

QMS-PRO-20

GIFTS, BENEFITS & HOSPITALITY



1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to establish clear processes and responsibilities for accepting, refusing, and reporting offers of gifts, benefits, and hospitality.

This procedure is designed to enhance public trust in MMA's impartiality and integrity as a government entity.

2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all MMA Board Members, Managers, and Employees.

This procedure aligns with the Victorian Public Sector Commission's Gifts, Benefits, and Hospitality Policy framework.

3. DEFINITIONS

Benefit - Preferential treatment, privileged access, Favors, or other advantages given to a person.

Bribe - Money or other incentives given or promised to influence someone corruptly to perform their role.

Contractor - All agents, contractors, and subcontractors engaged directly or indirectly by MMA, including their employees and representatives.

CEO - MMA's Chief Executive Officer.

CFO - MMA's Chief Financial Officer

EA - Executive Assistant to the CEO.

Employee - MMA Board Members, Managers, employees, and individuals directly engaged by MMA on a contract basis.

Gifts - Free or heavily discounted items, intangible benefits, or hospitality that go beyond normal courtesies and are given to Employees in connection with their work. Small promotional gifts from suppliers or conference stationery are not considered gifts.

Hospitality - Involves the friendly reception and treatment of guests. It can include anything from serving light refreshments at a business meeting to offering a restaurant meal, sponsored travel, and accommodations.

MMA Managers - An individual employed by the MMA with the role of manager or executive.

Token Gifts - An item of insignificant or trivial value that is worth no more than \$50.

4. PROCEDURE

4.1 Gifts, Benefits, and Hospitality

The MMA is required to operate with integrity and transparency. Employees are expected to stay impartial in their actions and decisions.

Employees shall not accept gifts from individuals attempting to influence their decisions or where accepting gifts could give the impression that an Employee will favour a specific person or organization when making decisions or taking action.

Under the Victorian Public Sector Commission Code of Conduct, employees are responsible for refraining from soliciting gifts, benefits, or hospitality for themselves or others.

Employees must report all repeated gift offers to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of MMA.

Employees must decline any bribes or inducements and report bribery attempts to the CEO, who shall notify Victoria Police of the incident.

Employees shall decline all offers of gifts, benefits, and hospitality that:

- are money, items used similarly to money, or items easily converted into money;
- result in an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest;
- may negatively impact their reputation as a public official or bring their public sector employer or the public sector itself into disrepute; or
- are offers without a legitimate business benefit that do not involve tokens.

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4.2 Accepting Gifts

The employee must record all gifts received and refused on the QMS-FOR-20.1 Gift Register.

Under normal circumstances, and as long as MMA is not involved in any stage of a Tender process, gifts may be accepted on behalf of MMA, provided they are then delivered to the EA. Any gifts received outside the office, at events or conferences, or outside of working hours are still considered gifts and must be submitted to the EA on the next working day.

Gifts received throughout the year will be distributed to employees through a random drawing organised by the EA. Perishable gifts will be shared appropriately with employees.

Extra caution is advised when evaluating gift offers from individuals or organisations about whom decisions are likely to be made involving:

- employment
- tendering and procurement processes
- provision of services
- enforcement
- licensing

Refused gifts must also be recorded in the Gifts register.

The Gifts Register will be reviewed annually by the Finance, Audit, and Risk Management Committee.

The MMA's gifts (for employees and board members only), benefits, and hospitality policy and register for amounts over \$50 will be published on its public website. The register will include information from the current and previous fiscal years.

4.3 During a Tender Process / Business Deal

Employees are not allowed to accept gifts from companies or individuals involved in an ongoing tender process with MMA.

When gifts are received during a tender or business deal, the EA shall be informed, and they will arrange for their courteous return.

4.4 Purchasing of Goods, Services and Produce within the Market

To minimise the risk of Market users giving gifts to Employees, goods may only be purchased for personal household consumption from Market users or within market land. If an Employee wants to make bulk purchases occasionally (i.e., more than what is considered 'personal household use'), they must first get permission from their immediate manager or, if the manager is unavailable, from the CEO.

- To ensure transparency, all items must be paid for at the point of sale.
- Employees must record the Staff Purchase on the Gift Register within one business day of buying it.
- The original copy of the receipt must be given to the EA.

The EA/CFO shall oversee the Gifts Register and inform the CEO and Managers of purchasing trends.

4.5 Purchasing of Food and Drinks within the Market

Employees may purchase food and drinks from the onsite cafes, where the retail price listed is paid.

To ensure transparency, all food must be paid for at the point of sale. Employees shall not keep accounts or tabs with Market users.

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When a café operator declines a request to pay for an insignificant item (such as a cup of coffee or tea), an employee may choose to accept the gift if it meets the criteria outlined in section 4.1.

4.6 Event Attendance

If an offer is made to attend a conference or participate in an industry event, the Employee may attend if there is a benefit to the MMA in the Employee attending that function in an official capacity.

When an Employee attends a conference or activity, either as a participant or a speaker, or applies for an award recognizing their public sector work, they represent MMA. Any benefits resulting from the Employee's activities belong to MMA and must be declared and transferred to MMA.

4.7 Gifts Benefits and Hospitality Provided by the Organisation

A manager may choose to recognise celebration events such as departures, birthdays, marriages, or the birth of children by giving a token gift.

Token gifts shall be applied consistently across the organisation and be in line with community expectations.

4.8 Contractors

All Contractors must:

- Refuse all offers of gifts, benefits, or hospitality, including produce, equipment, flowers, and discounted or gifted food from employees and market users.
- Not purchase any produce, equipment, or flowers within the Market.
- Promptly disclose all gratuities, gifts, and entertainment given or received from any party connected to the Market in any way.

5. SUPPORT, ADVICE & OTHER REFERENCES

- *The Victorian Public Sector gifts benefits and hospitality policy framework;*
- *Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees*
- *Directors Code of Conduct and Guidance Notes*
- *Legislation – Crimes Act 1958*
- *Financial Management Act 1994*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1982*
- *Information Privacy Act 2000*
- *Public Administration Act 2004*
- QMS-PRO-25 Fraud, Corruption and Other Losses Prevention Policy

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6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

6.1 QMS-FOR-20.1 Gifts Register

7. QMS-FOR-20.1 GIFTS REGISTER AUDIT REFERENCES

8.

7.1 ISO9001

Record	Retention	Location	Archived	Disposed
QMS-FOR-20.1 Gifts Register	5 Years	Harvest/QMS/Forms	5 Years	30 Years
Receipts	3 Years	CEO EA's Folder	N/A	3 Years