**Gifts, Benefits & Hospitality Policy**

**Policy Statement**

To define for all employees, including board and sub-committee members, the Board’s policy for the receipt and provision of gifts, benefits and hospitality.

**Objective**

This policy aims to ensure all employees, including board and sub-committee members, understand their own responsibilities in regards to acceptance and provision of gifts, benefits or hospitality.

The objective of this policy is to minimise gift offers made to board members and employees. This helps to protect and promote public confidence in the integrity of the Board.

Gift offers are discouraged and must not be accepted, consistent with the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Procedure.

Board members, sub-committee members and all other employees of the Board will only provide gifts, travel or hospitality on behalf of the Board if it is clearly in the public interest to do so. Any gift or hospitality provided must be 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.

**Scope**

This policy applies to board members, sub-committee members and all other employees (i.e. senior executives and other staff, including ‘in house’ contractors and consultants) of the Board.

**key principles & accountabilities**

The key principles are:

**Obligations**: board members and employees act in accordance with their respective obligations and with good public sector governance practice.

**Public interest**: board members and employees act in the public interest, in compliance with this policy.

**Culture of integrity**: the Board fosters a culture of integrity. Board members and employees are supported to raise any unresolved gifts issues.

**Risk-based:** the Board’srisksin relation to gift offers are assessed, managed, and monitored.

**Processes**: the Board’s procedures are transparent and accountable. Processes are in place to ensure that board members and employees are aware of the requirements of this policy and the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Procedure and how to comply with them.

The Board’s policy and procedures meet the requirements of the [DELWP model policy](http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au/about-us/boards-and-governance/gifts-benefits-and-hospitality) on *Gifts, benefits and hospitality – responding to gift offers*, which is published by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (‘DELWP’) and the Victorian Public Sector Commission (VPSC) Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy Guide.

**Accountabilities**

Board members and employees are responsible for ensuring that their own conduct meets the required standards of integrity. They place the public interest above their own interests when carrying out their official duties. This includes declaring all gift offers in accordance with the Gifts and Benefits Procedure and refusing all gift offers.

The chair, the executive officer (‘EO’), and employees with direct reports are responsible for being aware of, and monitoring, the risks inherent in their team’s work and functions. They model good practice and promote awareness of this policy and related procedures.

**Background**

Board members, sub-committee members and all other employees of the Board could be subject to offers of Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality in the course of their normal duties. This policy ensures that the Board has a transparent and consistent policy framework that fulfils the requirements and accountabilities outlined in the Gifts, Benefits, and Hospitality Policy Framework issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commission.

**References, Related Documents and Legislation**

* Board’s Gifts, Benefits & Hospitality Procedure
* Board’s Gifts Register
* Board’s Conflict of Interest Policy
* Board’s Purchasing Policy
* Board’s Board Charter
* Board’s Administration & Finance Policy
* Board’s Travel and Associated Expenses Procedure
* Victorian Public Sector Standards Commission Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Framework (the framework)
* VPSC - Code of Conduct for Victorian public sector employees
* Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) Guide to Good Governance – board members
* VPSC- Directors’ Code of Conduct and guidance notes
* VPSC Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Guide
* *Public Administration Act 2004*.

**Document Control**

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