



Audit
Tasmania

Management of gifts, benefits and hospitality in the General Government Sector

Report of the Auditor-General No. 11 of 2025-26

Audit objective

This audit assessed whether Tasmanian Government Departments (agencies) transparently mitigated the risk of actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest through effective management of gifts, benefits and hospitality (**GB&H**).

Why this is important

Offers of GB&H create real, perceived or potential conflicts of interest. These can:

- undermine trust in decision-making
- compromise personal and organisational integrity
- create reputation, legal and ethical risks for both individuals and organisations.

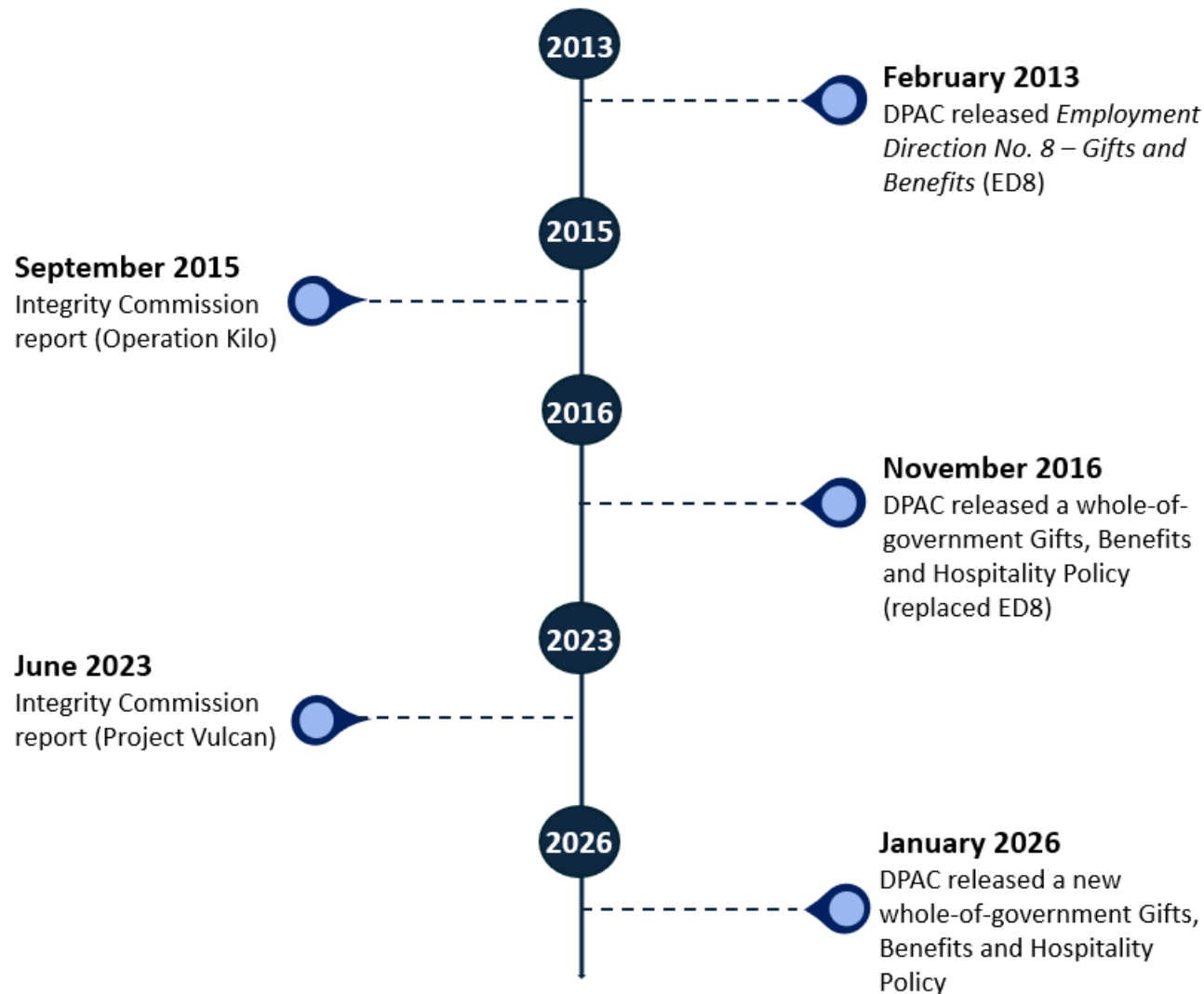
To reduce these risks, agencies should have clear rules about GB&H and regularly train employees, so they understand and follow ethical standards.

Our conclusions

- DPAC implemented the 2023 report's recommendations.
- Agencies, overall, did not effectively manage GB&H during 2024-25. This is because:
 - most agencies had not routinely provided training on GB&H procedures to staff
 - declaration forms were regularly incomplete, while still being approved by the manager or delegate
 - declaration forms did not allow employees to critically assess their reasons for accepting a gift, including if there was a conflict of interest.

This means that agencies have not transparently mitigated the risk of actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest through management of GB&H.

Over a decade: 3 whole of government policies and 2 Integrity Commission reports



The 2023 Integrity Commission report

The 2023 report found:

- instances of agencies not following the Policy* and procedures, including GB&H, accepted that were not consistent with the Policy's 'limited exceptions'
- that the Policy was unclear and contained conflicting statements
- compliance with the Policy was difficult to assess because public registers contained minimal detail
- agencies had not clearly communicated the principles and procedures of the Policy to employees.

Our performance expectations

We expected **DPAC** to implement the 4 recommendations from the Integrity Commission report.

We expected **all agencies** to effectively manage GB&H by:

- **updating** their policies, procedures and templates to align with those recommendations
- **clearly** and **routinely** communicating policies and procedures to all staff
- ensuring all GB&H were **identified, declared and managed** in a transparent, accurate and timely manner
- adequately **assessing and managing** conflicts of interest.

Key findings – DPAC

- DPAC addressed the recommendations in the 2023 report when it published the new Policy, following consultation with agencies, in January 2026.
- The new Policy:
 - balances integrity safeguards with administrative practicality
 - clearly communicates what is and what is not acceptable
 - largely addressed the additional good practice reminders contained in the 2023 report.

Key findings – DPAC

- DPAC advised us that it delayed consultation with agencies on the 2026 Policy due to competing priorities.

This left agencies without whole-of-government guidance on GB&H that matched expected integrity standards for more than 2 years.

Key findings – agencies

- Agencies did not **actively discourage** suppliers from offering GB&H.
- We identified GB&H:
 - that were accepted but there was no corresponding declaration form
 - were declared internally but not recorded on the agency's GB&H register.
- Declaration forms were regularly incomplete, including for over half those submitted in 2 agencies.
 - **These incomplete forms were still approved by the manager or delegate.**

Key findings – agencies

- Most agencies had **not routinely provided** training on GB&H procedures to staff:
 - a few agencies developed dedicated training modules to support staff understanding of their policies and procedures.
- One agency repeated formal training on GB&H following induction. This agency required all staff to complete a refresher training every 2 years.

Key findings – agencies

- Agencies had assessed, but not addressed, the risks associated with GB&H:
 - while most agency-specific GB&H policies stated that offers of GB&H create a conflict of interest, this messaging was inconsistent and often removed from the forms used by staff
 - only 2 agencies included conflict of interest fields in its declaration forms for all staff.

When conflicts of interest are not referred to in declaration forms, the recipient and approving delegate may not adequately assess the actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest of accepting GB&H.

Our recommendations

Agencies	1. Agencies review the new 2026 whole-of-government policy, procedures and templates and add further detail as necessary with consideration of their own risk environment.	ACCEPTED – Treasury, DoJ, DPAC, DSG, NRE Tas, DPFEM
	2. Agencies implement refresher training on the management of gifts, benefits and hospitality to provide a clear link to the agency’s relevant policies and procedures, emphasising the relationship with conflicts of interest.	ACCEPTED – Treasury, DoJ, DPAC, DSG, NRE Tas, DPFEM
	3. Agencies reinforce the message that suppliers are not to offer gifts, benefits or hospitality on their websites and in all procurements and grants.	ACCEPTED – DPAC, DoJ, DSG, NRE Tas, DPFEM ACCEPTED, IN PRINCIPLE – DPFEM
	4. Agencies review current and future sponsorship agreements to exclude, as a default position, gifts, benefits and hospitality for Tasmanian State Service employees.	ACCEPTED – DPAC, DoJ, DSG, NRE Tas, DPFEM ACCEPTED, IN PRINCIPLE – Treasury

Our recommendations

DPAC	5. The Head of the State Service reviews all declaration forms prepared by Heads of Agency, unless they identify a conflict of interest. Then the form is provided to the Premier or delegate for review.	ACCEPTED, IN PART
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Responses

Most agencies accepted the recommendations. The agencies' full responses to the report are at Appendix C of the full report. At the time of publication, 2 agencies had not provided a response to the report's recommendations.

A brief rejoinder has been included in response to the Secretary, DPAC and Head of the State Service.