

# Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy

## Purpose

To outline the department's requirements for:

- responding to offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality (GBH)
- the appropriate provision of gifts, benefits and hospitality.

## Scope

This policy applies to all department employees and workplace participants.

## Policy statements

1. You must not solicit GBH for yourself or anyone else through your role at the department.

### *Responding to offers*

2. The default position of the department is to politely decline all offers: 'thanks is enough'.
3. You must decline all offers of GBH that:
  - are likely to influence you, or be perceived to influence you, during your duties as an employee of the department
  - raise an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest such as an offer from a business associate or current supplier
  - are from a person or organisation, you are likely to make a decision about, such as processes involving grants, sponsorship, regulation, enforcement or licensing.
  - extend to your relatives or friends
  - have no legitimate business reason
  - are money or similar, such as vouchers, or easily converted into money
  - are issued by lobbyists
  - pay for flights, accommodation or any other benefit, other than when offered by a conference organiser to compensate you for presenting at a conference
  - could have other implications such as fringe benefits tax, insurance and/or public liability or health and safety risks
  - could bring your integrity, or that of the department, into disrepute.
4. Offers that can be considered for acceptance include:
  - token gift offers which do not raise a conflict of interest (anything valued at \$50 or above is not a token offer)
  - gifts offered as part of culture and practice of communities such as from an overseas delegation
  - thank-you gifts such as a small gift to a speaker at a conference or seminar
  - offers made or sponsored by a state government department or Minister

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- tickets to conferences and seminars relevant to the business of the department, or where the conference organiser offers to fund travel or accommodation costs, for an employee to present a paper at the conference
- when there are legitimate business reasons, it would further the business of the department or there is a public benefit in accepting the offer
- internal offers that promote approved department-initiated programs related to health and wellbeing or rewards and recognition
- invitations to official business events.

## *Unsolicited general offers or Sponsorships*

5. Unsolicited offers that are made to the department or to a general cohort (e.g. emergency services staff) rather than an individual must be assessed carefully. If accepted, these offers must be declared by a Director or more senior executive.
6. Offers that require something from the department in exchange may constitute a sponsorship proposition.

## *Declaring gifts, benefits and hospitality*

7. Approval must be obtained from your manager before accepting an offer.
8. If it is not possible to seek approval beforehand, the offer must be declared as soon as it is practicable.
9. You must take reasonable steps to determine the value of the offer if it is not clear.
10. All offers of gifts, benefits or hospitality valued at \$50 or more must be declared, even if they are declined.
11. The declaration must be made within 14 days of receiving the offer.
12. An offer need not be declared if:
  - it does not specifically or personally target the receiver (e.g. a data-base generated invitation to subscribers) and is declined
  - the offer amounts to a business as usual benefit such as modest catering
13. A register of all reportable offers (accepted and declined) is accessible to the public and is published annually on the department website.

## *Provision of gifts, benefits and hospitality*

14. You should avoid making offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality unless:
  - there is a legitimate business reason to further the conduct of official business or other legitimate organisational goals, or it promotes and supports government policy objectives and priorities
  - it does not raise an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest
15. Any costs must be proportionate to the benefits obtained for the State and considered reasonable in terms of community expectations.
16. Gifts offered for rewards and recognition of excellent work by department employees and workplace participants should be of a reasonable value that would meet community expectations of appropriate use of public funds. Items offered for this purpose must be appropriate to the workplace context and preferably not involve alcohol. The purchase of such rewards must be approved by the appropriate financial delegate for the accrued value if multiple gifts are purchased.

## *Speak up!*

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17. Instances of undeclared or inappropriately managed gifts, benefits and hospitality should be reported to the Integrity Unit: [integrity@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:integrity@delwp.vic.gov.au). Reports can be made anonymously.

18. Any attempted bribes must be reported to the Public Interest Disclosure Coordinator: [disclosures@delwp.vic.gov.au](mailto:disclosures@delwp.vic.gov.au).

**Note:** The source of authority for this policy can be found in the Policy Register.

## Additional guidance

Special requirements may apply to managing gifts, benefits and hospitality offers when they arise through different circumstances. Links to further information can be found in the policies and supporting documents sections of this policy.

## Key related policy, legislation and other documents

### ***Policies***

Conflict of Interest Framework

Code of Conduct (VPSC)

Supplier Code of Conduct (Vic gov)

Appropriate workplace behaviour policy

Departmental expenditure policy

Sponsorships policy

### ***Procedures***

Guidance for completing the Gifts, benefits and hospitality declaration is available on the Col ECM page.

### ***Forms***

Gifts, benefits and hospitality declaration

### ***Templates***

N/A

### ***Supporting documents***

Guidance material listed below is available on the Col ECM page.

Guidance on responding to gifts, benefits and hospitality offers

Guidance on providing gifts, benefits and hospitality

Guidance on offers of training and development

Guidance on sponsorships

Guidance on unsolicited general offers

## Definitions

The key terms underlined and used throughout this policy are defined or in the Policies and procedures online glossary.

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## Approval and review

<b>Approved by</b>	Executive Director, People and Culture
<b>Policy owner</b>	People and Culture
<b>Contact</b>	Integrity Unit Email: <a href="mailto:integrity@delwp.vic.gov.au">integrity@delwp.vic.gov.au</a>
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