

Policy Statement

This policy provides the binding and minimum accountabilities under the instructions supporting the [Standing Directions of the Minister for Finance 2016](#).

The Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy outlines the Department of Transport and Planning's (the Department) policy and procedures for managing situations where offers of a gift, benefit and hospitality are made to departmental persons. It is designed to support:

- Departmental persons in their responsibility to only accept an offer of gift, benefit and hospitality where it can be demonstrated to be in the public interest and does not create the perception of a conflict of interest or could raise a perception of, or actual, bias, or preferential treatment.
- Managers to develop and maintain processes and appropriate documentation to ensure that full and proper consideration is given to the management and reporting of all offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality.

Trust in public institutions lies at the heart of good government. In Victoria public servants are expected to display values that uphold the public's trust in government. This includes behaving in an ethical and proper manner and being open and transparent. Central to upholding a high standard of integrity and accountability is the expectation that public servants are not unduly influenced, or perceived to be influenced, by their relationships with non-departmental persons or organisations.

The default position of the Department in relation to offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality is to politely say '**no thank you**', unless the offers are:

- ceremonial gifts
- certain thank you gifts
- certain conference or seminar attendance additions
- or where there are strong business reasons in the public interest to accept.

This policy reinforces adherence to the values within the [Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees](#) (VPS Code of Conduct) and the Public Sector Values and Employment Principles specified in the [Public Administration Act 2004 \(Vic\)](#).

Attachment 1 provides a list of definitions applicable to this policy. This policy also requires people to familiarise themselves and comply with the documentation listed in Attachment 2.

Scope

Organisational coverage

This policy applies to all administrative areas of the Department and to agencies for whom the Secretary is the employer. The policy also applies to administrative offices established within the Department.

People coverage

The term 'departmental person(s)' is used in this policy to identify those people covered by the policy:

- All departmental employees, including executive officers and employees covered by the [Victorian Public Service Enterprise Agreement 2020](#) (VPS Agreement)
- Workplace participants including (but not limited to) trainees, university and work experience students
- Apprentices, cadets and volunteers who perform work for or on behalf of the department

Document Control Information

Issuing area: People and Business Services, Governance and Portfolio

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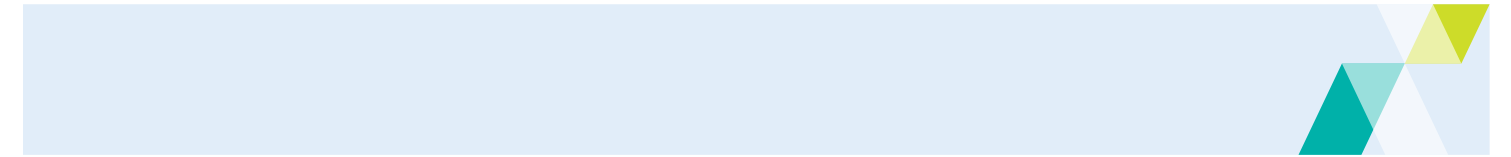
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- Agency on-hire staff and contractors who the [Victorian Public Sector Commission](#) (VPSC) has specifically identified as being bound by the [VPS Code of Conduct](#). These people include those who:
 - supervise public sector employees
 - undertake work that is of a similar nature to the work undertaken by public sector employees at premises or a location generally regarded as a public sector workplace, or
 - use or have access to public sector resources or information that are not normally accessible or available to the public.

An immediate family member (defined as a partner or child living under the same roof) of a departmental person (as defined above) may be treated as a departmental person for the purposes of this policy on a case-by-case basis. That is, work-related gift, benefit or hospitality offered to a family member of a departmental person may be considered as though it were offered to the departmental person directly as such offerings may be judged to create a perception of conflict of interest on the part of the departmental person.

Other policy elements

Criteria for acceptance of gifts, benefits and hospitality

A gift, benefit and hospitality is anything of value, including services and entertainment, that is offered to a departmental person in their work capacity beyond their normal employment entitlements. See Attachment 1 for further guidance.

Departmental persons who are offered gifts, benefits and hospitality:

- Do not, for themselves or others, seek or solicit gifts, benefits and hospitality.
- Refuse all offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality that:
 - are money, items used in a similar way to money, or items easily converted to money
 - give rise to a perception of, potential or actual, conflict of interest, or may adversely affect their standing as a public official or which may bring the department or the public sector into disrepute
 - or are non-token offers without a legitimate business benefit.
- Declare all non-token offers (valued at \$50 or more) of gifts, benefits and hospitality (whether accepted or declined) on the department's register and seek written approval from their manager or organisational delegate to accept any non-token offer.
- Refuse repeat offers, bribes or inducements and report inducements and bribery attempts to the Secretary or their delegate (who should report any criminal or corrupt conduct to Victoria Police or the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission).

The default departmental position in relation to offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality is to politely say '**no thank you**'.

Offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality may be accepted where:

1. The offer is work-related
2. There is a strong public interest business reason to accept
3. This business reason can be clearly demonstrated and articulated, and
4. The acceptance otherwise fully complies with this policy.

Offers of any gift, benefit and hospitality worth \$50 or greater **MUST** be registered. Acceptance of any offer requires managerial approval prior to acceptance, which must be included in the Department's [Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Declaration Form](#) for registering.

For more information on how to respond to an offer of gifts, benefits and hospitality, see the [Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality resources](#).

Register offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality

All offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality valued at \$50 or more are considered non-token offers and **MUST** be registered immediately upon receipt of the offer and irrespective of the offer being accepted or declined (including at a later date). Acceptance of any non-token offer **MUST** also have the documented approval of the appropriate line manager and the evidence of this approval must be included in the register.

Where multiple departmental persons have been offered the same gift, benefits and hospitality (e.g., attendance at a seminar or event), each person must complete a separate declaration of the offer.



Publication of the register

For transparency, and to comply with the minimum accountabilities, a subset of the information outlined in the Department's [Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Register](#) must be recorded in a public register and published on the Department's internet site. The public register should be published at the end of the financial year and must cover both the most recent and the previous financial year. The published Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Register details from the department's administrative offices.

As per the [VPSC](#) guidance, the department's public register will include the following information:

- the date an offer was made
- details of the employee receiving the offer
- details of the individual and the organisation making the offer
- a description of the offer and its estimated or actual value
- whether the offer was accepted or declined
- where accepted, the decision on ownership of the offer (for self or for the organisation).

Approval of the acceptance of gifts, benefits and hospitality

All non-token offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality that a departmental person may accept under this policy, requires documented approval of the acceptance from an appropriate manager, prior to the departmental person accepting the offer. Evidence of this approval is to be attached or included with the departmental person's registration of their declaration of an offer of gifts, benefits and hospitality. The approving manager should be the accepting officer's immediate line manager. Acceptance of any gifts, benefits and hospitality offers by the Secretary will be approved by the Deputy Secretary, People and Business.

Approval to accept gifts, benefits and hospitality should be obtained in advance of accepting a gift or attending hospitality. Where there is no opportunity to seek written approval prior to accepting, the individual must seek approval from their manager within five business days of the gift/benefit being received or hospitality attended.

A decision to accept non-token offers is the responsibility of the departmental person concerned. Such decisions are to be made in accordance with this policy. As a rule, all offers should be made known to the accepting employee's manager and any acceptance done in an open and transparent manner.

When you must reject offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality

You must reject all offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality if:

- **You are an Authorised Officer**, defined as an employee of the Department appointed by the Minister or Secretary to carry out a compliance or enforcement function under legislation administered by the department
- **Accepting may influence you**, or reasonably be perceived to influence you, in the performance of your public role. The [VPSC 'GIFT' test](#) provides prompts to consider about how accepting offers of gifts benefits and hospitality may create conflicts of interests. The more valuable the offer, the more likely that a conflict of interest or reputational risk exists.
- **The offer is made by certain people or organisations**, such as:
 - made by a current or prospective supplier/contractor
 - made during a procurement or tender process by a person or organisation involved in the process; or
 - made by a person about whom, or organisation about which, the Department likely to make a decision (this includes processes involving grants, sponsorship, regulation, enforcement or issuing of practising certificates and includes all parties to any matter that is the subject of a formal complaint or is under investigation by the department).

Note: offers of token hospitality, such as sandwiches during a meeting can be accepted.
- **Acceptance conflicts with this policy** and/or benefits you or your relationships personally.
- **They are repeated offers** (token or non-token, including of low value) from the same person or organisation, as these may generate perceptions that you are open to being influenced. Individuals should be aware of how accepting many small, repeated offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality may create actual or perceived conflicts of interests, and an expectation of obligation.



Offers exempt from the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy

Two types of offers are exempt from this policy:

1. Where the offer (usually an invitation to an event) is an Official Business Event (OBE) and which meets all the criteria defined in the [Attendance at Official Business Events Policy](#)
2. Items offered to you as a private citizen.

Official Business Events

Many core business activities of the department involve attending an official business event. Attendance at these events is not subject to the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy. You **MUST**, however, register your attendance in the Department's Official Business Events Register by submitting an Attendance at [Official Business Events Declaration Form](#). There is no requirement to register OBE's where people receive an invitation but elect not to attend.

To be considered an official business event, an event needs to meet **ALL** the following criteria:

1. The organisation issuing the invitation is the organiser or host of the event, and
2. The industry in which the event is occurring is directly related to the role in which the invitee works, and
3. Attendance at the event will not create an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest, and
4. Attendance at the event provides at least one of the following outcomes:
 - funded service delivery,
 - stakeholder engagement,
 - sector knowledge, or
 - professional knowledge.

Where the Department has booked its own tickets to an event, this is automatically considered an official business event.

For further information, please see the [Attendance at Official Business Events Policy](#).

Gifts, benefits and hospitality offered in a private capacity

This policy does not apply where an offer is made to a departmental person in their private capacity. Examples of private capacity:

- An invitation to attend an event as a plus-one of a friend or family member, where the offer is not a result of their role at the department
- A scholarship, or other grant or payment, made to support the departmental person's education, awarded based on academic or other achievement
- Other gifts, benefits or hospitality offered or received in a departmental person's private capacity.

In all situations, this policy exemption is subject to the departmental person being satisfied that a perception would not be created that their integrity was being challenged if they were to accept.

In the rare event that doubt is created, the departmental person should carefully consider acceptance, seeking advice from their manager or the Director, Integrity & Ethical Behaviour as needed.

Frequent flyer/loyalty points

Acceptance of a gift, benefit or hospitality must not benefit a departmental employee in their private capacity, including the accumulation of loyalty points. Refer to the department's [Travel Policy](#) for information on frequent flyer points and associated rewards schemes.

Estimated value

Staff registering offers of gifts, benefits or hospitality are required to include the actual or estimated value of each offer.

In most instances this is quite simple. For example, where offered tickets to an event, the value of the tickets can be established by contacting the organiser or through a simple online search. Prices are also often included on complimentary tickets. Similarly, gifts of wine, chocolate, etc. can be established via a google search.

On occasions where a value cannot be easily established, people registering items should always err on the side of the higher value range.



Unless there is evidence for a lower amount (e.g., a menu with prices), offer of a meal should be considered as being non-token and registered for no less than \$50, and if alcohol is included no less than \$100.

Ownership of gifts offered to individuals

All gifts, benefits and hospitality accepted as a tangible item becomes the property of the department and will, as appropriate, be used, displayed, stored or disposed of by the department. The relevant manager is responsible for determining the appropriate course of action for managing such gifts. This may include:

- Allowing the receiving departmental person to retain the gift (most appropriate for thank you gifts of low value that are commonly exchanged, e.g., office stationery, chocolates, bottles of wine, flowers, etc.)
- Sharing the gift with the workplace (e.g., office equipment food and wine hampers, etc.)
- Displaying the gift in the workplace (commonly appropriate for Ceremonial Gifts)
- Securely storing the gift in the workplace (appropriate for items of value).

The decision on ownership of the gift is to be included when declaring and registering the item on the Department's Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Register.

Guidance on any additional registration and management requirements of gifts individually valued in excess of \$5,000 should be sought from [Integrity & Ethical Behaviour](#).

Speak up

Departmental persons who consider that gifts, benefits or hospitality within the Department may not have been declared or are not being appropriately managed should speak up and notify their manager or authorised representative.

The Department will take appropriate action, including possible disciplinary action, against employees who discriminate against or victimise those who speak up in good faith.

If you have a concern with regard to a gift, benefit and/or hospitality within the Department, please contact [Integrity & Ethical Behaviour](#) or use the [Speak Up](#) resources on the Department's intranet.

Offers that include guests

Invitations to events that are assessed under this policy and include an invitation to the departmental person plus guest require careful consideration to determine the public interest that would be satisfied if the guest was to attend. As a rule, invitations for guests should not be accepted.

Fringe Benefits Tax application to accepted gifts, benefit and hospitality

Gifts, benefits and hospitality that is offered under an agreement between a third party and the department may attract Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT).

Guidance on the application of FBT to the acceptance of gifts, benefits and hospitality should be sought from the Finance team.

Criteria for providing gifts, benefits and hospitality

Gifts, benefits and hospitality may be provided to welcome guests, facilitate the development of business relationships, further the Department's business outcomes and to celebrate achievements. When deciding whether to provide gifts, benefits and hospitality, or what type to provide, you must ensure that:

- any gift, benefit and hospitality is provided for a business purpose in that it furthers the conduct of official business or other legitimate organisational goals, or promotes and supports government policy objectives and priorities
- any costs are proportionate to the benefits obtained for the State, and would be considered reasonable in terms of community expectations
- when hospitality is provided, individuals demonstrate professionalism in their conduct, and uphold their obligation to extend a duty of care to other participants.

Where a departmental person is considering providing hospitality, the [VPSC 'HOST' test](#) provides useful prompts to consider.



Provided for a business reason

Gifts, benefits and hospitality may be provided to external guests, such as business associates and international delegations, as well as to employees.

The decision to provide gifts, benefits and hospitality must consider the likely benefits to the department and the State of Victoria. The Department seeks to uphold the reputation of the Victorian public sector.

External guests

The Department may provide gifts, benefits and hospitality for the purposes of:

- receiving guests (e.g., visiting delegation from another jurisdiction)
- facilitating relationships between third party organisations that are in the interests of the State (e.g., an event where community sector and business organisations can meet to establish partnerships)
- celebrating the opening of an event, exhibition, or the establishment of a new public body
- launching an initiative (e.g., a new community awareness campaign).

The following questions may be helpful to determine whether the gifts, benefits and hospitality qualifies as being provided for a business reason:

- Will the provision of the gift, benefit or hospitality foster the conduct of public sector business?
- Will the provision of the gift, benefit or hospitality help to promote or support the government's policy objectives?
- In providing the gift, benefit or hospitality, can you be confident that the reputations of both the public sector and the external guests be upheld?

Employees

The Department may provide hospitality to employees for a range of reasons, including catering as part of an employee-related event.

Catering an event for staff can be an effective means of celebrating achievements or promoting behaviours and is consistent with common business practices. In deciding whether the Department should pay for all, some or none of the costs associated with the event, you should consider:

- The extent to which the event will contribute to organisational objectives by, for example, reinforcing values or motivating staff
- Whether there have been multiple recent events that would result in perceptions of excess
- The need to balance the positive benefits of public recognition with community expectations in relation to modest expenditure by public officials.

Acknowledgement of individual staff milestones such as birthdays, marriages, deaths or the birth of a child should not be funded by the department.

The Department may provide gifts to employees, for example as part of a recognised organisational reward and recognition program. The provision of this type of employee incentive must also comply with the financial probity guidelines outlined in the [VPS Code of Conduct](#).

Costs proportionate to the benefits

When deciding on the type of gift, benefit or hospitality to provide, a judgement should be made between the costs incurred and the potential benefits to the State. You should contain costs involved in the provision of gifts, benefits and hospitality to a minimum and ensure it is in line with community expectations. The following self-assessment may be useful:

- Will the cost of providing the gift, benefit or hospitality be proportionate to the potential benefits?
- Is an external venue necessary or does the organisation have facilities to host the event or can the event be held virtually?
- Is the proposed catering or hospitality proportionate to the number of attendees and value commonly expected by the community?
- Does the size of the event and number of attendees align with the intended outcomes?
- Is the gift symbolic, rather than financial, in value?
- Could providing the gift, benefit or hospitality be viewed by the public as excessive?



Ensure you refer to the department's [Procurement Policy](#) for information on approval thresholds and the advice and information on [financial delegations](#) which may be relevant when deciding on the type of gift, benefit or hospitality being provided.

Catering events and meetings

If an event or meeting extends over mealtimes, it is generally considered a basic courtesy to provide token hospitality such as tea, coffee or a light meal. This type of hospitality usually has a low cost per head and should be consistent with community expectations. The Department should ensure compliance with any obligations under the relevant industrial instrument in relation to meal breaks and any other employee entitlements, including occupational health and safety obligations.

Wherever possible, a sufficient break in proceedings should be encouraged to enable participants to seek their own refreshments. Where possible meetings should not be scheduled to conflict with mealtimes.

Providing alcohol as hospitality or a gift

The supply and consumption of alcohol is a hazard to occupational health, safety and wellbeing, and increases the risks of anti-social behaviour and reputational damage to both employees and the Department.

While the Department may permit the provision of alcohol at Department endorsed events, it has obligations under the [Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004](#), the [Liquor Control Reform Act 1998](#) and the [VPS Code of Conduct](#), and must consider these prior to granting approval for the provision of alcohol or attendance at events at which alcohol is provided. For all other purposes and considerations, the default position under this policy, is that the Department does not support the provision of alcohol at department events.

Departmental persons also have obligations under the [VPS Code of Conduct](#), and must not be impaired by alcohol or other illegal substances while in the workplace or while representing the Department at an approved event. When hospitality is provided, departmental persons must demonstrate professionalism in their conduct and uphold their obligation to extend a duty of care to other participants. See the Department's [Drug and Alcohol Policy](#) for more information about the consumption of alcohol while working or at work.

Decisions relating to the provision of alcohol as hospitality should be made on a case-by-case basis, assessed and approved by the relevant Executive Director or Group Deputy Secretary. The following parameters may be useful in making these decisions:

- provision of alcohol alone would be unusual and should be accompanied by the provision of a meal
- any event where alcohol is served should be held at a time that minimises the risk of employees returning to work and being impaired by alcohol (e.g., if standard office hours are worked, the event should be held in the late afternoon or early evening)
- events with alcohol service should not exceed two hours in duration
- no more than two standard drinks per person should be provided
- monitoring an employee's alcohol consumption is the responsibility of all employees
- the provision of alcohol should be incidental to the overall level of hospitality provided.

The Department does not permit the provision of alcohol as a gift to Department employees or guests of the Department.

Responsibilities

Responsible party	Responsibilities
Departmental persons	Ensure your personal interests do not influence and could not reasonably be perceived to influence you in your official role.
	Politely say 'no thank you' to offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality (excluding token hospitality, such as sandwiches over a lunchtime meeting). The only exceptions to this position are ceremonial gifts, thank you gifts, certain conference and seminar attendance, and where there is a strong business reason to accept.



Responsible party	Responsibilities
	<p>Authorised Officers are to decline all offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality.</p>
	<p>All non-token offers (i.e., valued at \$50 or greater) whether accepted or declined must be declared using the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Declaration Form and registered.</p>
	<p>All non-token offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality that are accepted require documented approval from an appropriate manager using the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Declaration Form.</p>
	<p>If a non-token gift is accepted, the relevant manager is responsible for determining the appropriate course of action for managing the gift.</p>
	<p>Do not seek or solicit gifts, benefits and hospitality for yourself or others.</p>
	<p>Refuse all offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are money, items used in a similar way to money, or items easily converted to money • May give rise to an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest • May adversely affect their standing as a departmental person or which may bring the department or the public sector into disrepute • Are non-token offers without a legitimate business benefit.
	<p>Using the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Declaration Form, declare all non-token offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality (whether accepted or declined) and seek written approval from a line manager where accepted. Departmental persons are not required to declare or record declined offers of hospitality that are part of a generic, bulk event invitation (such as 'spam' email) or accepted hospitality provided by another Victorian public sector organisation.</p>
	<p>Refuse repeat offers, bribes or inducements and report inducements and bribery attempts to the department's Protected Disclosure Coordinator (who will report any criminal or corrupt conduct to Victoria Police or the Independent Broad-based Anti-Corruption Commission).</p>
	<p>Report any breaches or compliance concerns with regard to this policy to the Speak Up resources on the department's intranet, or contact Integrity & Ethical Behaviour.</p>
	<p>Behave appropriately at all times and in accordance with departmental policies and the VPS Code of Conduct, in particular section 3.5 Public Comment and section 3.9 Public Trust.</p>



Responsible party	Responsibilities
Managers	Ensure all departmental persons are aware of the policy, and that support and guidance is provided to those departmental persons who receive an offer of gifts, benefits and hospitality.
	Ensure that procedures for the disclosure and consideration of all offers provide for appropriate manager oversight and are consistent with the policy.
	Ensure that all offers valued at \$50 or more are declared and registered.
	Ensure that the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Declaration Form has been completed, with all questions and sections answered, prior to review and sign off.
The Secretary	Establish, implement and review departmental policies and processes for the effective management of gifts, benefits and hospitality that comprehensively address the minimum accountabilities as set out by the VPSC .
	Establish and maintain a register for gifts, benefits and hospitality offered to departmental persons that, at a minimum, records enough information to effectively monitor, assess and report on these minimum accountabilities.
	Communicate and make clear within the department that a breach of the gifts, benefits and hospitality policies or processes may constitute a breach of binding codes of conduct and may constitute criminal or corrupt conduct and may result in disciplinary action.
	Establish and communicate a clear policy position to business associates on the offering of gifts, benefits and hospitality to departmental persons, including possible consequences for a business associate acting contrary to the department's policy position. This must take into consideration any whole of Victorian Government supplier codes of conduct.
	Report annually to the department's Audit, Risk and Integrity Committee on the administration and quality control of its gifts, benefits and hospitality policy, processes and register. This report must include analysis of the organisation's gifts, benefits and hospitality risks (including repeat offers from the same source and offers from business associates), risk mitigation measures and any proposed improvements.
	Publish the department's Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy and Register on the department's public website. The published register should cover the current and the previous financial year.

Non-compliance with this policy

An employee's failure to identify, declare and manage offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality in accordance with this policy may result in disciplinary action, including termination, on the basis of a breach of the [VPS Code of Conduct](#).



Summary of changes to latest version

This document has been reviewed and the changes made to this version of the document are:

1. Change of template and formatting to reflect machinery of government changes which came into effect 1 January 2023.



Attachment 1: Policy Definitions

Refer to the [Corporate Policy Common Terms and Definitions](#) for terms shared across the department's suite of corporate policies including this policy.

The below table lists the terms specific to this policy only.

Term	Definition
Business associate	<p>An external individual or entity with which the department has, or plans to establish, some form of business relationship, or who may seek commercial or other advantage by offering gifts, benefits or hospitality</p>
Departmental event	<p>A departmental event or department endorsed event for the purposes of providing hospitality may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A department sponsored conference, workshop, lecture, panel presentation, networking function; • Launch or opening /conclusion of a major infrastructure project; • Whole of Department, Group or Division celebration. <p>Small team gatherings such as farewells, Christmas /Holiday Season or other celebrations where attending employees pay for themselves, are not considered departmental events. Hospitality that is paid for from public funds is not permitted on these occasions. Adherence to the Department's Drug and Alcohol policy is expected and consideration of the hospitality considerations is strongly encouraged.</p>
Gift, benefit or hospitality	<p>A gift, benefit or hospitality is anything of value, including services and entertainment, that is offered to a departmental person in their work capacity beyond their normal employment entitlements. They can be split into three categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gifts are free or discounted items and any item that would generally be seen by the public as a gift. These include items of high value (e.g., artwork, jewellery, or expensive pens), low value (e.g., small bunch of flowers) and consumables (e.g., chocolates or alcohol). They also include free accommodation or travel. • Benefits include preferential treatment, privileged access, favours or other advantage offered to an individual. They may include invitations to sporting, cultural or social events, access to discounts and loyalty programs, and promises of a new job. Hospitality associated with an event is incidental and the registration category should be as a benefit. • Hospitality is the friendly reception and entertainment of guests. Hospitality may range from light refreshments at a business meeting to expensive restaurant meals.
Official business event	<p>Normally associated with a scheduled time and place of attendance, for industry, business, sporting/cultural, networking</p>



Term	Definition
	<p>and learning purposes. See the Attendance at Official Business Events Policy for further information.</p> <p>Excluded from official business events are activities that appear to be limited to hospitality or personal benefit such as: private breakfasts, dinners, lunches, Christmas functions, golf days, sporting events, comedy nights, etc.</p>
Register	Is the department's record of all declarable (\$50 or more) gifts, benefits and hospitality.
Public register	Is a subset of the information contained in the register for publication as required by the minimum accountabilities established by the Victorian Public Sector Commission and the Standing Directions of the Minister of Finance 2016.
Token offer	A gift, benefit or hospitality that is of inconsequential or trivial value to both the person making the offer and the recipient (such as basic courtesy). The minimum accountabilities state that token offers cannot be worth more than \$50.
Non-token offer	A gift, benefit or hospitality that is, or may be perceived to be by the recipient, the person making the offer or by the wider community, of more than inconsequential value. All offers worth \$50 or more are non-token offers and must be recorded on the department's gift, benefit and hospitality register.
Ceremonial gift	The gifting of items to departmental persons by third parties is commonly done as part of the culture and practices of communities and governments, both within Australia and internationally.
Thank you gift	Departmental persons who speak at conferences, seminars or other similar forums may be offered a gift in appreciation of their contribution. Such offers are normally done in public and may be accepted in a courteous and appreciative manner. Acceptance of any gifts, benefits and hospitality worth \$50 or greater requires manager approval and must be registered.
Conference/seminar attendance as speaker/presenter	<p>Departmental persons who have been approved to present at a conference or seminar may accept funded or sponsored travel, accommodation and / or registration as part of their agreement with the event organiser. Acceptance of any offers of sponsored travel, accommodation and / or registration should be approved by the appropriate line manager.</p> <p>Departmental persons who have been approved to present at a conference or seminar should register their attendance as an official business event. Any hospitality received as part of the conference or seminar package is incidental and does not require registration separately.</p> <p>For further information, see the Attendance at Official Business Events Policy.</p>



Term	Definition
	Offers from persons or organisations other than the event organiser are not to be accepted.
Conference/seminar attendance as a participant	<p>Departmental persons who are attending a conference or seminar as a participant must not accept sponsored travel, accommodation and / or registration. Any offers of this nature must be declared and registered. An exception may be where attendance is part of an intra or inter-government arrangement. Acceptance should have approval from the appropriate line manager and the Secretary.</p> <p>Incidental hospitality provided as part of the seminar or conference package (e.g., a light lunch or refreshments) does not require a separate registration and should be included in the registration of attendance at the conference or seminar.</p>
Legitimate business benefit	A gift, benefit or hospitality may have a legitimate business benefit if it furthers the conduct of official business or other legitimate goals of the Department, the public sector or the State.
Repeat offers	Receiving multiple offers (token or non-token) from the same person or organisation can generate a stronger perception that the person or organisation could influence you. Individuals should refuse repeat offers from the same source if they create a conflict of interest or may lead to reputational damage.



Attachment 2: Supporting information

Department people should also familiarise themselves and comply with the following information which supports and informs this policy.

Record type	Record name
DTP policies	Attendance at Official Business Events Policy
	Conflict of Interest Policy
	Drug and Alcohol Policy
	Travel Policy
Other DTP resources	GBH Procedures
	GBH & OBE Offers – Common Scenarios
	Responding to Gifts, Benefits & Hospitality flowchart
Relevant legislation	Public Administration Act 2004 (Vic)
	Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
	Liquor Control Reform Act 1998
Other external resources	Victorian Public Service Enterprise Agreement 2020
	Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees
	VPSC Guidance GIFT and HOST Test