

Treasurer's Instruction No	701
Title	Certifying Officers
Effective date	1 July 2005
Objective and Background	To provide instructions and guidance in relation to certifying officers
Last Reviewed Date	1 January 2004

This Instruction was previously known as Treasurer's Instruction No 504 – Certifying Officers.

Black letter (or bold) items within these Instructions are mandatory and other plain font items are instructional or for the purpose of providing guidance only.

BACKGROUND

Section 22 of the Act provides that a Head of Agency is responsible for the financial management of an agency in an efficient, effective and economical manner. These responsibilities include the appointment of one or more officers in the Agency as certifying officers charged with the duty of certifying all expenditure of that Agency.

Section 15 of the Act provides that an officer shall not incur expenditure in the course of official duties unless that expenditure is certified as correct by a certifying officer in accordance with the Treasurer's Instructions.

APPOINTMENT OF A CERTIFYING OFFICER

- (1) A Head of Agency may appoint as a certifying officer:**
 - (a) an individual officer; or**
 - (b) the holder of a nominated position.**
- (2) Each appointment of a certifying officer must be in writing and recorded in the Agency's Accounting Manual.**
- (3) The instrument of appointment must specify any limit on the type, or amount, of payment which may be certified together with details of subsequent revocation or variation of the appointment.**
- (4) An officer who is a certifying officer by virtue of holding a nominated position, will cease to be a certifying officer upon vacating the nominated position.**
- (5) The Statement of Duties of a nominated position must note that the incumbent is a certifying officer by reason of appointment to that position.**

The Head of Agency should regularly review the persons and positions nominated as certifying officers to ensure that those appointments remain current.

DUTIES OF A CERTIFYING OFFICER

- (6) Before certifying a payment, a certifying officer must be satisfied that:**
- (a) the payment has been properly authorized in accordance with the delegation arrangements in place within the Agency;**
 - (b) funds are available to make the payment that meet the requirements of the *Public Account Act 1986*;**
 - (c) the goods or services to which the service relates have been received or provided;**
 - (d) the payment has been accurately calculated and correctly coded to the Agency's chart of accounts; and**
 - (e) the goods or services have not been paid previously.**
- (7) A certifying officer must be familiar with:**
- (a) an Agency's financial delegations;**
 - (b) an Agency's processes and procedures for the authorization, ordering, receiving and payment of goods and services;**
 - (c) the legislative requirements of the Act and the *Public Account Act 1986* particularly as they relate to the authorization of expenditure;**
 - (d) the Treasurer's Instructions relating to payments, prepayments, cash management, refunds and procurement.**

It is the responsibility of the Head of Agency to ensure that appropriate internal controls relating to payments are in place within an Agency. In deciding whether or not to certify a payment, a certifying officer will exercise judgement and place reasonable reliance upon the Agency's systems and processes relating to the authorisation, ordering, receiving and payment for goods and services to certify payment. For a certifying officer to place reasonable reliance on Agency systems and processes, the systems and processes should be regularly tested, through internal audit or other review, as part of an Agency's internal audit and risk management procedures.

- (8) A certifying officer must not certify a payment which he or she has authorised.**

The certifying officer function forms part of the internal control arrangements of the Agency. These arrangements include other internal control processes such as the separation of the certification function from the authorisation of payments by an authorising officer.