it closely resembles the existing and successful Document Verification Service (DVS)
  - like the DVS, the FVS can only be used with the consent of the individual or by agencies that have a lawful basis for doing so.
- **The IMS are not a biometric database** and do not store any personal data in a central repository
  - they are merely a hub for transmitting requests and replies among agencies that already store biometric information
  - biometric matching happens at the data holding agencies and only results are transmitted as encrypted data i.e., data hidden.

***What is DFAT's role in Digital Identity (formerly known as Govpass) program?***

- DFAT is one of the key partner agencies involved in the Digital Identity program which is led by DTA.
- DFAT provides FVS (1:1 image based verification service) for passport data to confirm the identity of Digital Identity customers using passport as their proof of identity
- DFAT received Govpass funding in 2018-19 financial year and established an enhanced FVS infrastructure to be able to service high volume verification requests based on the forecast by DTA.
- The FVS is being used by the Australian Tax Office (ATO) through their digital identity smartphone App – myGovID. ATO commenced the public beta of this App in Aug 2021 including biometric verification through FVS on passport data at the Identity Proofing

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level (IP3). Till date ATO has issued over 1.13million digital identities at the IP3 level.

- DFAT assisted ATO and the Defence Science and Technology Group (DSTG) in undertaking biometric testing of the selfie images collected through the myGovID App against the associated passport images held in the APO based on passport holders' consent.
- DFAT continues to actively participate in various Digital Identity governance forums including some specialist working groups in support of the program.

***What specific information can you provide on the funding your department have been receiving from the Digital Identity Program?***

- In 2018-19, DFAT received \$9 million in capital funding to build the enhanced FVS. In 2019-20, DFAT absorbed \$4 million in support and maintenance costs. Sustainment has been funded since then, with DFAT receiving \$4 million in 2020-21 and \$3.3 million in 2022-23. The 2022-23 MYEFO included further sustainment funding of \$3.64 million for 2022-23 and \$3.66 million for 2023-24.
- The sustainment funding announced at MYEFO covers:
  - **Hardware and software support and maintenance** – servers and storage (production and non-production) and backups
  - **Technical support** during business hours
  - **System testing** – data preparation and regression testing of new Digital Identity services as they come on board
  - **Synching and Integration** of passport data with the FVS
  - **Program governance** and administration

**Will the Trusted Digital Identity legislation undermine privacy?**

- Refer the question to DTA
  - the draft DI legislation will not cover the identity verification service that DFAT offers through FVS and DVS
  - these services will be covered by the IMS Bill once it is passed
  - until then, DFAT is offering FVS and DVS services based on informed consent.

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**BACKGROUND****FMS - Face Verification Service (1:1)  
Face Identification Service (1:Many)**

- APO has been using commercial face matching algorithms and specialist facial image examiners to undertake face verification and face identification within its own Passport database since 2005.
- Where passport legislation permits (s.46 of the Passports Act – e.g. for security purposes) or on the basis of consent, DFAT has been disclosing results from face matching on an informal ad hoc basis to other government agencies since 2005.

**Face Verification Service (FVS) 1:1**

- The Face Verification Service is a **one-to-one** image-based verification service that can match a person's photo against an image on one of their government records, such as a passport photo, to help verify their identity.
- Practically all passport FVS verification is conducted on the basis of consent.

**DFAT linked its passport image database to the Face Verification Service in 2017**

- It has signed the Interagency Data Sharing Arrangements (IDSAs) with ASIO, ATO, Department of Justice NSW and Services Australia.
  - : utilised for victims of bushfires
- Prior to signing an independent Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) on DFAT was completed. A summary was made available on the AGD website and now through Department of Home Affairs website.

**Facial Identification Service (FIS) 1:Many**

- The Face Identification Service is a one-to-many service, it involves matching a photo of an unknown person against multiple government records.
- It is for use by law enforcement and security agencies only, as provided for in the Identity Matching Services Bill 2019.
- DFAT will not deploy the system (**yet to link passport image database to the Face Identification Service**) until the IMS Bill and Passports Bill have been passed.

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**Participation Agreement**

- DFAT has signed the IMS Participation Agreement that is legally binding and supersedes the existing IDSAs.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Prepared by:</b>                          | <b>Cleared by:</b>                           |
| s 22(1)(a)(ii)                               | Stephen Gee                                  |
| Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) |
| Date: 25 Jan 2022                            | Date: 25 Jan 2022                            |

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**REF 7.1****Senate Estimates February 2022**

## Australian Passport Office – Performance Metrics

**Handling Note:** APO ED to lead on passport issues.

### Strategic Messages

- The department started the 2021-22 financial year reporting period with record low demand for passports and ended it with unprecedented high demand.
- Extremely high demand meant we did not meet our processing targets from April to June 2022.
- Sustained high demand through July to November 2022 means our financial year targets are not on track.
- However, we are now meeting customer service timeframes for priority passports and are on track to regain our routine service timeframes in 2023.

### How is the APO tracking against its Portfolio Budget Statements performance criteria?

- APO only partially met its targets in 2021-22.
  - We rated our performance as ‘partially on track’ from July 2021 to March 2022, and ‘not on track’ from April to June 2022.
    - : We failed to maintain routine processing targets following the border reopening in November 2021. At that time, we updated advice to customers to allow six weeks for routine passport applications.
    - : We maintained our priority processing target until May 2022.
    - : We maintained our customer satisfaction target until April 2022 when longer-than-usual processing times and call centre delays impacted customer outcomes.
- At 31 January 2023, we are not on track for 2022-23.
  - We have processed over 88% of priority passports within 2 business days.
    - : Priority processing is back on track. Since early November 2022, we have consistently met our target of 98% issued within 2 business days.
  - We are not meeting our 10-business day processing target for routine applications.
    - : We have processed 34% of routine passports within 10 business days.
      - : Routine performance is improving. In January, we processed 87% of routine passports within 10 days.
    - : We have processed 73% of routine passports within our updated 6-week timeframe. We appreciate that this means just over a quarter of passports were not processed within 6 weeks.

- : We are now meeting our published 6 week timeframes. In January, we processed 95% of routine applications within 6 weeks.
- Customer satisfaction remains below our target of 85%.
  - : Between July and September 2022, 71% of customers were satisfied with the passport service.
  - Survey responses for October to December 2022 are currently being processed. Results are expected to be provided in late February 2023.
  - We expect improved processing times will result in an increase in overall customer satisfaction with the passport service.

#### **Will APO be able to meet the performance criteria this financial year?**

- We will not meet the performance criteria this financial year.
- Recent staff increases mean we are well placed to manage expected peaks in passport and customer contact demand while recovering our performance targets.
- We are now issuing passports within our priority processing timeframes and seeing continuous improvement in our routine performance.

#### **Why have the PBS measures changed / reduced since 2021-22?**

- In 2022, the department commenced a review to ensure all performance information met PGPA Act requirements, Department of Finance guidelines and to respond to recommendations from the ANAO, Chief Auditor and Audit and Risk Committee. This review resulted in a reduction in the number of passport targets from seven to three.
- The updated PBS measures were published in the October 2022-23 Budget papers.



## Final results for 2021-22 and results for 2022-23 to 31 January 2023

| Target   | 2021-22   | 2022-23 YTD   |
|--|---|---|
| 95 per cent of passports processed within 10 business days                                 | <u>Not met</u> : 68 per cent of passports processed within ten business days.<br><br>On target until November 2021.               | <u>Not on track</u> :<br><br>34 per cent of passports processed within ten business days.   |
| 98 per cent of priority passports processed within two business days                       | <u>Not met</u> : 90 per cent of priority passports processed within two business days.<br><br>On target until May 2022.           | <u>Partially on track</u> :<br><br>88 per cent of priority passports processed within two business days   |
| 85 per cent satisfaction rate of overall passport service from client survey               | <u>Not met</u> : 80 per cent satisfaction rate of overall passport service from client survey.<br><br>On target until April 2022. | <u>Not on track</u> :<br><br><u>Between July and September 2022, 71 per cent of customers were satisfied with passport services.</u><br><br><u>Survey results for October to December 2022 will be available in late February 2023.</u> |
| 100 per cent of identified high risk passport applications scrutinised by specialist staff | <u>Achieved</u> : 100 per cent of high-risk applications were scrutinised by specialist staff.                                    | <i>Removed for 2022-23</i>  |
| 90 per cent of administrative investigations finalised within five business days           | <u>Achieved</u> : 100 per cent of administrative investigations finalised within 5 business days.                                 | <i>Removed for 2022-23</i>  |



|  |  |                            |
|--|--|----------------------------|
| 95 per cent of referrals to prosecuting authorities accepted for prosecution | <u>Not met: 50 per cent</u><br>Prosecuting authorities assessed two referrals – accepting 1 referral and rejecting 1 referral. | <i>Removed for 2022-23</i> |
| 60 per cent of applications commenced online.                                | <u>Achieved: 81 per cent</u> of clients applied online.  | <i>Removed for 2022-23</i> |

### 2022-23 Target Descriptions

| Specified targets:   | Description  |
|--|--|
| 95 per cent of passports processed within 10 business days                   | Number of passports processed within 10 working days from scan date to date of print quality pass (excluding time on application hold) as a portion of all passports despatched in the period.                     |
| 98 per cent of priority passports processed within two business days         | Number of priority passports processed within 2 working days from scan date to date of print quality pass (excluding time on application hold) as a proportion of all priority passports despatched in the period. |
| 85 per cent satisfaction rate of overall passport service from client survey | Overall, average satisfaction score of 8.5 or above out of 10 for the last survey conducted in the reporting period.   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Division:</b> SDG   APO   Passport Strategy and Modernisation Branch                                      |   |
| <b>PDR No:</b>   |   |
| <b>Prepared by:</b><br>s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)    Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 7 February 2023 | <b>Cleared by Branch/Division Head:</b><br>Craig Kelly, A/g ED APO<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)    Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: Click or tap to enter a date. |
| <b>Consultation:</b> Enter Div/Branch/Section.<br>Name: Type in Officer's name.                              | Date: Click or tap to enter consultation date.<br>Mob: Type mobile.    Ext: Type extension.   |
| <b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary:</b><br>Craig Maclachlan  | Date: TBC   |

## AUSTRALIAN PASSPORT ISSUANCE STATISTICS

### Population Coverage

- As at 1 February 2022, there were just under 13.1 million valid travel documents in circulation
  - this equates to around 50.9 per cent of Australia's population.
- By comparison, there were just under 14.0 million valid travel documents in circulation at 1 February 2021
  - there are around 0.9 million fewer current passport holders than 12 months ago.

### Passport Issuance

- In 2021-22, as at 1 February 2022, we have *issued* over 585,000 travel documents
  - that's an average of around 20,000 a week, or just over 4,000 each business day
  - this is significantly less than our pre-pandemic demand forecast for the same period of around 1.3 million (45,000 a week, or just under 9,000 a day)
- We expect to issue between 1 and 1.7 million passports in 2021-22
  - this compares with our pre-pandemic forecast of around 2.25 million
  - there remains high volatility in passport demand. We closely monitor COVID-19 travel related policies and trends to inform our forecast models.
- As at 1 February 2022, we have received over 521,000 online applications for this financial year, representing around 83 per cent of total applications.

### Detailed statistics as at 1 February 2022

|   | 2016-17 | 2017-18 | 2018-19 | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 YTD |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Total number of travel documents on issue (includes CTD/CoI/DoI)        | 13.9m   | 14.2m   | 14.6m   | 14.6m   | 13.5m   | 13.0m       |
| Percentage of population with a passport (based on ABS figures)         | 56.4%   | 57.0%   | 57.5%   | 57.1%   | 52.4%   | 50.9%       |
| Total number of travel documents issued annually                        | 2.1m    | 2.1m    | 2.1m    | 1.8m    | 603k    | 585k        |
| Number of passport applications lodged using online forms               | 1.1m    | 1.3m    | 1.4m    | 1.2m    | 481k    | 521k        |
| Online forms lodged as a percentage of all passport applications lodged | 53%     | 61%     | 68%     | 70%     | 82%     | 83%         |

## BACKGROUND

**Number of 'travel documents' on issue** refers to:

- . All Australian Travel Documents (ATD) valid at 1 February 2022.
- . Valid ATDs include all documents that have been issued and have not reached their expiry date, nor cancelled by the APO due to loss, theft or other reasons.
- . ATD includes ordinary, official and diplomatic passports, Documents of Identity (DoI), Certificates of Identity (CoI), Convention Travel Documents (CTD), Emergency Travel Documents (EY) and Provisional Travel Documents (PTD).

**Percentage of the population with a 'passport'** is approximated by:

'Total number of travel documents on issue' ***divided by*** 'Estimated resident population'

- . The estimated resident population includes citizens and non-citizens, based on data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- . There currently is no reliable measure of the number of Australian citizens who would be eligible for an Australian passport.
- . This figure excludes Australians residing overseas.
- . The term 'passport' is used here as a generic term for all ATDs issued by the APO.

**Number of travel documents issued annually** includes:

- . All ATDs *printed* by the APO in the reporting period.
- . Documents spoiled during the printing process.

**Number of passport applications lodged using online forms**

- . Represents the number of passport applications that were generated using our passport online service and were *received* for processing by the APO within the reporting period.
- . Applications completed online using our online service that are not lodged within 28 days cannot be accepted for processing as the information submitted on the application may no longer be current. Hence, they are not counted.

**Online forms lodged as a percentage of all passport applications lodged** is calculated by:

- . 'Number of online applications interviewed' ***divided by*** 'Total number of applications interviewed'
  - Total number of applications interviewed includes all applications, including the ones that are yet to be available in our passport online service.
  - Overseas applications, child applications and applications for CTD/COI are not currently available as part of the passport online service.

| <b>Prepared by:</b>                          | <b>Cleared by:</b>                           |
|--|--|
| s 22(1)(a)(ii)                               | s 22(1)(a)(ii)                               |
| Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) |
| Date: 3 February 2022                        | Date: 4 February 2022                        |



## OFFICIAL

Ref 8.2

**APO STAFFING NUMBERS*****How many APS staff are employed by the APO?***

- . As at January 2022 the APO employed 345.05 FTE (361 headcount) across Australia and 262 contractors.
  - The APO total workforce is 623 people.

***Have you brought on additional staff to meet the increase in passport demand?***

- . Yes.
  - The APO has recalled its remaining 87 staff members who were on redeployment assisting Services Australia, and DFAT's Consular and Crisis Management Division.
  - The APO has also onboarded an additional 130 contract staff to assist with the increase in passport demand following the reopening of Australia's borders in November 2021.
  - The APO is currently finalising EL2, EL1 and APS6 recruitment rounds, with further APS3, 4 and 5 rounds to follow in the coming months.

**Background**

- . Current staffing numbers are comparable to pre-COVID levels.
  - Pre-COVID the APO had a total workforce of around 603 people.
  - Note: the APO now manages the APO Contact Centre in-house (currently 23 permanent APOCC staff, and 41 staff on loan from the production network). This means essentially ~60 staff are undertaking contact centre work; positions that were previously entirely devoted to passport processing.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Prepared by:</b>                     | <b>Reviewed by:</b>                     |
| s 22(1)(a)(ii) Director PCE             | s 22(1)(a)(ii)                          |
| Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) |
| Date: 2 February 2022                   | Date: 18 October 2021                   |

REF 8.2

Senate Additional Estimates February 2022

## OFFICIAL

Ref 8.3

**Total contract portfolio summary**

| Category           | Total number of contracts | Total value of contracts |
|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| IT – People        | 62                        | \$27,248,367.75          |
| IT – Other         | 50                        | \$75,980,814.34          |
| Contracts – People | 20                        | \$83,531,266.16          |
| Contracts – Other  | 22                        | \$654,456,474.48         |
| <b>Total</b>       | <b>154</b>                | <b>\$841,216,922.73</b>  |

**Top 10 service contracts by value**

| Supplier                        | Contract Description  | Valid From | Valid To   | Total Value (GST Inc) |
|---------------------------------|---|------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Note Printing Australia Limited | Design, Development, Testing and Production of blank booklets | 11/12/2003 | 7/12/2023  | \$388,582,516.00      |
| Australia Post                  | Passport Application Lodgement Services                       | 1/07/2018  | 30/06/2022 | \$181,961,070.42      |
| Thales DIS Australia Pty Ltd    | Security Laminates for Travel Documents                       | 30/10/2013 | 29/10/2022 | \$76,487,856.40       |
| Muhlbauer ID Services GmbH      | Passport Personalisation                                      | 1/12/2020  | 30/11/2025 | \$19,953,240.76       |
| CITEC                           | Provision of Hosted Mainframe Services                        | 1/08/2017  | 31/07/2022 | \$17,995,364.48       |
| McArthur Management Services    | APO Bulk Production Contractors                               | 1/07/2019  | 30/06/2023 | \$16,331,226.47       |

REF 8.3

Senate Estimates February 2022

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| <b>Supplier</b>  | <b>Contract Description</b>           | <b>Valid From</b> | <b>Valid To</b> | <b>Total Value (GST Inc)</b> |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Chandler Macleod | Chandler McLeod Bulk Recruitment ADHA | 1/07/2019         | 30/06/2023      | \$11,460,868.56              |
| Hays Recruitment | Bulk production contractors           | 1/07/2019         | 30/06/2023      | \$11,403,221.32              |
| Adecco Australia | Bulk production contractors           | 1/07/2019         | 30/06/2023      | \$10,132,024.54              |
| Randstad         | Bulk production contractors           | 1/07/2019         | 30/06/2023      | \$10,038,328.46              |

**Latest AusTender listings (December 2021 – January 2022 (inclusive))**

| <b>Supplier</b>                    | <b>Contract Description</b>      | <b>Valid From</b> | <b>Valid To</b> | <b>Total Value (GST Inc)</b> |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Modis Staffing Pty Ltd             | Senior .Net Full-Stack Developer | 10/01/2022        | 9/01/2023       | \$350,592.00                 |
| Aurec Pty Ltd                      | Senior .Net Full-Stack Developer | 4/01/2022         | 3/01/2023       | \$369,600.00                 |
| YNOT Consulting Services           | Senior .Net Full-Stack Developer | 16/12/2021        | 15/12/2022      | \$337,793.28                 |
| Aurec Pty Ltd                      | Senior .Net Full Stack Developer | 13/12/2021        | 12/12/2022      | \$354,816.00                 |
| Data#3 Limited                     | Samsung 32" S6U QHD Monitors     | 11/12/2021        | 10/12/2027      | \$249,975.00                 |
| Clicks Recruit (Australia) Pty Ltd | Performance Test Analyst         | 6/12/2021         | 5/12/2022       | \$351,648.00                 |
| Lifeworks.com Pty Ltd              | Leadership team support          | 3/12/2021         | 28/02/2022      | \$18,150.00                  |

**REF 8.3****Senate Estimates February 2022**

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**Ref 8.3**

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| <b>Prepared by:</b>   | <b>Cleared by:</b>                      |
| s 22(1)(a)(ii)        | Bridget Brill                           |
| Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)   | Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) |
| Date: 1 February 2022 | Date: 1 February 2022                   |

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**REF 8.3**  
**Senate Estimates February 2022**



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Ref 8.3a

**Market approaches completed/commenced since 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021**

| <b>Description</b>                            | <b>Approach type</b><br>(open/panel/direct source) | <b>Approx value</b><br>(inc GST) | <b>Result</b><br>(Complete, withdrawn, failed due to lack of interest suitable candidates) | <b>Comments</b>  |
|---|--|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Senior IT Project Manager (Brad Sullivan)     | Panel/Open   | \$390,720.00                     | Complete   |  |
| Supply & Delivery of 70 x Epson V850 Scanners | Direct   | \$79,310.00                      | Complete   | Replacement of STO scanners used for high resolution scanning of passport photos from application forms. Current model end of life and un-supported. |
| UX Designer s 47F(1)                          | Panel/Open   | \$325,248.00                     | Complete   |  |
| Senior .Net Full-Stack Developer (s 47F(1))   | Panel/Open   | \$350,592.00                     | Complete   |  |
| Senior .Net Full-Stack Developer (s 47F(1))   | Panel/Open   | \$369,600.00                     | Complete   |  |
| Senior .Net Full-Stack Developer (s 47F(1))   | Panel/Open   | \$337,793.28                     | Complete   |  |
| Senior .Net Full Stack Developer s 47F(1)     | Panel/Open   | \$354,816.00                     | Complete   |  |
| Samsung 32" S6U QHD Monitors                  | Panel/Open   | \$254,520.00                     | Complete   | STO replacements used for Eligibility. Current monitors end of life with high failure rate.  |
| Performance Test Analyst s 47F(1)             | Panel/Open   | \$351,648.00                     | Complete   |  |
| UX Researcher                                 | Open/Panel   | N/A                              | Failed due to lack of suitable candidates  |  |

REF 8.3a

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| Description   | Approach type<br>(open/panel/direct source) | Approx value<br>(inc GST) | Result<br>(Complete, withdrawn, failed due to lack of interest suitable candidates) | Comments   |
|---|---|---------------------------|---|--|
| Leadership Team Support                                   |   | \$18,150.00               | Complete  |  |
| Senior IT Project Manager<br>s 47F(1)                     | Panel/Open                                  | \$381,744.00              | Complete  |  |
| Application Support Engineer<br>s 47F(1)                  | Panel/Open                                  | \$235,192.00              | Complete  |  |
| ITIL Service Delivery Manager<br>s 47F(1)                 | Panel/Open                                  | \$316,800.00              | Complete  |  |
| Oracle Software Licensing & Support (Stellent WebCenter). | Open/Panel                                  | \$59,930.00               | Complete  |  |
| Fuji Xerox Phaser 3435 Colour Laser Printer x 14          | Open/Panel                                  | \$23,800.00               | In-progress   | STO replacements. Current model printer end of life and un-supported |
| Enterprise Architect                                      | Open/Panel                                  | \$504,768.00              | In-progress   |  |
| Data Robotics and Analytics                               | Open/Panel                                  | \$650,000.00              | Completed   |  |
| VDS Policy Officers                                       | Open/Panel                                  | \$200,000.00              | In-progress / finalised   |  |
| Dell Server Hardware for VDC Program                      | Open/Panel                                  | \$2,124,749.93            | Completed   |  |
| ClearCost Subscription                                    | Open/Panel                                  | \$59,950.00               |   |  |
| APIS External Contact Centre Support                      | Open/Panel                                  | \$500,000.00              | In-progress   |  |

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| Description                             | Approach type<br>(open/panel/direct<br>source) | Approx<br>value<br>(inc GST) | Result<br>(Complete,<br>withdrawn, failed<br>due to lack of<br>interest suitable<br>candidates) | Comments                             |
|---|--|------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Privacy Impact Assessment<br>for VDS    | Limited  | \$31,000.00                  | Completed   |                                      |
| Candidate Details and Police<br>Checks  | Limited  | \$16,000.00                  | Completed   |                                      |
| TIS Interpreter Services                | Limited  | \$450,000.00                 | Completed   |                                      |
| Future State Network<br>Operating Model | Open/Panel                                     | \$198,445.00                 | Completed   |                                      |
| 2D Barcode Implementation               | Limited  | \$20,000.00                  | Completed   |                                      |
| Video Spectral Comparator               | Limited  | \$260,000.00                 | In-progress   | S23 approved. PO has been requested. |

|                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| <b>Prepared by:</b>       | <b>Cleared by:</b>                                  |
| s 22(1)(a)(ii) _____      | Bridget Brill                                       |
| Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) _____ | Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) _____ Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) _____ |
| Date: 3 February 2022     | Date: 3 February 2022                               |

REF 8.3a

Senate Estimates February 2022

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## COVID-19 – Vaccine certificates - Vaccine certificate and recognition

**Handling Note:** ED APO to lead on the International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate. Questions on vaccine certification within Australia, including how the international certificate relates to domestic certificates and how individuals in Australia can get a certificate, should be referred to Services Australia.

### Strategic Message

- Strong demand for the International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate (ICVC) continues, based on vaccine certificate requirements in a number of foreign countries.
- The ICVC is widely accepted in the few countries that still require proof of vaccination.
- The Government is working with the G20 and the WHO on digital interoperability of major vaccine certificate formats in preparedness for any new COVID-19 variant or another pandemic.

### Why is DFAT still issuing International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificates (ICVCs)?

- Because Australian travellers continue to demand them
  - Over the Christmas period between 24 to 31 December 2022, everyday around 15,000 Australians applied for ICVCs
  - From 1 to 23 January 2023, everyday 12,000 Australian's are continuing to apply for ICVCs
  - we issued around 8 million in the first year *[19 October 2021 to 18 October 2022]*
  - and as of 31 December 2022, we had issued just over 9.1 million ICVCs.
- Although the Australian border has not required proof of vaccination since 6 July 2022, a number of foreign countries still do, either as a condition of entry and/or for access to certain domestic services and venues
  - examples include the United States, Japan and Indonesia.

### What types of vaccination certificate are there?

There are four main formats:

- International Civil Aviation Organization Visible Digital Seals (ICAO VDS) – the international standard, used by Australia, Japan, Nauru, Tuvalu and Samoa
- Digital Infrastructure for Verifiable Open Credentialing (DIVOC or 'CoWIN') – developed by India and also issued by four other countries
- the European Union (EU) Digital Covid Certificate (EU DCC)
- SMART Health Cards – the only digital format used in North America.
- In addition to these, some countries use unique national formats.
- Australia is working with the G20, the WHO, the OECD and the Global Digital Health Partnership *[collaboration of 30 countries and the WHO on digital health records]* to advance digital interoperability among major vaccine certificate formats in readiness for any new COVID-19 variant or another pandemic.

## Why won't European countries accept the ICVC? Why doesn't Australia join the EU Digital COVID Certificate (DCC), like New Zealand?

- Over the first half of 2022, governments in Europe sharply reduced or abolished their requirements for proof of vaccination
  - where such requirements remain, ICVCs are widely accepted
  - proof of vaccination is now rarely if ever an issue for Australians in Europe
  - there is no need for the Australian Government to issue EU DCCs.

## How much did it cost to develop the ICVC? What does it cost to keep it going?

- DFAT was allocated \$14.8m in 2021-22 to develop and support the back-end service for issuing certificate and \$5.8 million in 2022-23 to maintain the service
  - actual expenditure in 2021-22 was \$7.0 million
  - for 2022-23, expenditure to 31 December was \$1.85 million.
- Other expenditure has been incurred by Services Australia and the Department of Health.

## How much did it cost to develop the VDS-NC Checker app?

- Around \$350,000.

## Was the work contracted out?

- The certificate was developed in-house, in partnership with a long-standing private sector partner [*Verizon Enterprise Solutions*] that provides the encryption technology which secures Australia's ePassport chips.
- The app was designed by DFAT and developed in partnership with an existing private sector partner [*Speedwell, based in Brisbane*].

## Was there a tender for this work?

- The work carried out with these partners was covered by existing contracts.

## Has there been a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA)?

- Yes. Details have been published on DFAT's Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) Register on the DFAT website
  - APO and Services Australia have implemented the recommendations.

## Why does DFAT issue the certificate, not Services Australia?

- The certificate uses specialist ePassport technology, and DFAT, through the Australian Passport Office, operates this technology for the Australian Government.

## How does DFAT safeguard travellers' privacy?

- Services Australia derives the personal information for a certificate from the Australian Immunisation Register and from the passport details that travellers provide when they request a certificate
  - Services Australia sends this information to APO on the basis of informed consent
  - after issuing the certificate, APO retains none of this personal information.



- It is entirely up to travellers to decide what to do with their certificate, in the same way they decide when and to whom they present their passport.

#### Who decided what personal information goes into the certificate?

- ICAO, acting on guidance from the WHO.

#### Background

Australia's International COVID-19 Vaccination Certificate (ICVC) became available to individuals vaccinated in Australia on 19 October 2021.

In early 2022, a small number of European countries would only accept EU DCCs as proof of vaccination. In some locations, especially in Italy, this caused inconvenience for travellers from Australia, the United States, Canada, Japan, India and other countries that did not issue certificates in the EU's format.

#### Supporting information

##### Questions on Notice

No QoNs asked

##### Freedom of Information (FOI) Requests

None

##### Recent Ministerial Comments

- No recent Ministerial comments.

#### Relevant Media Reporting

In late 2021 and early 2022, Australian media reported extensively on the ICVC

- <https://www.abc.net.au/news/science/2021-08-19/covid-19-vaccine-passports-international-travel-borders/100383630>
- [Coronavirus: International COVID-19 vaccine passports to be issued next month \(9news.com.au\)](https://www.9news.com.au/coronavirus-international-covid-19-vaccine-passports-to-be-issued-next-month)
- <https://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/australia-vaccine-passport-intl-hnk/index.html>
- [International travel Australia: Singapore routes are first big test of Australian vaccine passport \(afr.com\)](https://www.afr.com/travel/international-travel-australia-singapore-routes-are-first-big-test-of-australian-vaccine-passport)
- [Travelling In Europe with An Australian Vaccination Certificate \(traveldaily.com.au\)](https://www.traveldaily.com.au/travelling-in-europe-with-an-australian-vaccination-certificate)
- [How to get a vaccine passport in Europe with an Australian vaccine certificate \(traveller.com.au\)](https://www.traveller.com.au/how-to-get-a-vaccine-passport-in-europe-with-an-australian-vaccine-certificate)
- [Europe COVID-19 Omicron travel restrictions: I'm locked down for Christmas \(traveller.com.au\)](https://www.traveller.com.au/europe-covid-19-omicron-travel-restrictions-im-locked-down-for-christmas)
- [Australia's vaccine certificates not accepted in some EU countries \(traveller.com.au\)](https://www.traveller.com.au/australias-vaccine-certificates-not-accepted-in-some-eu-countries)



|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Division:</b> SDG   APO   Passport Integrity Branch                                |  |
| <b>PDR No:</b> N/A  |  |
| <b>Prepared by:</b><br>s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 25 January 2023 | <b>Cleared by Branch/Division Head:</b><br>Craig Kelly, A/g ED APO<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 27 January 2023 |
| <b>Consultation:</b> N/A  |  |
| <b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary:</b><br>Craig Maclachlan                               | <b>Date:</b>   |

## Passport Renewal Reminder Service

**Handling Note:** APO ED to lead on passport issues.

### Strategic Message

- To assist Australians to be “travel ready” the department notifies existing passport holders if their passport has expired or is going to expire.

- Since 19 January 2021, the department has sent passport renewal reminders via email and SMS to over 3.1 million Australians.
  - Around 40 per cent of these customers have since been issued a new passport.
- As most passports are valid for 10 years, many Australians may be unaware their passport is expiring without a reminder.

### When did you start sending these reminders?

- On 19 January 2021.
- Other countries have also developed a reminder system.
  - New Zealand’s Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) launched its reminder service in December 2020.
  - The United Kingdom has been sending text messages to customers whose passports are nearing expiry since mid-2021.

### Who have you been sending them to?

- Customers whose passports will expire in the next six and nine months.
  - We send text messages to customers holding a passport that expires in six months. This is a reminder to renew.
  - We send text messages to customers holding a passport that expires in nine months. This is a reminder to renew.
    - The logic here is that some countries don’t allow entry with < six months validity on a passport, so we want to notify customers in advance of that date.
- Only customers who have an adult passport (over 18) will receive these reminders.

### Can people opt out if they don’t want to receive reminders?

- Customers can notify us if they do not wish to receive reminders and their records will be adjusted accordingly.
- Most passports are valid for 10 years, so customers will only receive these messages as their passports near expiry.

## Aren't these reminders a breach of passport holders' privacy?

- Our service complies with the Privacy Act.
- Customer contact details are used which were provided last time they applied for a passport.
- The reminder messages contain no personal information.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Division:</b> SDG   APO   Passport Strategy and Modernisation Branch         |  |
| <b>PDR No:</b>  |  |
| Date: Click or tap to enter a date.   | <b>Cleared by Branch/Division Head:</b><br>Craig Kelly, Acting ED, APO<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 27 January 2023 |
| <b>Consultation:</b> Enter Div/Branch/Section.<br>Name: Type in Officer's name. | Date: Click or tap to enter consultation date.<br>Mob: Type mobile. Ext: Type extension.   |
| <b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary:</b>   | Date: N/a  |

## OFFICIAL

Ref 10.1

**PASSPORT FACTS – 2020/21 v 2021/22\***

|   | <b>2020/21</b>  | <b>2021/22<br/>(YTD to 31 Jan)</b>                           |
|---|---|--|
| Number of passports issued  | 603,464   | 585,509  |
| Number of passports issued per business day   | 2,400   | 4,038  |
| Percentage of applicants who used APO's online services                                       | 80 per cent   | 83 per cent  |
| Number of people who paid to have their passports issued in two business days (plus delivery) | 18,332  | 45,144   |
| Number of Australians who had a passport  | 13.5 million  | 13.1 million   |
| Percentage of the population with an Australian passport                                      | 52 per cent   | 51 per cent  |
| Number of passports reported lost or stolen overseas  | 489   | 800  |
| Number of emergency travel documents issued   | 1,278   | 2,210  |
| Number of passports cancelled or refused on national security or law enforcement grounds      | 303   | 47   |
| Top five countries for lost Australian passports  | 1. China<br>2. United States<br>3. United Kingdom<br>4. New Zealand<br>5. Germany | 1. USA<br>2. UK<br>3. China<br>4. New Zealand<br>5. Thailand |
| Top five countries for stolen Australian passports  | 1. United States<br>2. New Zealand<br>3. Greece<br>4. Kenya<br>5. Germany         | 1. USA<br>2. Spain<br>3. UK<br>4. Canada<br>5. New Zealand   |

\* Financial years

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Prepared by:</b>                          | <b>Cleared by:</b>                           |
| s 22(1)(a)(ii)                               | Craig Kelly                                  |
| Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) |
| Date: 8 February 2022                        | Date: 8 February 2022                        |

**REF 10.1**  
**Additional Estimates February 2022**



## OFFICIAL

Ref 10.2

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**PASSPORT FEE SCHEDULE 2022*****Why are Australian passports so expensive?***

- . The Australian passport is respected internationally as a high-quality travel document
  - this is a key reason why Australians receive visa-free travel to some countries.
- . The Australian passport is technologically sophisticated and backed by rigorous anti-fraud measures to ensure its integrity
  - passport fees (which include an annual increase to reflect inflation) are consistent with this.
- . A 10-year passport costs less than a driver licence in a number of states and territories.
- . For example:
  - a 10-year licence costs \$352 in NSW, and \$381.10 in the ACT
  - a five-year licence in Queensland costs \$187.10.
- . Australian Passports are issued to the gold standard - Level of Assurance (LoA) 4 under the National Identity Proofing Guidelines (NIPG), which are the Australian Government's best practice guidelines for identity management
  - this means we have a very high confidence in the identities of people applying for Australian Passports.
- . No other government-issued credential in Australia meets this level of identity proofing.
- . Issuing a passport to a fraudulent or stolen identity carries very serious consequences for the community and the Government
  - we manage this risk by requiring an in-person interaction for all new passport applications, in accordance with the NIPG.
- . The operational costs associated with maintaining this gold standard are reflected in passport fees.
- . While passport fees are levied by the Government as taxes, none of this revenue is retained by the department.

***Why is the Australian passport one of the most expensive in the world?***

- . It's difficult to make direct comparison with the cost of other countries' passports.

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REF 10.2

Additional Estimates February 2022

## OFFICIAL

Ref 10.2

- 
- . Foreign passport fees are derived differently, based on a number of country-specific domestic factors, including:
    - cost of living;
    - cost of production; and
    - exchange rates.
  - . The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) recommends countries provide travel documents to their citizens at a rate reflecting:
    - the cost to design, develop and produce the book;
    - the cost to establish and maintain the application, adjudication, issuance; and
    - ongoing travel document life-cycle support costs.

***Is the Government considering waiving or reducing passport fees given most people were unable to use their passports for more than eighteen months while travel restrictions were in place?***

- . There are no plans to waive or reduce passport fees due to the previous border closures
  - under legislation, passport fees are levied as application fees, and COVID-19 hasn't reduced the cost of processing applications.
- . There's no correlation between passport application fees and the validity of an Australian passport
  - under legislation, passport application fees cover the significant costs associated with processing and technology, so our Australian-made, biometrically-enabled ePassports remain one of the most secure and trusted in the world.
- . Once issued, there is no full or partial refund available for any limited, reduced or unused passport validity.

***Why can't you extend the validity of existing passports at no extra cost, given that people – through no fault of their own – weren't able to use their passports until recently?***

- . It's not technically possible to extend the validity of a current passport.
- . That's because the expiry date is written into the electronic chip, and amending the chip is not possible as it is locked as part of issuance process and can't be written to again.
- . It is not possible to update the data page with a new validity period due to a security laminate being applied over the original printed validity period text.

REF 10.2

Additional Estimates February 2022

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- . ICAO prohibits the adding of additional pages to a travel document to combat fraud in changing passport details.
- . Australian passports are valuable forms of identification outside of travel
  - they can be used for up to three years after expiry to assist holders in Australia in opening bank accounts, obtaining driver licences and accessing other government services.

***Will there be any additional increase to passport fees in 2022 as a result of the new passport series currently in development?***

- . The next generation of the Australian passport – the R series – is expected to be launched later this year
  - it will build on the world-leading security features of the current P series passport, designed to prevent forgeries and detect any alterations.
- . There are no plans to increase passport fees as a result of introducing the new passport series.
- . Passport fees are subject to an annual increase to reflect inflation.
- . Since 2011, under Australian legislation, Australian travel document fees have been subject to annual Consumer Price Index increases.

**Background**

Under the *Australian Passports Act 2005*, Australians are entitled to a passport if they can prove their identity and citizenship, apply on the prescribed form and pay the applicable fee. The *Australian Passports (Application Fees) Act 2005* establishes a framework for Australian travel document fees, including that they are imposed as taxes and need not bear any relationship to the cost to the Government of producing a travel document.

The Australian Passports (Application Fees) Determination 2015 (‘the Determination’) sets the specific amount of each fee. Since 2011, the Determination has provided that the fees are automatically indexed for inflation on 1 January every year. The indexation uses a formula based on the ‘All Groups Consumer Price Index’, a weighted average of eight capital cities published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Prepared by:</b>                          | <b>Cleared by:</b>                      |
| s 22(1)(a)(ii)                               | Craig Kelly                             |
| Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) | s 22(1)(a)(ii)      Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii) |
| Date: 8 February 2022                        | Date: 8 February 2022                   |

REF 10.2

Additional Estimates February 2022

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Ref 10.2

## Passport fees

Fees as of 1 January 2022.

All fees are shown in Australian dollars.

| <b>PASSPORTS</b>  | <b>FEE</b> |
|---|------------|
| 10 – year validity passport (for persons aged 16 and over)    | \$308      |
| 5 – year validity passport (for children under 16)            | \$155      |
| 5 – year validity passport (optional for persons 75 and over) | \$155      |
| <a href="#">Replacement passport</a>                          | \$193      |
| <a href="#">Emergency passport overseas</a>                   | \$193      |
| <b>ADDITIONAL FEES</b>  | <b>FEE</b> |
| <a href="#">Priority processing</a> (if eligible)             | \$225      |
| Overseas surcharge - adult applicant                          | \$138      |
| Overseas surcharge - child applicant                          | \$67       |
| Observation made after passport issue                         | \$15       |
| <b>OTHER TRAVEL DOCUMENTS AND SERVICES</b>                    | <b>FEE</b> |
| Document of Identity  | \$81       |
| <a href="#">Certificate of Identity</a>                       | \$193      |
| <a href="#">Convention Travel Document</a>                    | \$193      |

REF 10.2

Additional Estimates February 2022



## **PASSPORT DOCUMENT REQUIREMENTS**

### **Why are original documents/in person lodgement still required to apply for a passport, why not a fully digital service?**

- . Australian passports are one of the most secure and trusted travel documents in the world. Establishing confidence in a person's identity is critical to maintaining integrity in our passport system.
- . The department explores ways to leverage technology and move more services online without compromising trust in the Australian passport.
- . Most customers can apply for a passport online. Between 1 Feb 2021 and 31 Jan 2022, 83% of applications, which is around 790,000, were commenced online.
- . Customers eligible for a streamlined passport renewal online do not have to provide original documents again. 93% of adult renewals are completed using our online renewal service at [www.passports.gov.au](http://www.passports.gov.au).
- . Under the *Australian Passports Act 2005*, the Minister or her delegate must be satisfied of a person's identity and Australian citizenship before issuing a passport.
- . Australian passports meet the highest level of identity assurance (Level 4) under the [National Identity Proofing Guidelines](#) (NIPG) (managed by the Department of Home Affairs).
  - This requires an in-person interaction and the sighting of original identity documents when first proofing a person's identity, as well as the verification of identity data with the issuing agency.

### **Have these processes changed during COVID-19?**

- . Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have assisted Australians overseas who are unable to meet our usual lodgement and identity requirements.
  - We have accepted applications and copies of documents by mail or email and conducted interviews via video call to facilitate the issue of emergency or limited validity passports for 'known' customers – those who have established their identity as part of a previous passport application.
  - We have implemented a document upload model which allows customers in high risk COVID-19 countries to lodge their application online, with additional checks completed over the phone.

### **What original documents do you need to apply for an Australian passport?**

*First time applicants*

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**Ref 10.3**

- . A customer applying for an Australian passport for the first time must present their original commencement of identity document, in accordance with the NIPG.
  - For a customer born in Australia this is their full original Australian birth certificate.
  - For a customer born overseas this is their original Australian citizenship certificate. In some circumstances we may ask to see their original foreign birth certificate, for example to establish their place of birth and/or gender or to determine parental responsibility for child applicants.
  
- . Due to Australian citizenship laws, a customer born in Australia on or after 20 August 1986 must also present either:
  - original evidence that at least one of their parents was an Australian citizen at the time of the customer's birth, or
  - an original Australian citizenship certificate.
  
- . Other documents (depending on individual circumstances) may include:
  - original documents to support a change of personal details (such as their name or gender),
  - approved translations of foreign language documents.
  
- . All first-time applicants must provide evidence of their identity in the community (for example, a driver licence and a Medicare card) and the name of a referee who has known them for at least 12 months.

*Previous passport holders*

- . A customer is eligible for streamlined renewal if their most recent Australian passport is current or expired, hasn't been reported lost or stolen or been cancelled for any other reason, and was issued:
  - on or after 1 January 2006
  - when they were 16 or older
  - with more than two years' validity
  - in their current name, date of birth, place of birth and gender.
  
- . Facial Recognition technology links the customer to their previously established identity and citizenship.
  
- . If the previous passport doesn't qualify for streamlined renewal, we need to see some original identity documents. This may be because the customer could not provide the original document when they first applied for a passport or because their personal details have changed, such as their name or gender.

**Ref 10.3**

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*Other requirements*

- For child applications the consent of all persons with parental responsibility is required unless there is an Australian court order in place that permits the issue of a passport or legislated special circumstances exist.

| <b>Reviewed by:</b>    | <b>Cleared by Branch Head</b> |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| s 22(1)(a)(ii)         | Troy Kaizik                   |
| Mobile: s 22(1)(a)(ii) | Mobile: s 22(1)(a)(ii)        |
| Date: 4 February 2022  | Date: 9 February 2022         |

## APO Procurements and Contracts

**Handling Note:** APO ED to lead on passport issues.

### Strategic Messages

- APO has approx. 53 open contracts with a total current value of approx. \$744m.
- Contracts cover requirements for manufacturing equipment and materials, flexible staffing arrangements, and operational support (e.g. call centre).

### What is the overall contracts portfolio profile?

- The APO contracts portfolio can be divided into two main areas:
  - Contracts for staffing arrangements, and
  - Contracts for other services, materials and equipment.
- The total value of the portfolio is: \$774.008m (\$774,008,323.46), split against:
  - People contracts: \$97.494m (\$97,493,745.23)
  - Services contracts: \$676.515m (\$676,514,578.23)

### What are the biggest contracts held by APO?

- The top 10 open contracts are:

| Ref | Supplier                        | Contract Description   | Valid From | Valid To   | Total Value (GST Inc) |
|-----|---------------------------------|--|------------|------------|-----------------------|
| 1   | Note Printing Australia Limited | Design, Development, Testing and Production of passport booklets | 11/12/2003 | 7/12/2023  | \$388,582,516.00      |
| 2   | Australia Post                  | Passport Application Lodgement Services                          | 1/07/2018  | 30/06/2023 | \$230,185,183.40      |
| 3   | Datacom Systems (AU)            | APO Contact Centre Services                                      | 4/05/2022  | 4/07/2024  | \$49,223,613.92       |
| 4   | Randstad                        | APO Bulk Production Contractors                                  | 1/07/2019  | 30/06/2023 | \$40,638,291.53       |
| 5   | SOS Recruitment                 | APO Bulk Production Contractors                                  | 1/07/2019  | 30/06/2023 | \$21,727,759.14       |
| 6   | Hays Specialist Recruitment     | APO Bulk Production Contractors                                  | 1/07/2019  | 30/06/2023 | \$18,916,901.07       |
| 7   | McArthur Management Services    | APO Bulk Production Contractors                                  | 1/07/2019  | 30/06/2023 | \$14,428,349.08       |



| Ref | Supplier         | Contract Description            | Valid From | Valid To   | Total Value (GST Inc) |
|-----|------------------|---------------------------------|------------|------------|-----------------------|
| 8   | Adecco Australia | APO Bulk Production Contractors | 1/07/2019  | 30/06/2023 | \$12,682,343.42       |
| 9   | Chandler Macleod | APO Bulk Production Contractors | 1/07/2019  | 30/06/2023 | \$11,998,757.75       |
| 10  | Ignite           | APO Bulk Production Contractors | 1/07/2019  | 30/06/2023 | 7,263,299.62          |

#### What are the procurement processes APO uses?

- APO procurement processes are completed in accordance with Commonwealth Procurement Rules (PCRs) and the PGPA Act.
- APO leverages the indigenous procurement policies (using Supply Nation Direct) wherever possible and government panel arrangements.
- The Digital Marketplace is the most used panel arrangement.

#### What are the key procurements APO has completed since 1 Nov 2022?

| Supplier                    | Contract Description                                    | Valid From | Valid To   | Total Value (GST Inc) |
|-----------------------------|---|------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Paper Giant                 | APO Website and Compass Content Transformation Services | 21/11/2022 | 30/06/2023 | \$219,078             |
| Grosvenor Performance Group | Inventory Management Services                           | 7/11/2022  | 6/05/2023  | \$103,273             |

## BACKGROUND

### Datacom commercial arrangement

- In March 2022, APO released an approach to market for a service provider to support the taking of pre-lodgement calls.
  - The approach to market was completed using the Digital Marketplace panel arrangement.
  - Initial expectations were that the service provider would support the taking of 'simple' call types, allowing APO staff to focus on more complex calls that required access to passport systems.
- Following an evaluation of three submissions from call centre service providers, a contract was established with Datacom.
  - Initial contract was signed in early May 2022 with the following particulars:
    - Resourcing of 40 Logged FTE
    - Initial contract term of 12 months with 2 x 12-month extension options
    - Forecast value of approx. \$6.991m (inc GST).
- In mid-April 2022, call demand started rapidly increasing from approx. 25k received per week to 122k.
- In mid-May 2022, Datacom advised that approx. 278 FTE of existing call agents were becoming available through other government arrangements ending.
- In parallel, remote access to passport systems had been established, allowing call centre staff to conduct all call types.
- By end-June 2022, APO had negotiated a contract that would enable the onboarding of an additional 278 Logged FTE from Datacom to take all call types.
  - The contract variation provided highly flexible terms and conditions, allowing APO to increase and decrease staffing levels on a monthly basis.
- The contract variation was signed in July 2022 with the following particulars:
  - Resourcing of an additional 278 FTE (on top of the initial 40 FTE)
  - Contract term of 12 months from the contract variation with 2 x 12-month extension options available.
- In June 2022, Services Australia completed a review of the APO-Datacom contract, confirming that the flexibility and pricing of the arrangement represented good value for money for APO's requirements.
- In Dec 2022, the Datacom contract was extended for an additional 12 months with the contract now expiring on 4 July 2024.

### Serco commercial arrangement

- At end-May 2022, Services Australia CEO Skinner and DFAT Secretary Campbell met to discuss Services Australia support of increased passport demand.
- From July 2022, approx. 300 staff (approx. 225 Logged FTE) would be available from a commercial relationship between Services Australia with Serco to transition from Services Australia activities to supporting processing passport demand.
  - The 300 staff were planned to be working across two main areas, being:
    - 100 staff in 'simple' production activities (eg cropping and data verification)
    - 200 staff in passport case management activities.
- Due to natural attrition and delays in recruiting suitable staff, the current resourcing profile is sitting at approx. 412 staff (equivalent of 185 Logged FTE).
- The forecast cost of the arrangement for is expected to be approx. \$35m for FY2022-23.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Division:</b> SDG   APO   Portfolio Management Office   |   |
| <b>PDR No:</b>   |   |
| <b>Prepared by:</b><br>s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)    Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 19 January 2023 | <b>Cleared by Branch/Division Head:</b><br>Craig Kelly, a/g ED APO<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)    Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 27 January 2023 |
| <b>Consultation:</b> Enter Div/Branch/Section.<br>Name: Type in Officer's name.                              | Date: Click or tap to enter consultation date.<br>Mob: Type mobile.    Ext: Type extension.   |
| <b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary:</b><br>Craig Maclachlan  | Date: TBC   |



## Identity Fraud

**Handling Note:** APO ED to lead on passport issues.

### Strategic Messages

- The department has facial recognition technology and document verification to detect and deter those who try to exploit the passport issuance system.
- APO engages closely with partner agencies across the Commonwealth and State/Territories to investigate and treat our most serious cases of passport fraud.
- The majority of passport fraud investigations involve forged parental consent for child passports. These are managed effectively using criminal or administrative sanctions.
- The APO continues to work closely with international passport partners to identify international passport fraud trends.

### What is DFAT doing to combat identity fraud?

- Identity fraud is a significant threat that we take seriously.
- The passport issuing system contains strict controls designed to meet its legal obligation to issue passports only to people who can satisfy us of their true identity. This includes:
  - requiring applicants aged 16 years and over to apply in person
  - requiring applicants to provide original birth certificates and citizenship certificates, which we verify with the issuing agency
  - requiring applicants to provide secondary or supporting identity documents such as driver licences
  - using biometric face recognition technology and human face comparison specialists to ensure that an applicant:
    - does not hold a passport in a different, undisclosed identity, and
    - renewing a passport is the same person as the holder of the previous passport
  - checks to ensure an identity is not deceased
  - sophisticated fraud profiling that identifies suspect applications and sets them aside for closer scrutiny
  - a team of professional investigators who work closely with law enforcement agencies to prosecute passport-related identity fraud
  - working with like-minded countries, including through the Passport 6 Anti-Fraud Working Group, to identify and counter trends in passport identity fraud.

### Is there much passport identity fraud?

- Because of the stringent controls we have in place, successful passport identity fraud is rare:
  - Twenty (20) cases of passport identity fraud were identified in FY 2021-22.
  - Ten (10) cases of passport identity fraud were identified in FY 2022-23
  - Cases may be identified in live applications though, these are rare. Historic cases—some dating back many years—are detected by internal projects or are often referred by external and partner agencies.



- The most significant kind of passport fraud does not involve identity, but rather fraud or dishonesty matters involving forged parental consent for child passports
  - there were 45 confirmed such cases in FY 2021-22, all of which were identified during processing stage
  - there were 79 confirmed cases in FY2022-23, all of which were identified during the processing stage
  - all cases result in the refusal of the application and retention of the fee and/or criminal or administrative sanction, depending on the circumstances of the case.

### What about photo morphing?

- To date, we have seen no instances of photo morphing (also known as photo merging) in Australian passport applications.

### What is the penalty for criminals who conduct identity fraud?

- The *Australian Passports Act 2005* provides significant penalties for passport fraud offences, with maximum penalties of 10 years' imprisonment and/or 1000 penalty units (currently \$222,000).
- We work closely with other agencies to identify related offending for identity fraud cases.
- This joint approach to investigations/prosecution delivers stronger sentencing outcomes than prosecuting passport fraud alone.
- In recent years we have seen individuals sentenced to terms of imprisonment.
- Indented July 2022, a Queensland man was convicted for offences relating to identity and social security fraud and received a penalty of four years imprisonment.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Division:</b> SDG   APO   Passport Strategy and Modernisation Branch                                   |  |
| <b>PDR No:</b>  |  |
| <b>Prepared by:</b><br>s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 7 February 2023 | <b>Cleared by Branch/Division Head:</b><br>Craig Kelly, A/g ED APO<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 27 January 2023 |
| <b>Consultation:</b> Enter Div/Branch/Section.<br>Name: Type in Officer's name.                           | Date: Click or tap to enter consultation date.<br>Mob: Type mobile. Ext: Type extension.   |
| <b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary:</b><br>Craig Maclachlan   | Date: TBC  |

## Restricting known child sex offenders

**Handling Note:** APO ED to lead on passport issues.

### Strategic Messages

- The Passports Legislation Amendment (Overseas Travel by Child Sex Offenders) Bill 2017 (the Bill) prevents Australian citizens listed on a State or Territory child protection offender register with reporting obligations from travelling overseas.
- This world-leading scheme mitigates the risk of sexual exploitation of vulnerable children in overseas countries where the legal framework is not as robust as Australia's.

### What's happening to stop overseas travel by child sex offenders?

- Since the legislation came into force on 13 December 2017:
  - The Minister for Foreign Affairs or an authorised delegate 'must' deny passports to reportable offenders if a competent authority makes a request
  - If a reportable offender attempts to depart Australia without permission from a competent authority (even if they hold a valid passport), they commit a Commonwealth offence and are prohibited from travelling
  - If a competent authority makes a refusal/cancellation request, the decision is not a reviewable decision in the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.
- A competent authority is generally a State or Territory law enforcement body responsible for managing a child protection offender register and those reportable offenders contained on it.

### Have these measures been effective?

- Yes.
- Since the travel restrictions took effect on 13 December 2017, the Minister for Foreign Affairs or an authorised delegate has (as at 23 January 2023):
  - cancelled 439 Australian passports, and
  - ordered the surrender of 11 foreign passports
- To date, the APO has received 4,416 requests from competent authorities to deny Australian passports to reportable offenders who do not have current passports
  - of these requests, only 58 applied for a passport and were refused.

### Background

- In February 2022, former Foreign Minister Payne sent a letter to each State and Territory Police Minister seeking support to increase the uptake of legislative provisions available.
- Automatic updates on the status of all Australian passports are provided to the Department of Home Affairs for use at international departure ports in Australia.
- Information on cancelled Australian passports is reported to Interpol daily with foreign border control officials having access to this information (albeit not specifics regarding the reason for a passport's cancellation).

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Division:</b> SDG   APO   Sensitive Cases and Enabling Branch   |   |
| <b>PDR No:</b> PDR number  |   |
| <b>Prepared by:</b><br>s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)    Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 25 January 2023 | <b>Cleared by Branch/Division Head:</b><br>A/g Craig Kelly, ED APO<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii)    Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 27 January 2023 |
| <b>Consultation:</b> Enter Div/Branch/Section.<br>Name: Type in Officer's name.                              | <b>Date:</b> Click or tap to enter consultation date.<br><b>Mob:</b> Type mobile. <b>Ext:</b> Type extension.                             |
| <b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary:</b>  | <b>Date:</b>  |



## Passport Cancellations (Security and Law Enforcement)

**Handling Note:** APO ED to lead on passport issues. Questions pertaining to Syria repatriations to be led by Ambassador CT and FAS CCD.

### Strategic Messages

- Passport legislation provides competent authorities with provisions to ask the Minister for Foreign Affairs (or delegate) to cancel/refuse Australian passports on law enforcement or national security grounds.
- The APO proactively engages with competent authorities to ensure these provisions are applied to maximise security and law enforcement outcomes.
- When a passport is cancelled, its status (not reason) is communicated daily to the Department of Home Affairs and Interpol to mitigate its use for travel.

### On what basis can the Minister cancel or refuse to issue a passport on security or law enforcement grounds?

- There are provisions under the *Australian Passports Act 2005* for a competent authority, to request the Minister for Foreign Affairs (or delegate) cancel or refuse to issue a passport to an individual. These definitions are:
  - Australian law enforcement (e.g. parole, arrest warrant, bail, reportable offenders). For example state and territory Police, parole and commonwealth parole office;
  - International law enforcement (e.g. Australians overseas arrested and/or detained for serious foreign offences). For example DFAT is the competent authority;
  - Security (e.g. conduct that might prejudice the security of Australia or a foreign country). For example ASIO, AFP and ABF.
- A person subject to a passport cancellation or refusal would be formally notified of the decision and have the right of review
  - the exception is on security grounds where the Minister for Home Affairs issues a certificate under the *ASIO Act 1979* to withhold notification.
- Questions concerning specific law enforcement or security-related cancellation/refusal cases should be directed to the competent authority.

### Are border control officials informed of passport cancellations?

- Updates on the status of all Australian passports are automatically provided to the Department of Home Affairs for use at the border.
- Information on Australian passports recorded as lost, stolen or cancelled is also reported to Interpol daily
  - foreign border control officials have access to this information to assist with their management of passenger movements.



**How many law enforcement or security-related passport cancellations/refusals does the APO manage per annum? (See table at end of brief)**

- The majority of cancellations and refusals relate to Commonwealth parolees, followed by Reportable Offenders subject to travel restrictions (i.e. an Australian citizen who is listed on a State or Territory child protection register).
- Questions concerning specific law enforcement or security-related cancellation/refusal cases should be directed to the competent authority.

s 47F(1)

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Division:</b> SAE   APO   Specialised Cases and Enabling Branch  |  |
| <b>PDR No:</b> PDR number   |  |
| <b>Prepared by:</b><br>s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 20 January 2023 | <b>Cleared by Branch/Division Head:</b><br>A/g Craig Kelly, ED APO<br>Mob: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Ext: s 22(1)(a)(ii)<br>Date: 27 January 2023 |
| <b>Consultation:</b> Enter Div/Branch/Section.<br>Name: Type in Officer's name.                           | Date: Click or tap to enter consultation date.<br>Mob: Type mobile. Ext: Type extension.   |
| <b>Cleared by Deputy Secretary:</b><br>Craig Maclachlan   | Date: TBC  |

**Passport Refusal Requests and Passport Cancellations  
On Law Enforcement And/or Security Grounds (As At 23/01/2023)**

| Section of APA 2005 | Description   | Cancel    |           |           |           |           | Refusal  |          |          |          |          |
|---------------------|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
|                     |   | 2018-19   | 2019-20   | 2020-21   | 2021-22   | 2022-23   | 2018-19  | 2019-20  | 2020-21  | 2021-22  | 2022-23  |
| s12                 | Reasons relating to Australian Law Enforcement matters                | 39        | 52        | 26        | 84        | 23        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 4        |
| s13                 | International Law Enforcement   | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        |
| s14                 | Security/<br>Potential Harmful Conduct<br>Reasons – National Security | 12        | 5         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 2        | 2        | 1        | 0        | 0        |
| s14                 | Security/<br>Potential Harmful Conduct<br>Reasons – Harmful Conduct   | 0         | 2         | 1         | 0         | 0         | 0        | 0        | 0        | 1        | 0        |
| s14                 | Potential Misuse  | 15        | 2         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        |
|                     | <b>Totals</b>   | <b>66</b> | <b>61</b> | <b>27</b> | <b>84</b> | <b>23</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>2</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>4</b> |

**Attachment X****MEDIA ENQUIRY FROM s 47F(1)  
PASSPORT WAIT TIMES (9 FEBRUARY 2022)****Questions:**

s 47G(1)(a)

**Response:**

//

**Attributable to a spokesperson from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade**

Since the reopening of Australia's international border, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has been experiencing an increase in passport demand.

Over 100,000 passport applications were lodged in January 2022. This is around 2.5 times higher than January last year.

- In January 2021, 38,793 applications were lodged (payment received at STO/AusPost/Post).
- In January 2022, 101,402 applications were lodged (payment received at STO/AusPost/Post).

Continuing passport demand fluctuations make it difficult to estimate current application processing times. Our best guide is the average turnaround time for January – which was around 17 working days.

- According to PICS (KPIA report), for all passports issued in January 2022:
  - The average turnaround time (scan to despatch) was 17.20 working days.
  - The average processing time (scan to despatch, excluding time on clock stopping hold) was 16.81 working days.

This is well short of the timeframe DFAT is publicly encouraging Australians to apply for or renew their passport – which is up to six weeks ahead of their planned travel.

This is also much shorter than the average processing times seen in the United States and the United Kingdom following the reopening of their own international borders, with many customers waiting in excess of 90 days to receive their passport.

Processing timeframes for passports depend on the complexity of the applications received and whether they have been fully completed when lodged. We often find most delays occur when customers haven't provided all the necessary information or haven't met other requirements.

Many child applications are complex in nature. The department doesn't track data on turnaround time by application type. But, because passport renewal is not available to child applicants, and additional requirements need to be met to issue passports to children (e.g. parental consent), child passports may take longer to process than those for adults.

Most Australians that have planned international travel get in contact with the Australian Passport Office (APO) well before their scheduled departure. In cases where customers need to travel urgently (i.e. for compassionate reasons), the APO has processes in place to ensure they receive their passports on time (including outside regular business hours). For an additional fee, customers also have the option of using the APO's priority processing service.

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