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## Agencies improve in management of gifts

In his latest report released today, Auditor General Colin Murphy has found an overall improvement in agency management of gifts since his previous report in 2015.

Mr Murphy said at most of the 8 agencies audited, management were regularly reviewing the gift register to identify any potential conflicts.

'However, agencies need to improve policies and the recording of gifts, as well as ensuring that accepted gifts are independently approved in a timely manner,' Mr Murphy said.

During the audit period, 445 gifts were recorded as offered of which 272 were accepted. These included invitations to work related events, tickets to sporting events and concerts, air tickets, clothing, and general consumables such as food and beverages.

'In some circumstances, accepting gifts can be appropriate, such as when it involves useful networking or information sharing, but even then caution is advisable.

'If not properly managed, accepting gifts may cause a real or perceived conflict of interest if the recipient has authority to influence agency decisions in favour of the person or company giving the gift.

'This area poses an important and ongoing risk and I encourage all agencies to take note of the findings and recommendations of this report and act accordingly,' Mr Murphy said.

The Auditor General's report, *Agency Gift Registers* (Report 2 – March 2018), is available on the Office of the Auditor General website at [www.audit.wa.gov.au](http://www.audit.wa.gov.au).

The Integrity Coordinating Group's [Gifts, benefits and hospitality - A guide to good practice](#) assists public authorities in identifying the risks associated with gifts, benefits and hospitality, and consider how to minimise those risks through sound policies, transparent recordkeeping, communication and review activities.

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