

Guidance for Victorian public sector employees – organisation of public ministerial events



**Victorian
Public Sector
Commission**

Purpose

This guide assists Victorian public sector employees (employees) who are required to organise and facilitate Ministerial events. It reminds employees of their existing obligations under the [Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees \(the Code\)](#) (PDF, 259KB) and the [Public Sector Values \(the Values\)](#).

Background and context

It is well established, through long custom and practice extending across successive governments, that Victorian public sector bodies, and particularly departments, will support Ministers in the organisation and conduct of a range of public events. In some cases Ministers may choose to send a delegate to attend an event on their behalf.

These public events include those that mark significant milestones in the delivery of government funded programs and projects, and events to assist in the public communication of government programs, regulations, and in the provision of other public information.

When a department is requested to support arrangements for a public event, it would normally be expected that officials would clarify with the relevant Minister (or the Minister's office on behalf of the Minister), the Minister's expectations for the event, including time, intended participants, location and format.

Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees (the Code)

Employees serve the government of the day and are required to remain apolitical and professional throughout the performance of their duties as required by the [Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Sector Employees \(the Code\)](#) (PDF, 259KB). The Code is based on the Public Sector Values established by the [Public Administration Act 2004](#)

[\(the Act\) \(PDF, 1MB\)](#).

Employees provide advice that is objective, independent, apolitical and impartial and give effect to the policies and decisions of the Government of the day, regardless of its political complexion.

Public Sector Communications Regulations

Part 5A of the Act establishes standards to ensure that public sector communication is in the public interest and is not party political. The [Public Administration \(Public Sector Communication\) Regulations 2018](#) prescribe permitted public interest purposes for public sector communication and also prescribe public sector communication standards.

Guidance – Apolitical and Professional Conduct of Employees

Employees may be required, consistent with the Values of responsiveness and impartiality, to assist in the organisation and facilitation of public events to support the positive communication of the business of the Government of the day.

If employees have reason to believe that the proposed format of a public event to be facilitated by a Victorian public sector body may draw employees inappropriately into matters of a party-political nature, they should draw any relevant matters to the attention of their manager or a relevant executive for resolution in the first instance.

If a matter cannot otherwise be resolved, it should be drawn, by an appropriate senior executive to the Minister's attention. In particular, officials should advise the Minister if there are any activities or actions, they are unable to perform, so as to ensure they adhere to the public sector values.

In determining the preferred format for a public event, Ministers may sometimes determine the event is of a nature that invitations would be extended to other Members of Parliament. In relation to an event to be facilitated by a Victorian public sector body, a Minister may request that invitations to other Members of Parliament be managed by the Minister's office.

Alternatively, following consultation with the Minister, invitations may be extended by a Victorian public sector body, or they may be extended by a third party (such as a local community group) organising a Ministerial event in consultation with a Victorian public

sector body.

Employees may facilitate events provided that any involvement is consistent with the maintenance of an apolitical and impartial public sector.

Guidance – Communication of Event Requirements

Where a Victorian public sector body is communicating a Ministerial requirement for an event, either to invitees, or to other parties involved in hosting or facilitating the event, the Victorian public sector body should ensure that any communication is expressed in a manner that avoids doubt as to the apolitical conduct of employees.

