



News release

Insurance Council
of Australia

Thursday, 28 October 2021

Travel insurance as essential as a passport for OS trips

The Insurance Council of Australia (ICA) today reminded Australians to make sure they have travel insurance if they are planning to go overseas.

Travel insurance is available for international travel, and some insurers have introduced cover for various COVID-related travel situations to destinations other than those few that continue to carry a Level 4 'Do Not Travel' advisory.

The introduction of COVID cover has not significantly impacted premium costs, and travel insurance remains good value given the benefits it provides travellers if the unexpected happens.

Travellers should go to DFAT's smartraveller.gov.au for the most up-to-date information about the status and entry requirements of their stopovers and destinations.

An increasing number of destinations, including Singapore, the UAE and Thailand, require overseas visitors to have cover for COVID-related medical treatment.

Travellers should read their policies carefully to make sure it provides cover for their particular circumstances and destinations.

Travel insurance protects travellers for many situations unrelated to COVID, which can include medical cover and assistance, dental cover, changed or cancelled travel plans, lost luggage, and theft.

Quote attributable to ICA CEO Andrew Hall:

Australians love to travel, and with more flights taking off and the Australian Government's travel advisories updated we're expecting to see the pent-up demand of the last two years turn into a rush to travel overseas in coming months.

You can't leave Australia without a passport, and you shouldn't leave Australia without travel insurance.

Travel insurance remains essential for all the reasons it was pre-pandemic: to provide protection when the unexpected occurs far from home.

Some insurers are now offering cover for a range of COVID-related situations, providing additional protection for travellers if they want or need this as part of their travel insurance.

Things to consider when purchasing travel insurance

- Travellers need travel insurance to cover their specific trip – travel insurance is not one size fits all and research is essential to find the product that best suits the individual traveller and the specific trip.
- Don't choose a travel policy on price alone – look at the inclusions, exclusions, excess and claims limits.
- Buy travel insurance when booking and paying for big-ticket items. This means you may be covered if an unexpected event forces cancellation.
- Not all travel policies will automatically cover COVID – some insurers may have this cover as an add-on for an additional cost and some will include it in the policy as part of the overall cost.
- Travel insurance can cover cancellation costs if you need to change your plans. Read the product disclosure statement before you buy your policy so you know how it will respond to cancellations and delays.
- Check your destination's COVID requirements – some countries will require inbound travellers to not only be vaccinated but have a minimum amount of cover specifically for COVID related medical expenses. You may also be required to have a negative pre-trip COVID test.
- Product Disclosure Statements should be read carefully to determine inclusions, exclusions and limits, and how the cover responds to COVID-19 for specific situations and destinations.
- In some countries hospitals will refuse to provide medical assistance if you don't have travel insurance or the ability to pay upfront. This may be avoided by ensuring you have appropriate travel insurance for you, your trip and activities to cover medical emergencies, particularly if you have a pre-existing medical condition.
- Carefully read the terms and conditions if you are planning on to use complimentary travel insurance that comes with some credit cards and consider purchasing additional cover.