

## Integrity in Public Administration Policy

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This document is relevant to all WH sites, including Bacchus Marsh, Melton and Caroline Springs

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## Intent

Directors and Staff have a duty to place the public interest above their Private Interests when carrying out their Western Health duties. The intention of this document is to outline Western Health's policy position on maintaining integrity in public administration by reference to and adoption of specific external resources.

## 1. Outcomes

### Policy Statement

The policy document outlines Western Health's standards for integrity and accountability as a Victorian public sector entity, specifically a public health service constituted under Section 65P of the *Health Services Act 1988* (Vic) in relation to:

- Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality;
- Conflicts of Interest and Conflicts of Duty; and
- Public Interest Disclosures.

### Policy Details

The Victorian Public Sector Commissioner and IBAC publish extensive guidance on the expected standards of conduct of Directors and Staff that align with the duties and values of Victorian public entities.

To facilitate a consistent and compliant approach to integrity in public administration, Western Health adopts:

- in relation to Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality, the Minimum Accountabilities (refer Section 5 Definitions);
- in relation to Conflicts of Interest and Conflicts of Duty, the *Model Conflict of Interest Policy* and *Conflicts of interest and duty as a board director* (refer Section 6 References); and
- in relation to Public Interest Disclosures, the *Guidelines for Public Interest Disclosure welfare management* and *Guidelines for handling Public Interest Disclosures* (refer Section 6 References),

which, when read together with this internal policy document, form Western Health's Integrity in Public Administration Policy (the Policy).

### **Procedures and Forms in support of the Integrity in Public Administration Policy**

In so far as it is practicable, procedures and forms for the management of gifts, benefits and hospitality, conflicts of interest and conflicts of duty by Directors and by Staff will be based on the model policies, procedures, guidelines and forms published from time to time by the VPSC and IBAC, to facilitate consistency and compliance.

Western Health will, through its procedures, promote awareness of the Policy and provide practical guidance on the processes for the declaration of offers and approval of acceptance of Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality, Conflicts of Interests, Conflicts of Duty, Private Interests and mandatory notification of Public Interest Disclosures, including links to declaration forms.

Western Health may develop separately sponsored procedures for activities where Conflicts of Interest and Conflicts of Duty may commonly arise or where the acceptance of Gifts, Benefits or Hospitality of any kind is prohibited, for example in tendering or recruitment processes. Those procedures may reference other external codes related to integrity in public administration, such as the Victorian Government's Supplier Code of Conduct (refer Section 6 References).

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**Responsibility for Making Declarations**

Directors and Staff are expected to be proactive and timely in making any declarations.

Where Directors and Staff are unable to locate or identify Western Health contacts, procedures or forms for relevant declarations, declarations can be made by email to the Board Chair (for Directors) or to the Sponsor (for Staff).

**Training and Awareness**

The Sponsor will be responsible for promoting this Policy and supporting procedures to Directors and Staff, such as roles with delegated financial authority. Use of external resources made available by the VPSC and IBAC at no cost, such as posters, digital banners and videos, is encouraged.

**Declaration of Private Interests**

Declarations of Private Interests allow the organisation to pre-emptively identify any personal interests or duties to other organisations that may give rise to an actual, potential or perceived Conflict of Interest or a Conflict of Duty for a Director or a member of Staff. A conflict does not automatically arise by virtue of a Private Interest.

Directors are required to provide declarations of Private Interests in accordance with the form of declaration provided by the Department of Health and make disclosures of pecuniary interests as prescribed by Section 65W of the *Health Services Act 1988* (Vic). Western Health will provide Directors with procedural guidance on declaring Private Interests, Conflicts of Interest and Conflicts of Duty.

Categories of Staff required to provide declarations of Private Interests is set out in *OP-RS2 Conflict of Interest Procedure (Directors and Staff)* and, subject to practical and risk materiality considerations, will reflect the prevailing guidance from the VPSC (for example, a financial delegation monetary threshold).

**Publication**

Western Health will publish this policy document and supporting procedures (or suitable extracts) on its website, together with the current and previous annual register of declarable Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality. Registers of Private Interests, Conflicts of Interest, Conflicts of Duty and Public Interest Disclosures will be maintained in confidence in accordance with the relevant procedure.

Western Health will make information about making Public Interest Disclosures available to the public on its website, including links to the IBAC website. Western Health cannot receive Public Interest Disclosures but may be the subject of a disclosure; persons who make any such Public Interest Disclosure will be afforded the statutory protections of the *Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012* (Vic) by Western Health.

**Consequences of Breach**

Failure of a Director to comply with procedures supporting this Policy may be a breach of the Code of Conduct for Directors of Victorian Public Entities (refer *Section 6 References*). Section 1.4 of the Code of Conduct for Directors of Victorian Public Entities outlines the potential consequences for breach of the Code of Conduct for Directors of Victorian Public Entities.

Failure of a member of Staff to comply with procedures supporting this Policy may be a breach of the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees (refer *Section 6 References*). Section 1.7 of the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees outlines the potential consequences for breach of the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees.

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### Reporting on Compliance

The Audit Committee of the Board will annually receive a report from the Sponsor on the operation of the Policy and any changes to supporting procedures for the previous year ending 30 June, together with the annual register of declarable Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality. Areas of risk, mitigations and proposed improvements will be highlighted in reporting to the Audit Committee.

## 2. Applicability

This Policy applies to all Directors and Staff of Western Health without exclusion.

## 3. Accountability

The Executive Director General Counsel has accountability for the establishment, implementation and review of the Policy and supporting procedures.

## 4. Associated Procedures

In support of the Policy, the following Manuals, Procedures, Instructions and/or Guidelines apply:

- Board Charter
- Board Procedure: Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality
- Board Procedure: Declaration of Interests
- Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Procedure (Staff)
- Declaration of Interests (Staff)
- Public Interests Disclosures Procedure

## 5. Definitions

Terms used but not defined in this policy document are defined in the relevant reference document listed in Section 6 References.

<b>Benefits</b>	has the meaning given in Section 3 of the VPSC’s Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy Guide (refer Section 6 References)
<b>Board</b>	means the board of directors of Western Health, constituted under Section 65S of the <i>Health Services Act 1988</i> (Vic)
<b>Conflict of Duty</b>	means the conflict that arises from having two or more roles that have competing priorities (source Conflicts of interest and duty as a board director (refer Section 6 References))
<b>Conflict of Interest</b>	has (for Staff) the meaning given in Section 4 Definitions of the VPSC’s Model Conflict of Interest Policy and (for Directors) the meaning in Conflicts of interest and duty as a board director (refer Section 6 References)
<b>Director</b>	means a director of the Board
<b>Gifts</b>	has the meaning given in Section 3 of the VPSC’s Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy Guide (refer Section 6 References)
<b>Hospitality</b>	has the meaning given in Section 3 of the VPSC’s Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy Guide (refer Section 6 References)
<b>IBAC</b>	Independent Broad-based Anti-corruption Commission, constituted under the <i>Independent Board-based Anti-corruption Commission Act 2011</i> (Vic)
<b>Minimum Accountabilities</b>	means the minimum requirements in relation to the management of Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality set out in Section 2 of the VPSC’s Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy Guide (refer Section 6 References)

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<b>Private Interests</b>	has the meaning given in Section 4 Definitions of the VPSC’s Model Conflict of Interest Policy (refer Section 6 References)
<b>Public Interest Disclosures</b>	means reports about corruption and misconduct in the Victorian public sector made to IBAC or to a public sector entity authorised to receive reports (such as the Department of Health) under the <i>Independent Board-based Anti-corruption Commission Act 2011 (Vic)</i>
<b>Staff</b>	means employees Western Health and other individuals contemplated by Section 1.4 of the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees (refer Section 6 References)
<b>VPSC</b>	Victorian Public Sector Commissioner

## 6. References

*Health Services Act 1988 (Vic)*  
*Independent Board-based Anti-corruption Commission Act 2011 (Vic)*  
*Public Administration Act 2004 (Vic)*  
*Public Interest Disclosures Act 2012 (Vic)*

The external frameworks, standards & programs that apply to directors of Victorian public entities informing this policy document are:

Code of Conduct for Directors of Victorian Public Entities  
<https://www.boards.vic.gov.au/code-conduct-directors-victorian-public-entities#>  
 Integrity guidance for board directors  
<https://www.boards.vic.gov.au/integrity-guidance-board-directors>  
 Gifts, benefits and hospitality  
<https://www.boards.vic.gov.au/gifts-benefits-and-hospitality>  
 Conflicts of Interest and Duty as a Board Director  
<https://www.boards.vic.gov.au/conflicts-interest-and-duty-board-director>

The external frameworks, standards & programs that apply to Victorian public sector employees informing or referenced in this policy document are:

Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees  
[https://vpsc.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/VPSC\\_Code\\_VPSE\\_WEB.pdf](https://vpsc.vic.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/VPSC_Code_VPSE_WEB.pdf)  
 Supplier Code of Conduct  
<https://www.buyingfor.vic.gov.au/supplier-code-conduct-buyers#supplier-code-of-conduct>  
 Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy Guide  
<https://vpsc.vic.gov.au/ethics-behaviours-culture/gifts-benefits-hospitality/gifts-benefits-and-hospitality-policy-guide/>  
 Conflicts of Interest  
<https://vpsc.vic.gov.au/ethics-behaviours-culture/conflict-of-interest/conflict-of-interest-guidance-for-organisations/>  
 Model Conflict of Interest Policy  
<https://vpsc.vic.gov.au/ethics-behaviours-culture/conflict-of-interest/conflict-of-interest-guidance-for-organisations/#heading1>  
 Guidelines for Public Interest Disclosure welfare management  
<https://www.ibac.vic.gov.au/publications-and-resources/article/guidelines-for-protected-disclosure-welfare-management>  
 Guidelines for handling Public Interest Disclosures  
<https://www.ibac.vic.gov.au/publications-and-resources/article/guidelines-for-protected-disclosure-welfare-management>

## 7. Document History

Number of previous revisions: New policy

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This policy supersedes the following policies and procedures:  
P-RS1 Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality  
OP-RS2 Conflict of Interest Procedure  
Board Policy Gifts Benefits and Hospitality (last reviewed 23 May 2023)  
Board Policy Conflicts of Interest (last reviewed 23 May 2023)

## 8. Sponsor

Executive Director General Counsel

## 9. Authorisation Authority

Board of Directors

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