

## **Filipino Migrants Forum**

### **TIPS FOR TOURIST VISA HOLDERS!**

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Many of you have probably watched the television series “Border Protection” and wonder why a number of arriving passengers are denied entry during the immigration segments. For those who think the series is a work of pure fiction, please be assured **IT IS NOT**. The situations you see on the television do happen, if not daily, on a very regular basis.

Visitors to Australia are not permitted to work and are required to have sufficient funds to support themselves during their visit and to cover their departure from Australia at the end of their visit. Visa issuing officers overseas check that these requirements are satisfied before the visa is granted and immigration staff at entry points double check by interviewing arriving passengers as they see fit.

The fact of holding a valid tourist visa does not automatically guarantee that a person will be allowed to enter Australia. In the case of visitors for example, the Department of Immigration needs to be satisfied that a visa holder does not intend to breach the visa conditions, either has an airline ticket to depart Australia or sufficient funds to buy one as well support him/herself during the visit. Failure to satisfy immigration staff at the airport on any on any of these matters can result in denial of entry.

Although possession of an outward airline ticket is not mandatory, given that it is usually cheaper to buy a return ticket on which discounts may be obtained, a tourist who arrives holding only a one way ticket to Australia creates immediate doubts as to his/her bona fides. If a one way ticket is being used then the visitor must be able to show evidence of sufficient funds to buy the return ticket and may, in fact be asked to do so at the airport.

The mere fact of a passenger having a one way ticket and/or insufficient funds is not of itself a basis for visa cancellation however it can result in the immigration officer determining that the visa holder intends to work to support him/herself during the visit and this is a ground for visa cancellation and denial of entry.

Evidence of sufficient funds may be in the form of cash, travellers’ cheques, a guarantee of financial support by someone in Australia, evidence of access to funds in Australia such as a bank transfer. Cash and travellers’ cheques can easily satisfy an interviewer but other documents such as bank transfers, guarantees by someone in Australia, ATM cards and credit cards are difficult to verify and the Immigration Officer has the discretion on whether to accept these as evidence or not.

Whilst there is no set amount of what is considered sufficient during a visit, matters considered in assessing whether funds are sufficient include whether the visitor has to provide his/her own accommodation or will be staying with family or friends and their travel itinerary within Australia. Visitors would generally be expected to show evidence of \$1,000 to \$1,500 per month depending on what level of accommodation is intended and their planned itinerary.