



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – GIFTS, BENEFITS, SPONSORED TRAVEL AND HOSPITALITY

### WHAT HAS CHANGED ABOUT REPORTING GIFTS, BENEFITS, HOSPITALITY AND SPONSORED TRAVEL?

- Introduction of a centralised online [Gifts and Benefits Register](#) to record and approve the retention of gifts, benefits, hospitality, and sponsored travel.
- Clearer guidance on what is considered a ‘reportable’ versus a ‘non-reportable’ gift or benefits.
- Removal of AUD200 and AUD500 allowable limit for gifts received from government and private sources.
- Removal of personal contribution for gifts over the allowable limit.

### ARE THERE EXAMPLES OF WHAT GIFTS AND BENEFITS ARE CONSIDERED REPORTABLE?

The list can be found at the beginning of [Chapter 6](#) in the Ethics, Integrity, and Professional Standards Policy Manual. Whilst this list is not exhaustive, it provides a general idea of what is considered reportable.

### HOW DO I KNOW IF SOMETHING IS CONSIDERED A GIFT, BENEFIT OR HOSPITALITY?

A gift or benefit is often something provided to the recipient where hospitality refers to invitations to work-related meals, social functions, sporting, or cultural events where the costs are met wholly or substantially by the host. The term work-related refers to events where an invitation is based on the recipient's official work for the department rather than on a personal relationship or connection.

### DO I NEED TO REPORT OFFERS OF HOSPITALITY AND HOW IS THIS DONE?

Hospitality is not reportable, and does not require approval via the Gifts and Benefits Register, if the following three criteria are all met

- The hospitality is accepted in accordance with your official duties
- There is a genuine business need to accept offers of hospitality
- The offer being accepted passes all conditions as set out in section 6.2 of the Ethics, Integrity, and Professional Standards Policy Manual.

### WHAT IF A GIFT OR BENEFIT HAS BEEN OFFERED BUT NOT ACCEPTED?

Where a gift is declined at the time of offer, no further action is required, and it does not need to be published on the Gifts and Benefits Register or the Agency Heads Gifts and Benefits Registry.

By accepting a gift or benefit you are taking personal responsibility for the appropriate management from that point forward. This includes situations where you accept a gift or benefit so not to cause offence, but do not plan to retain the gift for personal or official use. In this situation you must still submit a request through the Gifts and Benefits Register to decline to retain the gift or benefit and arrange for it to be disposed of in accordance with [Chapter 6.1.23 - Declining, Storage or Disposal of Gifts and Benefits](#).

## WILL THE GIFT GIVERS' NAMES BE PUBLISHED ON THE GIFTS AND BENEFITS REGISTER?

Yes, the Gifts and Benefits Register requires you to include the sponsor/gift giver's name and organisation. As part of best practice and as recommended by the APSC, you may wish to advise gift givers that their personal information may be recorded on the register as part of acceptance of that gift.

## WHO HAS ACCESS TO THE INFORMATION COLLECTED THROUGH THE GIFTS AND BENEFITS REGISTER?

Only the Ethics, Integrity, and Professional Standards Section (EES) can access records and data collected in the Gifts and Benefits Register. This information is used by EES for auditing and reporting purposes. If you would like to access to reporting, please contact EES.

## CAN I INCLUDE ATTACHMENTS IN MY SUBMISSION?

Yes, you may include up to three attachments when submitting your request.

## CAN I SUBMIT A REQUEST THROUGH THE GIFT AND BENEFITS REGISTER ON BEHALF OF SOMEONE ELSE?

Yes, you may submit a request on behalf of another employee (including attached agency LE) or in the case of family/spouses. When submitting a request on behalf of someone else you must ensure their name is listed as the recipient.

## IF I HAVE A PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP THAT IS FUNDED BY THE DEPARTMENT, DOES IT NEED TO BE RECORDED ON THE REGISTER?

No. A gift or benefit is any item or service accepted by an employee from clients, customers (including potential clients or customers) or other associates.

## DO AIRLINE LOUNGE MEMBERSHIPS SUCH AS THE CHAIRMANS LOUNGE NEED TO BE RECORDED ON THE REGISTER?

If they have been offered as a gift or benefit and accepted in the course of official duties, then it must be submitted into the Gifts and Benefits Registry. In the case of the Secretary and Deputy Secretaries they will also be publicly recorded in the Agency Heads Gifts and Benefits Registry.

## WHY DO THE SECRETARY AND DEPUTY SECRETARIES HAVE TO PUBLISH GIFTS AND BENEFITS OVER \$100 ON THE AGENCY HEADS GIFTS AND BENEFITS REGISTRY?

The APSC Gifts and Benefits Reporting Guidelines came into effect from 18 October 2019. Under these guidelines, agency heads are required to publicly disclose all gifts and benefits valued over AUD100 (excluding GST) they accept on their departmental or agency website on a quarterly basis.

## HOW DO I KNOW WHO SHOULD APPROVE MY REQUEST IN THE GIFTS AND BENEFITS REGISTER?

A listed of designated approvers can be found under Forms and Schedules at the back of the [Ethics, Integrity and Professional Standards Policy Manual](#).

## WHAT IF I HAVE LODGED A REQUEST THROUGH THE GIFTS AND BENEFITS REGISTER AND THE APPROVER HAS NOT RECEIVED IT?

When lodging a request, both the requestee and approver should receive an email. If those emails aren't received, please first check your junk mail. If it still isn't there then please contact the GSC in the first instance so that they may provide technical support.

## ONCE I HAVE RECORDED MY GIFTS VIA THE GIFTS AND BENEFITS REGISTER, IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE I AM REQUIRED TO DO?

All gifts intended to be retained must be reviewed by Pacific and Technical Security Section (PTS) to determine their suitability to be kept from a security point of view. All items gifted to DFAT workers must be isolated away from areas where sensitive or classified information is stored, processed, or discussed until cleared by PTS. The form can be accessed at [Official Gift Inspection Request](#).

## DO GIFTS GIVEN NEED TO BE RECORDED IN THE GIFTS AND BENEFITS REGISTER?

No, the Gifts and Benefits Register is only for gifts received. Please refer to [Chapter 2](#) of the Secretary's Instructions regarding the proper use and management of public resources, including official hospitality.

## WHAT DO I DO IF I RECEIVE A GIFT ANONYMOUSLY?

Where a gift has been given by an anonymous donor, extra caution should be taken, especially regarding security and conflicts of interest. It is recommended to dispose of the gift in accordance with [Chapter 6.1.26 - Declining, Storage or Disposal of Gifts and Benefits](#).

## HOW WILL I BE NOTIFIED ABOUT THE DECISION ON MY GIFT OR BENEFIT?

Once the delegate has reviewed your request and decided on the appropriate action, you will receive an email notifying you of their decision.

## CAN I APPEAL THE DECISION IF MY GIFT IS DECLINED?

If you are not satisfied with the delegate's decision regarding your gift or benefit you may seek clarification from them regarding their decision. If you are still not satisfied that the decision is fair or in line with departmental policy, then you may contact EES to discuss further.

## WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF FAILING TO REGISTER A GIFT?

Compliance with departmental policy and procedures for managing gifts and benefits is mandatory. Public confidence in APS agencies and the APS more broadly can be damaged when gifts and benefits that create a conflict of interest are accepted or not appropriately declared. Failure to report gifts or benefits, or failure to adhere to the determinations made by the department may result in a breach of the [APS or LES Codes of Conduct](#).

## HOW LONG DOES THE REVIEW PROCESS USUALLY TAKE?

This depends on the designated approver. Generally, we would expect requests to be reviewed and approved within 5 business days.

## WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE GIFTS, BENEFITS, SPONSORED TRAVEL, HOSPITALITY OR THE GIFTS AND BENEFITS REGISTER?

Please contact the Ethics, Integrity, and Professional Standard Team (EES) via [giftsandbenefits@dfat.gov.au](mailto:giftsandbenefits@dfat.gov.au) or + 61 6261 3380.