



Australian Government

**Office of the Australian Building and
Construction Commissioner**

Finance Direction 9

Hospitality and Gifts

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1. Commissioner’s Instruction (CI)

A Delegated Official is responsible for:

- ensuring that staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to giving and receiving hospitality and gifts.
- maintaining a Register of Hospitality and Gifts received and given.

2. Introduction & Objectives

This procedure is applicable to all employees who may be exposed to circumstances where they are required to give or receive hospitality or gifts in their capacity as ABCC officers.

The purpose of the procedure is to ensure accountability, integrity, transparency of the process and public defensibility.

3. Supporting Information

3.1 Related References & Pronouncements

FMA Act 1997:	Sections 41 – 44
FMA Regulations:	N/A
Related Finance Directions:	
Other References:	APS Code of Conduct

3.2 Responsible Officers and Contacts

Position/Title	Level	Responsibility
Assistant Director, Business Services	EL1	File all notifications of receiving and giving hospitality and gifts in Official File and record in the ABCC Hospitality and Gifts Register.

4. Guidelines

4.1 Relationship to APS Values and Code of Conduct

- 4.1.1 Key aspects of the APS Values and Code of Conduct are integrity and impartiality. Giving and receiving hospitality and gifts and other benefits inappropriately can compromise the high ethical standards expected of APS employees. ABCC employees should not accept hospitality or gifts or other benefits if it is (or appears to be) intended to improperly influence an ABCC employee in their official duties.

4.2 Receiving Hospitality or Gifts

- 4.2.1 The main risk involved in accepting or receiving hospitality or gifts is the potential for a conflict of interest, or the perception of a conflict of interest to arise. At the extreme, it could be perceived as a bribe, which is an offence under the Criminal Code and a breach of the APS Code of Conduct.
- 4.2.2 Public servants must take care to ensure they avoid any actual or perceived conflict of interest. Employees should consider how they might answer a parliamentary or media question about accepting hospitality and/or gifts.
- 4.2.3 Employees must seek approval prior to accepting hospitality or gifts. If it is not possible to gain prior approval the employee may accept the hospitality or gift and then declare this to the officer delegated to approve the hospitality or gift as soon as possible thereafter.
- 4.2.4 At certain times, accepting hospitality or gifts can be acceptable as a means of networking with stakeholders, developing relationships or in a liaison context where the rejection of a minor gift may cause embarrassment or offence.
- 4.2.5 Acceptance of hospitality or gifts from a supplier will not usually be appropriate if an employee or the ABCC is:
- The subject of a decision within the discretionary power or substantial influence of the ABCC employee concerned that may affect the supplier
 - Involved in discussions or advice with the supplier about current or proposed ABCC procurement
 - Involved in time away from ABCC official duties with the supplier at public expense
- 4.2.6 Particular care should be taken if the person or organisation is in a contractual or regulatory relationship with the Commonwealth or ABCC, or if the organisation's primary purpose is to lobby Ministers, Members of Parliament or agencies.
- 4.2.7 The benefits referred to above include, but are not limited to:
- Meals or other hospitality (meals, drinks and refreshments served during business meetings are not generally considered a gift unless the estimated value is unusually high)
 - Offers of cash or shares
 - Gifts, such as bottles of wine, manufacturer's samples or personal items
 - Promotional materials, including clothing, books or compact discs
 - Sponsored or discounted travel and accommodation

- Benefits under loyalty schemes, such as frequent flyer schemes
- Airline competition prizes
- Entertainment, such as seats at sporting or theatre events or golf days
- Discounts on commercial items
- Free or discounted places on training and development courses other than contract deals associated with the presentation of papers
- Equipment or facilities, including laptops and cameras

4.3 Approval to Receive Hospitality or Gifts

- 4.3.1 Declaring the receipt of hospitality, gifts or other benefits does not in itself justify their acceptance. Before any gift is accepted, the employee receiving the gift must determine - and be able to justify to others - that the gift does not give rise to a conflict of interest and cannot be perceived as such by a reasonable outside observer.
- 4.3.2 If approval is not given for a gift, the gift can be either paid for by the ABCC staff member concerned or surrendered to the Commonwealth. Any gifts surrendered to the Commonwealth must be provided to the Assistant Director, Business Services. Surrendered gifts will become the property of the ABCC.
- 4.3.3 The ABCC maintains a register of 'Hospitality, Gifts and Benefits', including the approximate value of items valued at more than \$100. The value of gifts or benefits is to be taken as the price which would be payable by the general public for equivalent goods, services or benefits, where this can be determined, or a common sense view of value.
- 4.3.4 The ABCC 'Hospitality, Gifts and Benefits' register is maintained by the Business Services team. ABCC employees should provide details of gifts to the Assistant Director, Business Services for recording in the 'Hospitality, Gifts and Benefits' register.
- 4.3.5 Employees should not assume that hospitality, gifts or benefits of minor value (\$100 or under) may be accepted. Employees must seek prior approval from their manager, or as soon as practicable thereafter, before accepting minor hospitality, gifts or benefits. The ABC Commissioner must seek prior approval from the Chief Financial Officer, or as soon as practicable thereafter, before accepting minor gifts or benefits.
- 4.3.6 A proposal for accepting a gift for \$100 or under must be recorded in the gifts register and include the following information:
- The nature of the gift or benefit, and the circumstances of it being offered
 - Evidence of written approval of the gift.
- 4.3.7 For gifts or benefits of a more substantial nature (greater than \$100), prior approval to accept the gift must be sought from the relevant ABCC Delegated Official, or as soon as practicable thereafter, who may consult further with the Group Manager or ABC Commissioner if needed. The ABC Commissioner must seek prior approval from the Chief Financial Officer, or as soon as practicable thereafter, in relation to acceptance of gifts or benefits of a more substantial nature.
- 4.3.8 A proposal for acceptance of a gift greater than \$100 must be recorded in the 'Hospitality, Gifts and Benefits' register and include the following information:
- The nature and estimated dollar value of the gift or benefit, and the circumstances of it being offered

- Whether it is the ABCC that will gain, rather than the individual, and what that gain entails (e.g. whether acceptance of the gift or benefit will assist the ABCC to develop a relationship with stakeholders)
- Whether the offerer is in receipt of Commonwealth or ABCC assistance, and the extent to which that assistance (or further assistance) could be seen to be influenced by the presentation of gifts or benefits
- Whether the offerer could be perceived as seeking to influence Ministers, Members of Parliament, Australian Government departments or authorities
- Whether the offerer is in a contractual relationship with the ABCC or competing for the award of a contract
- Evidence of written approval of acceptance of the gift
- Any other relevant information.

4.3.9 Where a gift or benefit has been received and approval is not given for an individual to retain the gift or benefit the item becomes property of the ABCC and is to be treated the same way as purchased goods, including any requirements to record them as assets.

4.4 Providing Hospitality or Gifts

4.4.1 Public servants must take care to ensure they avoid any actual or perceived conflict of interest. Employees should consider how they might answer a parliamentary or media question about accepting hospitality and/or gifts.

4.4.2 Provision of hospitality is divided into Official Hospitality and Other Hospitality.

4.5 Official Hospitality

4.5.1 Official hospitality is approved ABCC hospitality expenditure for any persons or entities outside the ABCC for the benefit of the ABCC where the primary purpose of the event is work-related.

4.5.2 This includes, but is not limited to:

- foods and beverages (including alcohol)
- entertainment
- travel
- accommodation

4.5.3 Official hospitality does not include ABCC hospitality expenditure for ABCC employees only (see Other Hospitality).

4.5.4 The types of events or circumstances that may constitute official hospitality include, but are not limited to:

- program, service or policy launches attended by media
- events that promote or support an ABCC or Government policy initiatives
- events to facilitate the conduct of ABCC or public business
- functions for recognition of significant events such as awards or presentations

- visiting foreign delegates.
- 4.5.5 Official hospitality does not include (see Other Hospitality):
- refreshments for ABCC employees at ABCC training courses, seminars or meetings
 - working meals for ABCC employees provided on ABCC premises
 - hospitality provided to ABCC employees (e.g. working lunches, morning teas and staff reward functions).
- 4.5.6 Before the ABCC is committed to any Official Hospitality expenditure, prior approval must be obtained from a Delegated Official.
- 4.5.7 Official Hospitality may attract Fringe Benefits Tax. Accordingly, the 'Domestic Entertainment Form' (see Attachment A) must be completed in full by the person seeking approval for the official hospitality.
- 4.5.8 Before approving any Official Hospitality expenditure, the Delegated Official must ensure that:
- the primary purpose of the event is work-related;
 - the request is reasonable, appropriate and publicly defensible;
 - the request is in accordance with Finance Direction 10 - Procurement of Goods and Services;
 - the ABCC will benefit from the use of public funds to facilitate business with entities or persons outside the ABCC who:
 - provide advice or services to the ABCC or Commonwealth
 - share mutual vocational, business or national interests with ABCC or the Commonwealth
 - the 'Domestic Entertainment Form' has been fully completed.
- 4.5.9 As a guide to reasonable meal, travel and/or accommodation costs for Official Hospitality, reference should be made to the applicable travel daily cap, the Commonwealth's Lowest Practical Fare Policy and reasonable meal costs as outlined in Finance Direction 15 - Travel.
- 4.5.10 The Delegate must confirm their approval of Official Hospitality by completing the signature block in the 'Domestic Entertainment Form'. The completed 'Domestic Entertainment Form' is to be provided to the Assistant Director, Accounting Services.
- 4.5.11 Purchasing or travel credit cards may be used to meet the costs or pre-approved Official Hospitality.

4.6 Other Hospitality

- 4.6.1 Other hospitality is approved ABCC hospitality expenditure for ABCC employees only where the primary purpose of the event is work-related.
- 4.6.2 This includes, but is not limited to:
- refreshments for ABCC employees at ABCC training courses, seminars or meetings
 - working meals for ABCC employees provided on ABCC premises
 - hospitality provided to ABCC employees (e.g. working lunches, morning teas and staff reward functions).

- 4.6.3 Other hospitality does not include ABCC hospitality expenditure for any persons or entities outside the ABCC (see Official Hospitality).
- 4.6.4 Before the ABCC is committed to any Other Hospitality expenditure, prior approval must be obtained from a Delegated Official.
- 4.6.5 Before approving any Other Hospitality expenditure, the Delegated Official must ensure that:
- the primary purpose of the event is work-related
 - the request is reasonable, appropriate and publicly defensible
 - the request is in accordance with Finance Direction 10 - Procurement of Goods and Services.
- 4.6.6 As a guide to reasonable meal costs for Other Hospitality, reference should be made to the reasonable meal costs as outlined in Finance Direction 15 - Travel.
- 4.6.7 Purchasing credit cards may be used to meet the costs of pre-approved Other Hospitality.

4.7 Gifts

- 4.7.1 Gifts of public property are covered by s 43 of the FMA Act. Only certain ABCC staff have the delegated power to gift public property.
- 4.7.2 When staff are considering the giving of a gift, the following principles must be observed:
- The process of and rationale for giving a gift must be transparent and well documented.
 - The giving of a gift must be approved by the ABC Commissioner or a person delegated by the ABC Commissioner to approve a gift.



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Domestic Entertainment Form

Cost Centre..... FBT Year..... /

Please attach a copy of invoices and/or receipts.

Date of the function to (if multiple days) / / / /	Duration of function	Start time Finish time
Location of the function – ABCC premises?	Yes / No	If not ABCC premises – provide venue details		
Purpose of the function e.g. Meeting, Training, Seminar, Social		Total Number of attendees	
		- No. of ABCC Employees	
		- No. of Other Govt Employees	
		- No. of Other Guests	

Function Expenditure	Description	Cost (GST Inclusive)
Venue Hire		\$
Equipment Hire		\$
Catering – including type of food/drinks e.g. morning tea, light lunch, 3 course meal, alcohol, juice, tea & coffee		\$

Purpose of function:

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Organising Officer

Name

.....

Signature

.....

Date / /

Approving Delegate

Name

.....

Signature

.....

Date / /

Position

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