



For secretaries and chief executives of Public Service agencies and statutory Crown entities

New Zealanders need to be able to have trust and confidence in the Public Sector and its employees. It is unacceptable for any employee to use their role to advance private business interests or seek any sort of personal benefit.

- PETER HUGHES, TE TUMU WHAKARAE MŌ TE KAWA MATAAHO | PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSIONER

These model standards apply to the secretaries and chief executives of Public Service agencies and statutory Crown entities.¹

Secretaries and chief executives hold privileged positions as stewards of the New Zealand Public Service. They make a commitment to serve in the best interests of New Zealand and New Zealanders, acting with a spirit of service to the community.

The positions they hold come with high expectations for the standards of integrity and conduct they are expected to uphold. They must always put the interests of the Public Sector and their organisation before their own personal interests to maintain the trust and confidence of New Zealanders.

Secretaries and chief executives will, as is right, incur expenses as they carry out their role and they will be offered gifts and benefits, including hospitality. The decisions they make about these matters carry significant weight as they are subject to higher levels of public scrutiny than other public sector employees. Because of this, they are expected to exercise the highest standard of judgement when accepting gifts and benefits or incurring expenses.

They are expected to use these standards when deciding whether to incur expenses or accept gifts and benefits, including hospitality.

Te korahi o ngā paerewa | Scope of the standards

While each secretary and chief executive must follow their own organisation policies in deciding whether to incur expenses or accept gifts and benefits, the standards set out the Public Service Commissioner's expectations for these leaders.

There are four key elements to these standards:

1. **Getting the foundations right from the start:** ensuring secretaries and chief executives are aware of the different policies and guidance which govern gifts, benefits and expenses.
2. **Decision making is robust:** taking an active approach to the consideration of where public money is spent and the perceived benefits or consequences of accepting or declining gifts and benefits.

¹ For the purposes of these model standards "Public Service agencies and statutory Crown entities" refers to departments, departmental agencies, Crown agents, autonomous Crown entities and independent Crown entities.



3. **Processes are in place:** ensuring a central record of decisions regarding expenses, gifts and benefits is kept and is up to date.
4. **Disclosures are consistent:** ensuring secretaries and chief executives comply with the expense disclosure guidance from Te Kawa Mataaho | Public Service Commission including the publication of disclosures online within the specified timeframes.

Te tika o te whakatokoto i te tūāpapa | Getting the foundations right from the start

Policies

There are a range of policies and guidance which public service employees, including secretaries and chief executives, need to be aware of and comply with.

Each organisation will have policies to cover such situations. These model standards set out the Public Service Commissioner's expectations of secretaries and chief executives.

Model standards:

Secretaries and chief executives comply with the following guidance and policies to inform how they exercise their judgement when making decisions:

- Public Service Standards of Integrity and Conduct
- Conflicts of Interest model standards
- Auditor-General's guidance on sensitive expenditure
- Ombudsman guidance on chief executive expenses
- Individual organisation policies.

Kua pakari te ara whakatau | Decision making is robust

Gifts and benefits

Secretaries and chief executives should act with the highest integrity when deciding to accept any gifts and benefits, including hospitality from third parties. It is not acceptable to use their position for personal gain or be perceived to be doing so.

There will always be a public perception of influence or personal benefit if secretaries and chief executives accept gifts, benefits, or hospitality. It is critical to maintaining public confidence that the integrity and motivations of all secretaries and chief executives are not called into question.

The opportunity to 'network' is not a sufficient reason for accepting or offering hospitality that is unrelated to a core role.



For example, and regardless of who is in attendance, any offers that are not directly related to fulfilling the obligations of the role should be declined. This could include tickets to sports matches or concerts.

If gifts, benefits, or hospitality are accepted or declined, they should be publicly disclosed through the annual disclosure process. This process promotes transparency and ensures we are being open with New Zealanders about exactly what we are accepting from whom.

Model standards:

- It is expected that when gifts and benefits are accepted there will be a transparent process of registration and declaration.
- All gifts and benefits, with a value greater than \$50, that are accepted or declined, should be disclosed through the annual expense disclosure process. Secretaries and chief executives may choose to share gifts under this value with their staff or donate it to charity.
- Secretaries and chief executives should decline gifts or benefits from a third party that places them under any obligation or influence, both real and perceived.
- Gifts and benefits that are declined should be disclosed.
- When presented with ceremonial gifts, these are expected to remain the property of the organisation rather than the secretary or chief executive. This reflects the relationship that gave rise to the gift.
- The disclosure specifies what was done with the gift or benefit.



Expenses

Expenses, including domestic and international travel, are part of the role secretaries and chief executives hold.

Their expenses should be modest as they have an obligation to use public resources prudently.

Secretaries and chief executives may choose to meet some costs personally, such as lunch when travelling for the day or hospitality provided at staff functions, rather than claim them.

Secretaries and chief executives should give consideration to how claims may be perceived. For example, the public would expect them to cover nominal expenses such as coffee, bus fares or short taxi rides.

Model standards:

- Nominal expenses are met by the Public Service secretaries and chief executives themselves.
- Travel costs are kept to a minimum at all times and opportunities are taken to reduce costs where practicable.
- Hospitality costs are appropriate for the guest(s) and the occasion.
- Secretaries and chief executives ensure their expenses are reviewed by an appropriate person such as a Chief Financial Officer or Risk and Audit Committee member for Public Service agencies and the Board Chair for Crown entities.

Involvement of other agencies

While secretaries and chief executives are ultimately responsible for their own decisions, there are some circumstances where it is expected that they will consult and/or advise other agencies in order to make an informed decision.

Acting in the Spirit of Service

Ngā takoha, ngā takuhe me ngā utu | Gifts, Benefits and Expenses



Te Kawa Mataaho
Public Service Commission



Training and Development	Diplomatic Events	Invitation to Partners	Unsure?
<p>There is a requirement that secretaries and chief executives consult with Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission (or their Board Chair) on any training and development expenses they wish to incur to ensure it is relevant to their role.</p>	<p>Secretaries and chief executives should advise the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) on any international or diplomatic invitations - whether they are for an event held in New Zealand or overseas. MFAT is best placed to provide advice on any relevant protocols, as well as on New Zealand's diplomatic relationships with other nations.</p>	<p>In the rare circumstance where it could be justifiable for a partner to incur expense (for example, where non-attendance of the partner risks causing offense, a breach of protocol or etiquette, or embarrassment), secretaries and chief executives should consult Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission.</p>	<p>In any situation where a decision is unclear, secretaries and chief executives are expected to consult Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission for advice.</p>



Kua whai tukanga | Processes are in place

Documentation

Centralised record keeping by secretaries and chief executives will support them to disclose gifts, benefits and expenses accurately, on time and in full. This will be particularly helpful where different aspects are dealt with by different people.

Centralised record keeping requires secretaries and chief executives to be able to log and provide auditable details.

There may also be valid national security reasons that result in some gifts, benefits and expenses not being disclosed, however these should still be recorded internally by the organisation.

Model standards:

- Secretaries and chief executives maintain a central, up-to-date record of gifts, benefits and expenses.
- Secretaries and chief executives must record the rationale behind all decisions made.
- Secretaries and chief executives must record a clear monetary value against all records. Where the monetary value is unknown, an estimated value should be provided.
- For gifts and benefits secretaries and chief executives should record gifts offered, accepted and declined, and the rationale for the decision.
- Secretaries and chief executives should include documentation of who reviewed their expenses. This should be either a Chief Financial Officer or Audit and Risk Committee member for Public Service departments and the Board Chair for Crown entities.



E rite tonu ana te puta o ngā whākinga | Disclosures are consistent

Disclosing expenses, gifts and benefits

Secretaries and chief executives publicly disclose all items offered, accepted or declined in performing their role. Guidance and tools to record and disclose gifts, benefits and expenses is available at [Gifts, Benefits and Expenses | Te Kawa Mataaho Public Service Commission](#).

Publishing clear and detailed disclosures is integral in building and maintaining the public's trust and confidence in the Public Service.

Model standards:

- Disclosures should be reviewed by an appropriate person, such as a Chief Financial Officer or Audit and Risk Committee member for Public Service agencies and the Board Chair for Crown entities.
- Disclosures are formally approved by the secretary or chief executive personally.
- Gifts, benefits and expenses disclosures are published in full and on time as per Te Kawa Mataaho | Public Service Commission's disclosure guidance.
- Secretaries and chief executives will publish both accepted and declined gifts and benefits as part of their yearly disclosures.