

Policy for Acceptance of Gifts and Benefits by Aldermen

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to define the City of Launceston's expectations of the Mayor and Aldermen with regard to the acceptance and disclosure of gifts and benefits.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to the Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Launceston and is available for public inspection.

POLICY:

In relation to the acceptance of gifts and benefits by Aldermen of the City of Launceston:

1. Gifts or benefits above the value of \$75 must be disclosed and recorded in the Gifts Register.
2. A cumulative amount in excess of \$500 of gifts or benefits received under the value of \$75 from any single source within a calendar year is to be declared and recorded in the Gifts Register.
3. A cumulative amount in excess of \$1,500 of total gifts or benefits received under the value of \$75 within a calendar year is to be declared and recorded in the Gifts Register.
4. Gifts and benefits may include a meal and/or beverage, tickets to sporting or theatrical events, corporate hospitality at a corporate facility or at a sporting venue, discounted products for personal use, use of facilities such as gyms, use of holiday homes, free or discounted travel and free training excursions.
5. Where the City of Launceston may issue tickets to Aldermen to attend City of Launceston run or sponsored/funded events, the Alderman is to ensure that details of the event, the Aldermen receiving the tickets and any dollar values are included in the Gifts Register.
6. Gifts to the City presented to Aldermen in fulfilling their civic and ceremonial roles will be retained by the Council and passed to the General Manager. The General Manager will arrange for the gift to be displayed within an appropriate area of the City of Launceston.
7. It is acknowledged that, from time to time, Aldermen will be offered tickets to sporting or theatrical events associated with City of Launceston managed facilities like Aurora Stadium and Princess Theatre. It is not expected that incidental gifts and benefits of this nature will be recorded in the Gifts Register, except if points 2 and/or 3 above apply.

PRINCIPLES:

In deciding whether it is appropriate to accept a gift or benefit, Aldermen are asked to consider:

Policy for Acceptance of Gifts and Benefits by Aldermen

- who is giving the gift or benefit, and their relationship to the Alderman/Council;
- is the gift or benefit being offered to influence a decision or seek a return favour?
- will public knowledge of the acceptance of the gift or benefit diminish community trust?

Adapted from the GIFT Test of the Victorian Public Sector Commission.

Expectations of Aldermen

Aldermen must ensure as part of their duties, they:

- a) Never accept an offer of money, regardless of the amount
- b) Do not accept gifts and benefits, other than token gifts, without ensuring each is disclosed and recorded in the City of Launceston's Gifts Register in keeping with City of Launceston policies and procedures; and
- c) Strive to avoid situations in which the appearance may be created that any person or body, through the provision of hospitality or benefits of any kind, is securing (or attempting to secure) a favour from the Alderman or the Council.

Supporting examples

- 1) If an Alderman is involved in the allocation of tenders for any work supplied to the City of Launceston, they must not accept any benefits from the tenderer as this may be expected or perceived to influence the decision making process.
- 2) If an Alderman is provided with tickets to the theatre or any form of corporate entertaining, then it should be declared in the City of Launceston's Gifts Register in keeping with associated policies.

RELATED POLICIES & PROCEDURES:

14-Plx-016 Mayor and Aldermen's Expenses and Resources Policy
14-Plx-032 Code of Conduct for Aldermen

RELATED LEGISLATION:

Local Government Act 1993 (Tas) S.28E
Local Government (General) Regulations 2005 R.22A

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REFERENCES:

Strategic Planning and Policy Committee Notes 01 Oct 12 - ECM document number 2787031

Strategic Planning and Policy Committee Notes 06 Nov 12 - ECM document number 2809613

Model Code of Conduct Template produced by the Local Government Association of Tasmania April 2012; accessed 04 July 2014

Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy Framework produced by the Victorian Public Sector Commission April 2012; accessed 04 July 2014

DEFINITIONS:

"token gifts/benefits" are low-value gifts or benefits that a reasonable person would not perceive are intended to improperly influence an Alderman. City of Launceston defines token gifts or benefits as those with a value of less than \$75

"disclosed and recorded" means that gifts and benefits are captured in the City of Launceston's Gift Register by Aldermen declaring the details of the gifts and benefits to the Executive Assistant to the Mayor or the Administration Officer to the Aldermen

REVIEW:

This policy will be reviewed to coincide with Council elections or more frequently, if dictated by operational demands and with Council's approval.