



OFFICE OF THE OFFICIAL SECRETARY TO THE
GOVERNOR-GENERAL



GIFT POLICY

FOR GIFTS RECEIVED BY
THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL
AND SPOUSE

October 2015

Next review due before October 2017

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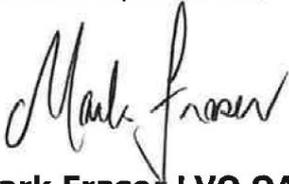
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1. PURPOSE

This policy establishes:

- internal control processes and procedures to ensure that substantial gifts received by the Governor-General and spouse in the course of their official duties (from all sources, both private and government, received overseas or within Australia) are properly recorded; and
- appropriate handling and management arrangements for such gifts.

A separate policy covers procedures relating to gifts received by OOSGG staff.



Mark Fraser LVO OAM
Official Secretary

14 October 2015

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

For the purposes of this policy, gifts are sorted into two categories:

- Group One comprises mementos and items of a token or promotional nature (such as pens, caps, T-shirts, regular books, calendars, flowers, foodstuffs, home made items and consumables) and other items likely to have a commercial value of less than \$100.
- Group Two comprises gifts worth more than \$100.

While Australian Government practice is to discourage the giving and receiving of gifts, the reality is that the Governor-General and spouse receive many unsolicited gifts in the course of their duties. In the interests of reasonable courtesy and goodwill, the Governor-General sometimes reciprocates with gifts, especially to counterparts abroad.

It is also recognised that for some countries (especially those in Asia and the Middle East), the presentation of gifts is an established way of doing business. Moreover, if refusal to accept a gift is likely to cause offence, common sense and courtesy should prevail to avoid unnecessary embarrassment to all parties.

The Australian Government has established guidelines for members of the Executive for the acceptance or otherwise of gifts, the basic principle being that ministers should not accept any benefit that risks giving the appearance they may be subject to improper influence (because the giver has, or seeks to have, a contractual relationship with the Government or has any other special interest in Government decisions).

The Governor-General's role in decision making is, however, materially different from that of ministers. He acts, in the main, on ministerial advice. So the guidelines for ministers, insofar as they are written to avoid any suggestion of influence over decision making, are not directly relevant to the Governor-General because he does not make policy decisions.

Decisions concerning the retention of any gifts should be made as quickly as is reasonably possible after receipt. A fundamental principle is that the Governor-General ought not retain any gift that may be used for personal gain, for example through the sale of, or realisation of the monetary value of the gift.

3. GIFT REPORTING AND HANDLING

3.1 Declaration

Group One gifts received in the course of official duties need not be reported, on the understanding that they are immediately used or disposed of according to the Governor-General's instructions. However, any Group One gifts that are to be set aside (eg. for re-gifting purposes) should be tagged with a label noting when they were presented, by whom, and at what event.

The assessment of the gift as being less than \$100 should be confirmed informally by a second staff member whenever practicable. Group One book gifts which are directed to the Governor-General's library should be added to the book list kept by his Senior Executive Assistant.

Group Two gifts received in the course of official duties must be reported in detail to the Household Section within 14 days of receipt, using the attached [Official Gift Reporting Form](#). On receipt of the gift and accompanying form, Household staff will:

- photograph the gift and complete the reporting form, including the proposed action (retention by Their Excellencies, display, storage, TBC, etc.);
- provide the reporting form to the Director Operations (DOps) for endorsement;
- once endorsed by DOps, provide the form to the Deputy Official Secretary, as Delegate, for a decision on action to be taken.

The reporting form is to be returned to the MHO so that summary details can be recorded in the Official Gifts Summary Spreadsheet. The Household Section will retain the original record in a chronological file and a copy will be kept with the gift (or its packaging if the gift is on display) in the secure gift store, to which access is controlled by MHO. The Official Gift Summary spreadsheet should be presented to DOps for review each quarter.

Finance Section will undertake regular spot checks on gifts and documentation.

The MHO will prepare an annual list of Group Two gifts received for publication in the Office's Disclosure Log at the end of March each year.

3.2 Gifts received overseas

Gifts received overseas in the course of official duty are to be declared to the Australian Customs Service at the point of entry into Australia:

- if they fall outside normal duty-free passenger concession limits as personal belongings; and/or
- if they are subject to quarantine inspection.

3.3 Valuation

For gifts that Their Excellencies do not wish to retain, the reporting official should make use of public information (eg. the general market, manufacturers' or retailers' websites) to provide a fair and reasonable estimate of the value.

Similar sources may also be used to ascribe value to gifts which Their Excellencies wish to retain, if the items concerned are commonly available for purchase. Where this is not the case (eg. for works of art, jewellery, or custom made articles) a formal valuation certificate may be required.

In the absence of formal valuation documents, the value for customs purposes would normally be determined by reference to the value of the goods (manufacturer's price) in the country of origin or based on advice (verbal or written) from the Australian post in the country visited, or from the foreign government/diplomatic mission that presented the gift. For gifts received from Australian sources, the value of the gift should be assessed on the basis of the Australian wholesale price, or such valuation determined by a professional valuer.

Where the value of the gift exceeds the allowable limit, or if there is doubt about its value, a formal valuation should be sought from a valuer competent in the field or from the list of accredited valuers issued by the Committee on Taxation Incentives for the Arts. Where it would be uneconomical to undertake a professional valuation, a reasonable value may be ascribed by the registering official, and this valuation endorsed by the relevant branch director and the Delegate.

3.4 Retention of gifts

The Governor-General and spouse may retain gifts in certain circumstances subject to the following principles:

- Gifts made to the Governor-General and/or spouse may generally be retained if the value does not exceed \$1,000 (at 2015 prices¹). Where the Governor-General elects not to retain a gift, such gifts may be used at Government House or Admiralty House, offered to a national museum or reputable public art gallery, or subject to appropriate storage or disposal arrangements. Gifts worth more than \$1,000 may be retained subject to the purchase arrangements outlined in [section 3.8](#) below.
- Items worth more than \$3,000 should be checked annually by Finance staff to ensure they are being stored securely or displayed. Appropriate valuations should be sought for any high value items Their Excellencies may wish to retain, in time for purchase arrangements to be made at the end of the Governor-General's term. To facilitate the management of high value gifts, the MHO will maintain a summary list of these items.
- Gifts which are not received in the course of performance of the duties of office but which arise out of a personal relationship or friendship need not be subject to the provisions above. The Official Secretary will determine any issues where there is doubt about the basis on which the gift is received.

¹ This figure will be reviewed annually and may be adjusted in line with accepted practice.

3.5 Gifts of historical or cultural significance to the Australian people

The Governor-General will not retain any gift which has historical or cultural significance to the Australian people. In the case of gifts received that have national significance and therefore should be retained for all Australians, advice should be sought from the Official Secretary about the appropriate course of action.

3.6 Gifts from the Sovereign and Heir to the Throne

Because of the special relationship between the Sovereign, the Heir to the Throne and the Governor-General, gifts from the Sovereign or the Heir are regarded as personal gifts and may be retained by the Governor-General. These gifts need not be registered.

3.7 Official Gifts of a personal nature

Official gifts that are clearly customised (eg. personally tailored clothing, sporting equipment designed specifically for the incumbent, etc.) which would be unlikely to be used by another person, should be registered, but may be retained by the Governor-General at no cost.

3.8 Purchase of gifts

Subject to the principles mentioned above, gifts presented to the Governor-General and/or spouse valued at more than \$1,000 may be purchased by Their Excellencies for the valuation price less \$1,000 plus GST on the difference.

For example, if a gift is valued at \$1,200 and the allowable limit is \$1,000, the cost for the gift would be the \$200 difference plus \$20 GST.

The MHO is responsible for ensuring that all gift report forms are processed efficiently, whether sequentially or in batches, and that, where reasonable, the necessary processes are completed within four weeks of the receipt of the gift. All decisions relating to the movement of gifts must be recorded on the relevant registration form.

Gifts that are not retained or purchased by the Governor-General will be subject to the control requirements outlined in this policy.

3.9 Custody

The MHO is responsible for recording the receipt of gifts, safekeeping of official gifts received, and for arranging the review, display, storage or other actions arising. A report on gifts received and actions taken in relation to gifts (eg. surrendered, retained, purchased, spot checks, etc.) is to be submitted to DOps each quarter.

DOps is responsible for the management of the gifts received in accordance with the stated policy above.

3.10 Disposal

At the conclusion of the term of a Governor-General, a stocktake and reconciliation of all gifts received during the term will be undertaken by the MHO to ensure that all gifts that are to be retained by the outgoing Governor-General or the Office are appropriately accounted for.

Any gifts the Governor-General elects not to take when leaving office will be considered the property of the Office and will be treated as portable and attractive items.

Options for these items include:

- display in the Houses or Chancery;
- transfer to repositories of national collections including museums, galleries, libraries, archives and special interest collections, education or community institutions;
- donation to a nominated non-profit organisation or charity at the discretion of the Official Secretary; or
- disposal in accordance with 'Disposal of Public Property' instructions.

Disposal action is to be recorded on the attached [Gift Disposal Form](#).

OFFICIAL GIFT REPORTING FORM

For use of reporting
Group Two gifts (ie. gifts worth over A\$100)
presented to the
Governor-General and/or spouse

Instructions: All gifts worth more than A\$100 received by Their Excellencies in the conduct of their official duties must be reported to the Manager Household Operations, using this form, within **14 days of receipt**.

TO: MANAGER HOUSEHOLD OPERATIONS

Detailed description of gift:	Approximate size: Small <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Large <input type="checkbox"/>
Date and occasion when received:	
Name and title of person or organisation who presented the gift:	
Estimated value of gift (including method of substantiation):	
Name of reporting official:	
Signature and date:	

Insert Photograph

TO: DIRECTOR OPERATIONS

Proposed action:	<input type="checkbox"/> Retention <input type="checkbox"/> Purchase <input type="checkbox"/> Display GH <input type="checkbox"/> AH <input type="checkbox"/> Chancery <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Library <input type="checkbox"/> Disposal <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Signature of DOps accepting valuation as fair/reasonable:	
Date:	

TO: DEPUTY OFFICIAL SECRETARY (or nominated delegate)

Delegate's decision on proposed action:	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> More information required <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Signature of Delegate:	
Date:	

TO: CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

If gift to be retained by Governor-General and/or spouse:	Value less than \$1,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Transfer to Governor-General and/or spouse
	Value more than \$1,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Raise invoice for \$..... <input type="checkbox"/> Issue receipt <input type="checkbox"/> Transfer to Governor-General and/or spouse
If gift not to be retained by Governor-General and/or spouse:	<input type="checkbox"/> Assign asset number (if registered as a portable and attractive item
	Transfer to MHO for <input type="checkbox"/> Display GH <input type="checkbox"/> AH <input type="checkbox"/> Chancery <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Signature of CFO:	
Date:	

TO: MANAGER HOUSEHOLD OPERATIONS

Action taken:	
Signature of MHO:	
Date:	

GIFT DISPOSAL FORM

**For use of reporting
disposal of gifts
presented to the
Governor-General and/or spouse**

TO: MANAGER HOUSEHOLD OPERATIONS

Detailed description of gift:	<i>Attach Official Gift Reporting Form.</i>
Condition of gift at date of disposal:	Approximate size: Small <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Large <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> As new <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Estimated current value of gift (including method of substantiation):	
Sensitivities and/or identifiable features:	
Proposed method of disposal:	<input type="checkbox"/> Destroy <input type="checkbox"/> Re-gift <input type="checkbox"/> Donate <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Method destruction:	<input type="checkbox"/> Damage and dismantle <input type="checkbox"/> Other

TO: DELEGATE

Delegate's decision on proposed action:	<input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> More information required <input type="checkbox"/> Other
Signature of Delegate:	
Date:	

TO: MANAGER HOUSEHOLD OPERATIONS

Action taken:	
Signature and date:	