

East Gippsland Catchment Management Authority

Gifts, Benefits & Hospitality Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

To define for all employees the Authority's policy for the receipt and provision of gifts, benefits and hospitality.

For the purpose of this policy, employees includes: Senior Managers, Board members, employees and any individuals or groups undertaking activity for or on behalf of the Authority.

OBJECTIVE

The objectives of this policy are to:

1. Define the Authority's position in relation to the receipt of, and provision of, gifts, benefits and hospitality:

- Minimise gift offers made to employees and prohibit the acceptance of gifts unless the gift is a token offer. This helps to protect and promote public confidence in the integrity of the Authority.

Employees may generally accept token offers without approval or declaring the offer on the Authority's Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality register, as long as the offer does not create a conflict of interest or lead to reputational damage.

- Ensure decisions relating to the provision of gifts, catering and alcohol are made on a case-by-case basis.
- Ensure the Authority's Gifts Benefits and Hospitality procedure defines the position and processes all employees must comply with in regard to the gifts, benefits and hospitality.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees including: Senior Managers, Board members, employees, contractors, and any other individuals or groups undertaking activity for or on behalf of the Authority.

This policy complies with the DEECA model policy for agencies and boards – Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality.

KEY PRINCIPLES & ACCOUNTABILITIES

Impartiality:

Employees have a duty to place the public interest above their private interests when carrying out their official functions. They will not accept gifts, benefits or hospitality that could raise a reasonable perception of, or actual, bias or preferential treatment.

Accountability:

Employees are accountable for:

- declaring all non-token offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality;
- declining all non-token offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality; and
- the responsible provision of gifts, benefits and hospitality.

Employees with direct reports are accountable for overseeing management of their direct reports' refusal of gifts, benefits and hospitality, modelling good practice and promoting awareness of gifts, benefits and hospitality policies and processes.

Integrity:

Employees strive to earn and sustain public trust through responding to offers of gifts, benefits and hospitality in a manner that is consistent with community expectations. Employees will refuse all offers of non-token gifts, benefits and hospitality.

Risk-based approach:

The Authority, through its policies, processes and Audit and Risk Board Sub-Committee, will ensure gifts, benefits and hospitality risks are appropriately assessed and managed. Employees with direct reports will ensure they are aware of the risks inherent in their team's work and functions and monitor the risks to which their direct reports are exposed.

Accountabilities

Under the Instructions supporting the Standing Directions of the Minister for Finance 2018, the Victorian Public Sector Commission has set binding minimum accountabilities for the appropriate management of gifts, benefits and hospitality. These can be found in the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Procedure - Schedule A.

BACKGROUND

Employees can be subject to offers of Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality in the course of their normal duties. This policy ensures that Authority has a transparent and consistent policy and procedure framework that fulfils the requirements and accountabilities of DEECAs model policy for agencies and boards – Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality.

DEFINITIONS

Token offer

A token offer is 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

Examples of a token gift, benefit or hospitality offer are:

- a cup of coffee at another organisation's premises
- a modest working lunch, such as sandwiches and pastries, at another organisation's premises
- a cup of coffee at a café (unless there is a conflict of interest)
- promotional items such as pens and note pads
- token generic gift of a value of less than \$50

Token offers do not need to be recorded on the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality register (as long as the offer does not create a conflict of interest or lead to reputational damage).

Non-token offer

A non-token offer is 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 more than \$50 are non-token offers and must be recorded on a Gift Declaration Form (form) and details added to the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality register.

Register

The Authority must establish and maintain a register for gifts, benefits and hospitality offered to employees that, at a minimum, records sufficient information to effectively monitor, assess and report on gifts, benefits and hospitality.

REFERENCES, RELATED DOCUMENTS AND LEGISLATION

- Authority's Gifts, Benefits & Hospitality Procedure
- Authority's Gifts Register
- Authority's Conflict of Interest Policy
- Authority's Purchasing Policy
- Authority's Board Charter
- Authority's Administration & Finance Policy
- Authority's Travel and Associated Expenses Procedure
- Victorian Public Sector Standards Commission Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Framework
- VPSC - Code of Conduct for Victorian public sector employees

- DEECA Guide to Good Governance – Board members
- DEECA – Model Policy for agencies and boards (Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality)
- VPSC - Directors' Code of Conduct and guidance notes
- VPSC Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Guide
- *Public Administration Act 2004.*

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Last Review Date	February 2025
Version	27
Frequency of Review	Annual
Next Review Due Date	February 2026
Responsible Officer	CEO
Approved by	The Board