

Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Procedure



1. Purpose

To provide a clear and concise procedure for accepting, declining and recording offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality.

2. Scope

This procedure applies to all employees, board and committee members, students, consultants, contractors and volunteers of the Women's and should be read in conjunction with the *Conflicts of Interest and Duties Policy*.

3. Responsibilities

Role/Title	Responsibilities
General Counsel	Operation of this procedure.

4. Definitions

The definitions listed in the *Declarations of Interest Policy* also apply in this procedure. In addition, for the purposes of this procedure, the following definitions are used:

Term	Explanation
Business Associate	An individual or body that the Women's has, or plans to establish, some form of business relationship with, or who may seek commercial or other advantage by offering gifts, benefits or hospitality.
Benefits	Preferential treatment, privileged access, favours, or other advantages provided to an individual. These may encompass invitations to sporting, cultural, or social events; access to discounts and loyalty programs; or promises of future opportunities, such as a new job. While the monetary value of these benefits can be challenging to quantify, they hold personal value to the recipient and have the potential to influence their behavior or decision-making.
Ceremonial Gifts	Official gifts provided as part of the culture and practices of communities and government, within Australia or internationally, usually provided when conducting business with official delegates or representatives from another organisation, community or foreign government.
Gifts	Items provided free of charge or at a discounted rate, which are generally perceived by the public as tokens of appreciation or generosity. They can range in value and type, including high-value items such as artwork, jewellery, or luxury pens; low-value items like a small bouquet of flowers; and consumables such as chocolates or other treats.

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Hospitality	The friendly reception and entertainment of guests, often provided to foster goodwill or professional relationships. It can range from light refreshments at a business meeting to more substantial offerings, such as expensive restaurant meals, sponsored travel, or accommodation.
Legitimate Business Benefit	A gift, benefit, or hospitality that furthers the conduct of official business or legitimate goals of the Women's, the public sector, or the State.
Register	The electronic register used by the Women's to record all declarable gifts, benefits and hospitality.
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 (offers worth \$50 or more).
Token Offer	A gift, benefit or hospitality that is of inconsequential or trivial value to both the person making the offer and the recipient (offers worth less than \$50).

5. Procedure

5.1 Minimum accountabilities

- The [minimum accountabilities](#) issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commission for the management of gifts, benefits and hospitality must be adhered to.

5.2 Accepting or refusing offers

- Use the GIFT test in Table 1 to help determine whether to accept or refuse an offer.
- Refuse offers that:
 - Are offered during a tender
 - Are from a pharmaceutical company
 - Could influence or appear to influence your duties, or create a conflict of interest
 - Could damage your reputation
 - Could damage the Women's reputation
 - Are from a person or organisation that you will make decisions about, e.g. current or prospective supplier or during a procurement or tender process
 - Are likely to be a bribe or inducement
 - Extend to your relatives or friends
 - Are for hospitality or events where the Women's is already adequately represented
 - Could be seen as endorsing a product or service or giving unfair advantage
 - Are from lobbyists or organisations with lobbying as their main purpose
 - Are made in secret.
- Report any offers of actual or perceived bribes or inducements to the General

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Counsel immediately.

- General Counsel to report any criminal or corrupt conduct to Victoria Police or the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission.

Table 1 – GIFT Test	
If you answer yes to any of these questions, you should refuse the offer.	
Gift	Does my role require me to select contractors or award grants? Could the person or organisation benefit from a decision I make?
Influence	Is the person or organisation providing the gift, benefit or hospitality seeking to gain an advantage or influence my decision? Has the gift, benefit or hospitality been offered privately? Is it a valuable non-token offer? Does its timing coincide with a decision I am about to make or endorse a product or service?
Favour	Is the person or organisation providing the gift, benefit or hospitality seeking a return favour? Has the gift, benefit or hospitality been offered honestly? Has the person or organisation made several offers over the last 12-months? Would accepting it create an obligation to return a favour?
Trust	Would accepting the gift, benefit or hospitality diminish public trust? Would the public view acceptance of this gift, benefit or hospitality negatively? What would my colleagues, family, friends or associates think?

5.3 Token offers

- A token offer is not perceived as influencing or creating a conflict of interest.
- The value of a token offer must not exceed \$50.
- Frequent token offers from the same person or organisation may accumulate in value or create the perception of influence, making them non-token offers.
- Token gifts can be accepted without approval or declaring them on the Women’s register.

5.4 Non-token offers

- Non-token offers can only be accepted if there is a legitimate business benefit.
- Acceptance of a non-token offer must meet the following requirements:
 - It does not raise an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest, or have the potential to bring the individual or Women’s, or the public sector into disrepute
 - There is a legitimate business reason for acceptance, related to the individual’s responsibilities and benefiting the Women’s, the public sector, or the State.
- All accepted non-token offers must be approved in writing by the individual’s manager or organisational delegate using the form at **Appendix A**.

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- If an unexpected gift is received (e.g. wrapped and later identified as non-token), seek approval from the manager within five business days.
 - If the gift could likely bring the individual or Women's into disrepute, it must be returned
 - If the gift poses a personal conflict for an individual, it should either be returned or transfer ownership of the gift to mitigate this risk.
- Any gift of cultural significance of significant value must be transferred to the Women's.

5.5 Recording non-token offers

- The General Counsel will record and maintain a register of all accepted and declined non-token offers.
- The Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality internal register will include:
 - The date the offer was received
 - The name and position of the recipient
 - The description of the offer
 - The business reason for the acceptance of the offer, linking it to the individual's work functions and benefit to the Women's, public sector or the State (unacceptable reasons include networking and maintaining stakeholder relationships)
 - The individual or organisation who provided the offer
 - The estimated value of the offer.
- The Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality public register will include:
 - The date the offer was received
 - The position of the recipient
 - The description of the offer
 - The individual or organisation who provided the offer
 - The estimated value of the offer.

5.6 Reporting non-token offers

- The Audit and Corporate Risk Management Committee will receive an annual report on how the Conflict Management and Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality procedure are managed. The report will include:
 - A review of risks, such as repeat offers from the same source
 - Any actions taken to reduce risks
 - Suggestions for improvements
 - The Women's gifts, benefits and hospitality register.
- The public register will be published on the Women's website at the end of each financial year.

5.7 Ownership of gifts

- Non-token gifts can be kept by the individual if approved in writing by their manager or delegate, if it does not harm the individual's or the Women's reputation.
- Gifts of cultural or significant monetary value (over \$50) must be transferred to the Women's.

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5.8 Repeat offers

- individuals should decline repeat offers if they create a conflict of interest or could harm the Women's reputation.
- Any repeated offers must be reported to the General Counsel.

5.9 Ceremonial gifts

- Ceremonial gifts:
 - given as part of official practices, belong to the Women's, regardless of value.
 - should be accepted on behalf of the Women's and recorded in the register.
 - are not published online.

5.10 Hospitality provided by Victorian public sector organisations

- Hospitality offered by Victorian public sector organisations as part of official duties does not need to be reported if it aligns with the Women's goals and the individual's role.

5.11 Providing gifts, benefits and hospitality

- When the Women's provides gifts, benefits, or hospitality:
 - It must serve a business purpose or support government policy objectives and priorities.
 - Costs should be reasonable and proportionate to the benefit for the Women's or the State (refer to **Table 2** when making an assessment).
 - There should be no actual or perceived conflict of interest.

Table 2 - HOST Test

As yourself the questions below to evaluate whether providing the gift, benefit or hospitality is appropriate

Hospitality	Questions: Who are the recipients? Are they external partners or internal staff? Purpose: determine if providing hospitality is appropriate.
Objectives	Questions: Why is the hospitality being provided? Is it for a business reason, such as promoting government policy objectives and priorities? Does it support staff wellbeing and workplace satisfaction? Purpose: assess whether the hospitality serves a clear and legitimate reason. It should contribute positively to business outcomes or staff wellbeing.
Spend	Questions: How much will it cost? Will public funds be used? Is the expense reasonable? Will alcohol be served, and is it appropriate for the occasion? Purpose: Ensure spending is modest, proportionate to the benefits, and justifiable.
Trust	Questions: How will this action affect public trust? Can the decision to provide hospitality be publicly defended? Is it in line with public sector reputation standards? Have records been kept in line with this procedure? Purpose: evaluate whether hospitality enhances or diminishes public confidence.



	Ensure everything is transparent and appropriately documented.
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5.12 Breaches

- Disciplinary action, including dismissal, may be taken if an individual does not follow this procedure. This includes failing to identify, declare, or manage conflicts of interest related to gifts, benefits, and hospitality as outlined in the Conflict Management Policy.
- Violations may be considered misconduct under the Public Administration Act 2004, which includes breaches of the Code of Conduct, such as conflict of interest and improper use of position. For more information on managing breaches, contact the General Counsel.

5.13 Speak up

- If you believe that gifts, benefits, hospitality, or conflicts of interest have not been properly declared or managed, notify your manager or the General Counsel.
- If you suspect corrupt conduct in a colleague, you can report it directly to the Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission (IBAC).
- The Women's will take strong action against anyone who discriminates or victimises individuals who speak up in good faith.

5.14 Contacts for further information

- If you are unsure about accepting a gift, benefit, or hospitality, or need clarification on the policy, ask your manager or the General Counsel for guidance.

6. Compliance

- All employees, board and committee members, students, consultants, contractors and volunteers of the Women's are required to adhere strictly to this procedure and the Declarations of Interest policy.
- The Audit and Corporate Risk Management Committee will receive an annual report on the administration and quality control of this procedure, along with a copy of the public register. The report will include an analysis of any risks, mitigations strategies and treatment plans.

7. References

- External References:
 - Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees 2015.
 - Code of Conduct for Directors of Victorian Public Entities 2004.
 - Victorian Public Sector *Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy and Policy Guide*.
- Internal Documents:
 - The Women's *Conflict of Interest and Duties Policy*
 - The Women's *Conflict of Interest and Duties Procedure – Board*
 - The Women's *Conflict of Interest and Duties Procedure – Employee*

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- The Women's *Disciplinary Procedure*
- The Women's *Public Interest Disclosures Procedure*
- The Women's *Respectful Workplace Behaviours Framework*
- The Women's *Delegations Manual*.

8. Appendices

Appendix A – Approval of Benefit Form

9. Review

The document owner will annually review this procedure, or as required, to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness.

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Appendix A – Approval of Benefit Form

This form should be read in conjunction with the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Procedure. Employees must use this form to declare all non-token offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality (whether accepted or declined) and seek written approval from their manager or organisational delegate to accept any non-token offer. Fields marked in blue will be published on the public gifts and benefits register, which is available on the Women’s website.

Employee to complete	
Declaration date:	
Name (recipient):	
Position (e.g. Director):	
Unit/ Division (e.g. Finance) <i>Published only if the offer is accepted</i>	
Date offered:	
Estimated or actual value:	
Name of person (donor) making the offer:	
Position of the person making the offer:	
Name of organisation making the offer: <i>Published only if the offer is accepted</i>	
Why is the offer being made?	

Is the person or organisation making the offer a business associate of the organisation?

Yes

If **yes**, describe the relationship between them and the organisation:

OR

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No

If no, describe the relationship between you and the person or organisation making the offer, e.g. a personal relationship:

Is the person or organisation making the offer a business associate of the organisation?

Yes* No

* the offer must be declined in accordance with the minimum accountabilities

Would accepting the offer bring you, the organisation or the public sector into disrepute?

Yes* No

* the offer must be declined in accordance with the minimum accountabilities

Is there a legitimate business benefit to the organisation, public sector or State for accepting the offer? e.g. was it offered during the course of your official duties?

Yes* No**

* the offer must be declined

** the business benefit must be detailed below, in accordance with the minimum accountabilities:

Is the offer an official or ceremonial gift provided when conducting business with official delegates or representatives?

Yes* No

* please provide details:

I accepted the offer: Yes No

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Manager to complete

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Name:	
Position (e.g. Director):	
Unit/ Division (e.g. Finance):	

Complete if the individual declined the offer

I have reviewed this declaration form and submitted it for inclusion on the organisation's gifts, benefits and hospitality register.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Complete if the individual accepted the offer

I have reviewed this declaration form and confirm that, to the best of my knowledge, accepting this offer:

1. Does not raise an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest for the individual or myself; and
2. Will not bring the individual, myself, the organisation or the public into disrepute; and
3. Will provide a clear business benefit to the organisation, the public sector or the State.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Record the decision about ownership by ticking the appropriate box:

- The employee retained the gift
- The employee accepted an official or ceremonial gift on behalf of the organisation
- The employee transferred ownership of the gift to the organisation
- The employee returned the gift to the donor
- The employee retained the gift
- The employee donated the to charity.

Submit the completed form to the General Counsel for secure storage and record of the Women's Gifts and Benefits Register.

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