



18 June 2024

[Redacted]

Ref: OIA-2023/24-0885

Dear [Redacted]

### Official Information Act request relating to catering spend

Thank you for your Official Information Act 1982 (the Act) request received on 22 May 2024. You requested (numbers added):

- “1 Please provide the amount spent on any catering by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet since 27 November 2023.*
- 2 Please break this spend down per event, and where available, the number of individuals in attendance (or planned to be in attendance) at each event.*
- 3 Please also provide any information held about policies, instructions, or correspondence about the catering budget (e.g., information about total budget per event, per year, or information about the appropriate spend per head for events).”*

### Information being refused

In answer to parts one and two, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPMC) does not hold information about spending on catering in a format that means it can be easily extracted in the way you have requested. Therefore, I am refusing your request for amounts spent on catering in the period since 27 November broken down by event under section 18 (f) of the Act as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

DPMC does not collect information on numbers attending events, therefore I am also refusing this part of your request under section 18 (e) of the Act as the document alleged to contain the information requested does not exist.

### Information being released

In reply to part three of your request I have decided to release the document listed below, subject to information being withheld under section 9(2)(a) of the Act, to protect the privacy of individuals. This document explains our policy regarding all forms of entertainment, gifts, koha, and hospitality.

Item	Date	Document description	Decision
1	1/04/2017	Hospitality, Gifts, Koha, and Entertainment Policy	Some information is withheld under section 9(2)(a).

We report on catering spending annually through the Parliamentary Annual Review process.

The results from the year 2022/23 are available on the Parliament website at: [www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/54SCGOA\\_EVI\\_fd4648a6-8f33-47f5-4539-08dbfce8a371\\_GOA1052/259cbc95fd5596b1a1c274a8d277a2d5119d4d06](http://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/54SCGOA_EVI_fd4648a6-8f33-47f5-4539-08dbfce8a371_GOA1052/259cbc95fd5596b1a1c274a8d277a2d5119d4d06) (catering costs are at question 95). The results for the current financial year will be available later in 2024.

In making my decision, I have considered the public interest considerations in section 9(1) of the Act. No public interest has been identified that would be sufficient to outweigh the reasons for withholding that information.

You have the right to ask the Ombudsman to investigate and review my decision under section 28(3) of the Act.

This response will be published on DPMC's website during our regular publication cycle. Typically, information is released monthly, or as otherwise determined. Your personal information including name and contact details will be removed for publication.

Yours sincerely



Clare Ward  
**Executive Director**  
**Strategy, Governance and Engagement**



# Hospitality, Gifts, Koha and Entertainment Policy

Original policy approved by:

i-Manage reference	3038112	Approved by	Chief Executive
Date originally approved	1/04/2017		

Amended policy approved by:

i-Manage version	10	Contact	Director, Organisation Direction and Development
Amended version approved by	Acting Chief Executive	Name	Anneliese Parkin
		Signature	s 9(2)(a)
Date amended version approved	1/12/2022	Date for review	28/06/2024

## Objective

1. This policy sets out the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's (DPMC) and the National Emergency Management Agency's (NEMA) approach to acceptance or giving of hospitality or providing hospitality, gifts, koha or entertainment so that this form of sensitive expenditure is appropriate and transparent.

## Principles

2. The principles that underpin this policy, and give effect to it, are that expenditure decisions should:
  - a. **have a justifiable business purpose** that is consistent with DPMC or NEMA's objectives. A justifiable business purpose means a reason that would make clear sense, supported by evidence of the need for the gift or hospitality and evidence that a range of options have been considered;
  - b. **be moderate and conservative** when viewed from the standpoint of the public and given the circumstances of the gift or hospitality. It includes considering whether the justifiable business purpose could be achieved at a lower cost;
  - c. **preserve impartiality**. Impartiality means decisions based on objective criteria, rather than based on any sort of bias, preference, or improper reason;

- d. **be made with integrity.** Integrity is about exercising power in a way that is true to the values, purposes, and duties for which that power is entrusted to, or held by, someone. It is about consistently behaving in keeping with agreed or accepted moral and ethical principles;
  - e. **be made transparently.** Transparency in this context means being open about the gift or hospitality, and willing to explain any decisions or have them reviewed; and
  - f. **be made with proper authority.** This means that the person approving the gift or hospitality has the appropriate financial delegation to do so, for the type and amount of the gift or hospitality and follows correct procedures.
3. These principles should be applied together. None should be applied alone, and no principle should be treated as more important than any other.

## Policy Statement

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4. DPMC and NEMA's policy is that all gifts, hospitality, koha, and entertainment will be guided by the principles set out above.
5. This policy guides DPMC and NEMA decisions on acceptance or provision of hospitality, gifts, koha or entertainment by:
  - a. taking into consideration both DPMC and NEMA values, our commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi / te Tiriti o Waitangi as well as wider cultural expectations consistent with our desire to demonstrate cultural competence;
  - b. ensuring a declaration register is maintained by business units in order to compile an official register;
  - c. not conferring a personal benefit and
  - d. enabling conduct of business in an efficient and moderate manner, including participating in work carried out over a meal.

## Applies to

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6. This policy applies to everyone in DPMC and NEMA including permanent, fixed-term, secondee, casual and agency temporary staff, self-employed and independent contractors (together referred to in this policy as 'staff'), regardless of position or seniority.
7. This policy also applies to staff and others representing DPMC or NEMA on DPMC or NEMA business or who may be working with or accompanying the Governor-General, Prime Minister or Ministers.

## Disclosure

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8. All gifts, koha, hospitality and entertainment of any value given and received must be recorded on the [Gifts and Hospitality Register](#). Each entry must be full and complete.
9. Items or accumulations of items with a value of \$50 or more will be drawn from each Business Unit to be included within the official DPMC and NEMA Registers and reported externally.
10. Chief Executive gifts, hospitality and travel must also be disclosed on the DPMC website.

## Giving gifts or hospitality

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### External gifts or hospitality

11. DPMC and NEMA Executive Leadership Team (ELT) members can determine what may be offered to external parties. Approval from an ELT members must be obtained prior to any expenditure applying the principles in this policy.
12. Once approval is obtained, only managers with Level C and above financial delegations may approve expenditure on entertainment, including for overseas visitors to New Zealand and for business relationships.
13. Staff travelling as official DPMC or NEMA representatives should seek budget approval prior to providing official entertainment, or afterwards if this was not practicable. This approval must be documented and saved into the iManage system.

### External events involving alcohol

14. ELT members or the Official Secretary Government House may determine, prior to an internal or external function, on the inclusion of alcohol. In doing so, they will ensure that the decision would withstand the highest level of public scrutiny.

### Tokens of appreciation

15. Where tokens of appreciation such as food, fuel or gift vouchers are provided to those participating in specific DPMC or NEMA deliverables such as research, the value per recipient should be *de minimus*. Where the total cost of all tokens is material, expenditure should be approved as part of a procurement plan by a Manager with Level C and above financial delegations, as per the [Delegations Policy](#).

### Giving Koha and other gifts of cultural recognition

16. Koha is a form of cultural recognition within te ao Māori.
17. Koha is the kawa of giving in recognition of contribution, commitment and generosity, and fulfils the obligation of reciprocity – which is key to the upholding of the mana of both the giver and receiver. It is given on appropriate occasions in a Māori cultural setting including:
  - a. tangihanga;
  - b. attendance at an event/meeting;
  - c. for use on or for a marae; and
  - d. kaumātua support for pōwhiri, mihi whakatau meetings, or other events.
18. All other forms of cultural recognition are gifts and may be given in order to successfully engage with other ethnic communities.
19. Koha and other gifts of cultural recognition are given within a cultural context and without any additional expectation on the part of the person receiving it. Koha and gifts of cultural recognition are not given in return for specific services that are procured.
20. Koha and other gifts of cultural recognition may be money, goods or services that DPMC and NEMA treat as sensitive expenditure because it is discretionary and usually un-receipted expenditure.

21. Koha or other gifts of cultural recognition must be:
- approved in advance in writing by a member of the DPMC or NEMA Executive Leadership Team (ELT) or the Official Secretary Government House as per the [Delegations Policy](#);
  - at a level and in a form appropriate to the occasion on which advice from an appropriate cultural adviser may be sought; and
  - recorded on the [Gifts and Hospitality Register](#).
22. Koha or other gifts of cultural recognition are not appropriate when someone does work for DPMC or NEMA. Koha or other gifts of cultural recognition given for something in return are not a gift and appropriate taxation treatment needs to be applied.

### Internal hospitality

23. The table below sets out the maximum levels that may be incurred for specific internal functions and events:

<b>Farewells and retirements</b>	<i>GST exclusive amount</i>
Less than 1 year	\$7.50 per person in unit with maximum of \$100
Between 1 and 19 years	\$7.50 per person in wider DPMC up to a maximum of \$750
20 years or more or ELT member	ELT member or CE to decide case by case
<b>End of year Event</b>	
DPMC or NEMA event	\$25 per head – CE to approve
All other unit or team events	Self-funded
<b>Gifts for staff</b>	
Generally funded by colleagues	
<b>Significant business events to mark an occasion</b>	
At the discretion of an ELT member	

### Use of DPMC or NEMA facilities for staff social events

24. DPMC or NEMA facilities may be used for DPMC or NEMA staff social events outside work time provided that:
- a people leader has given their prior consent to the function after considering whether any conditions should be placed on that consent, and any such conditions are complied with;
  - the function has a defined responsible host of sufficient seniority and a specified end time;
  - good host responsibility principles are observed where alcohol has been consumed, including that appropriate food and non-alcoholic drinks are available;

- d. the quantity of alcohol is modest;
- e. all participants are reminded of their obligations under the Code of Conduct policy; and
- f. any invited guests are advised of, and comply with, the appropriate standard of conduct.

## **Accepting gifts or hospitality**

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### **What can be accepted by anyone**

25. The following may be accepted by anyone to whom this policy applies:
- a. gifts or hospitality where the value is less than \$50 (unless if to do so means the total accumulated value of the gift or hospitality from the same provider is more than \$100 in that year);
  - b. hospitality involving working meals<sup>1</sup>;
  - c. hospitality hosted by other New Zealand public service entities; and
  - d. hospitality with a visiting delegation hosted by the New Zealand government.

### **When ELT member approval is required**

26. Prior to accepting anything not covered by the above ELT member approval is required:
- a. where gifts or hospitality are valued at \$50 or more;
  - b. where the accumulated value of the gift or hospitality received from the same provider is more than \$100 in that year (for example regular café meetings, catered seminars or industry forums with no cover charge);
  - c. where gifts or hospitality have the potential to present a conflict of interest for DPMC or NEMA, or which may require a 'no surprises' briefing for a Minister.

### **How to accept**

27. Accepted gifts may not be used for personal gain, except those of low value or low quantity where it is not possible to share with other colleagues or charitable organisations. This contributes to transparency and avoidance of perceptions of personal benefit.
28. Items accepted in accordance with this policy must be recorded on the [Gifts and Hospitality Register](#).
29. All information relating to the gift, reason for acceptance, the decision-maker and the method of disposal must be recorded as part of the declaration.
30. If a value is unknown, the manager must enter an estimated value and indicate if it is above or below \$50.

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<sup>1</sup> A working meal means a meal (at any time of the day) with an external party, where the main purpose is business-related, with specific objectives relating to DPMC or NEMA's outcomes. This includes occasions where Government House staff are obliged to be present at a meal in support of the Governor-General. The provision of food and beverages by the third party should be incidental to that main purpose. The working meal should preferably take place in a confidential setting unless it involves approved learning and development.

## Declining Gifts, hospitality or entertainment

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### What must be declined

31. The following must always be declined and recorded on the [Gifts and Hospitality Register](#):
- money, gift vouchers, shares, cryptocurrency or similar items;
  - tickets to concerts or sporting events (unless approved by an ELT member, or the Official Secretary Government House for staff supporting the Governor-General as part of their duties);
  - items where a direct instruction has been given by the Chief Executive of DPMC or NEMA, or the Public Service Commissioner.

### Who must decline

32. The following people must always decline:
- staff who could reasonably be perceived to be in a decision-making position or position of influence in relation to the parties offering the gift or hospitality;
  - staff involved in a procurement process including tendering or establishment of panels, or when considering allocating work to a panel provider.

### Where refusal is not possible

33. Acceptance is possible if refusing or returning a gift is not practically possible or would cause cultural embarrassment or offence to the giver, or otherwise have a negative impact on the operations of DPMC or NEMA.
34. All gifts accepted in such circumstances become the property of DPMC or NEMA and may not be sold or exchanged.
35. An ELT member or the Chief Executive must determine how to dispose of the gift.
36. Sometimes it may be appropriate to consume alcohol or traditional beverages while attending official functions or cultural events. Before accepting alcohol or traditional beverages in such circumstances, you should consider whether the circumstances make it inappropriate to refuse, exercise constraint and ensure behaviour remains consistent with the [Standards of Integrity and Conduct](#).

## Responsibilities

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Role	Responsibilities
DPMC or NEMA ELT members	<p>Make and record decisions regarding hospitality, gifts, koha and entertainment in line with this policy and financial delegations.</p> <p>ELT members have the discretion to grant exceptions to this policy (management override) only in exceptional circumstances and in line with the principles of the <a href="#">Delegations Policy</a>. Where this occurs the principles of this policy must be adhered to with adequate records kept of decisions.</p>



Role	Responsibilities
<p><b>People Leaders</b></p>	<p>It is not possible or desirable to set rules for all expenditure that DPMC and NEMA may possibly incur in the course of our business. DPMC and NEMA expect people leaders and staff to exercise good judgement by applying the principles in this policy in all situations.</p> <p>All people leaders are expected to model the right behaviours to the highest standard.</p> <p>All people leaders and staff with delegated financial authority are responsible for properly and prudently spending the public money under their control, and when approving expenditure or the acceptance of gifts, hospitality and/or entertainment, ensuring that it is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consistent with DPMC and NEMA policies, principles and rules for such expenditure;</li> <li>• within their delegated authority; and,</li> <li>• appropriate and necessary, with a valid invoice and appropriate records kept.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Staff and others covered by this policy</b></p>	<p>All staff and others covered by this policy are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meeting the requirements of this policy and associated procedures;</li> <li>• ensuring that purchasing, acceptance or declining decisions and authorisations are within the delegated authority of the person making the decision;</li> <li>• submitting valid invoices (GST invoices where applicable) and other supporting documentation for all gifts, hospitality and/or entertainment that is given, received or declined; and,</li> <li>• complying with common law obligations (for example duty of care, duty to act fairly and reasonably).</li> </ul>

## Related policies, guidance and information

37. Other documents that should be read in conjunction with this policy include:

- [Sensitive Expenditure Policy](#)
- [Delegations Policy](#)
- [Travel Policy](#)
- [Credit Card Procedural Guidance and Roles](#)
- [Office of the Auditor-General guidance on sensitive expenditure](#)
- [Standards of Integrity and Conduct](#)
- [Chief Executive Gifts, Benefits and Expenses](#)
- [Staff travel page on Kāinga](#)