

# VAGO Financial Code of Practice

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Policy owner: Finance

TRIM reference: 60/9

## 1 Summary

This Financial Code of Practice is prepared in accordance with the Standing Directions for the Minister for Finance, and sets the standards of conduct expected from all Victorian Auditor-General's Office (VAGO) employees and contractors. It forms parts of the terms and conditions of employment, and should be read in conjunction with the *Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector (VPS) Employees of Special Bodies*. If any of the provisions contained within this Financial Code of Practice are not fully understood, employees should seek clarification from their direct managers.

Employees are expected to act at all times in the best interest of VAGO.

All VAGO policies listed in this document are available on the intranet.

## 2 Public funds, integrity and accountability

VAGO acknowledges the responsibility it has for the administration of public funds.

VAGO emphasises both to the public, the Government and to its employees the importance it places upon propriety, financial control and honest administration.

VAGO arrangements for the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption will be kept under constant review, and suspected irregularities will be investigated.

Where employees have direct responsibility for financial transactions, for example the ordering of goods and services on behalf of VAGO, then they must be fully acquainted with VAGO internal policies, the Standing Directions of the Minister for Finance pursuant to Section 8 of the *Financial Management Act 1994* and the *Financial Management Regulations 2004*, and comply with these.

## 3 Independence and declaration of financial and/or other interests

Employees must declare any personal interests that may affect or be affected by a VAGO transaction. Interests should be declared in accordance with Conflict of Interest Policy, which is available on the Intranet.

Employees must not influence the awarding of any contract in which they have any interest.

Employees who act as panel members in any employee interview and selection process must also declare any knowledge they have of candidates. Any such knowledge must be disclosed to Human Resources (HR) Director at the earliest opportunity.

## 4 Financial inducements, gifts and hospitality

Gifts and hospitality must be received and given in accordance with Conflict of Interest Policy, the Providing Gifts and Hospitality policy and the *Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector (VPS) Employees*

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*of Special Bodies* (No 1 2007). In areas of doubt, advice should be sought from the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or the Deputy Auditor-General.

Employees may also refer to the Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy Framework issued by the Victorian Public Sector Commission (<http://vpsc.vic.gov.au/resources/gifts-benefits-and-hospitality-policy-framework/>).

## 5 Secondary employment

In accordance with the *Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector (VPS) Employees of Special Bodies* (No 1 2007) and the *Public Administration Act 2004*, Section 32(1), employees considering taking up a second post should take into account whether this might conflict with their employment with VAGO. They should seek guidance from the HR Director, and seek approval from the Deputy Auditor-General, prior to undertaking any secondary post.

## 6 Payment of fees received

All employees, contractors or consultants who are paid fees by an external organisation for services rendered in their official capacity as employees, contractors or consultants of VAGO are required to pay such fees to the CFO for payment into the Consolidated Fund.

Examples of such circumstances include:

- fees received as a result of giving evidence or producing papers in any court in an official capacity under subpoena or order
- fees received for any public speaking engagement undertaken in the employee's, contractor's or consultant's official capacity, or
- fees received as a member of a Commonwealth or other Board which is an extension of the employee's, contractor's or consultant's role in the Victorian public sector and which appointment has been supported by the Auditor-General.
- The Auditor-General, may, in certain circumstances, grant exemption in writing from the above requirement.

## 7 Tendering and procurement processes

VAGO follows the Victorian Government Purchasing Board (VGPB) Guidelines and has implemented policies and procedures covering internal Delegations of Authority for the acquisition of goods and services. Particular reference should be made to Procurement and Purchasing Policy and the Financial Delegations Policy.

Employees should also refer to, where applicable, the procurement guides and manual available on the intranet.

## 8 Corporate credit cards

VAGO operates credit card facilities with Westpac. In most instances, goods and services should be acquired through the regular Accounts Payable process; however, there are instances where a credit card is used and these must be in accordance with VAGO's Credit Card Policy.

Cardholders must always act in the interest of VAGO.

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Please note—readers should refer to the Department of Treasury and Finance General Government Purchasing Card Rules for Use and Administration (available on the office Intranet).

## 9 Use of property, facilities and/or equipment

Employees of VAGO often have access to facilities, including office equipment such as computers, telephones, photocopiers and fax machines to use in carrying out their official duties. Use of such property and equipment is governed by a number of policies, including (but not limited to):

- Physical & Intangible Assets Policy
- Employee Travel Policy
- Information Technology and Information Security Policy

Excessive personal use of any VAGO equipment or removal of any property from the work place for any purpose is not permitted without direct manager approval. Any use for personal gain is not permitted under any circumstances. Please refer to Information Technology and Information Security Policy (3.1) for specific information regarding users' responsibilities in using IT Equipment.

## 10 Confidentiality

VAGO staff members are expected to maintain and respect the confidentiality and privacy of financial information and other matters of a financial nature that they come across during the course of their employment. Unless authorised by the Deputy Auditor-General, staff are not to use confidential information. Reference should also be made to the VPS Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector (VPS) Employees of Special Bodies (No 1 2007).

## 11 Fair play, integrity, and reporting unlawful or unethical behaviour

VAGO promotes a fair environment for all its employees. VAGO acts with integrity in all its business dealings and treats all third party individuals and organisations in an open transparent manner.

VAGO may apply its disciplinary procedures against employees who are in breach of this Code. Instances of non-compliance with this Code may be reported through to the CFO or the Deputy Auditor-General. VAGO's procedures are consistent with the requirements of the Victorian Government Whistleblower Legislation, and the *Audit Act 1994*.

## 12 Review Date

This policy is to be reviewed every year. The next review is scheduled for March 2018.