



ACT
Government

Directorate Liaison Officer Guideline

Office of Industrial Relations and
Workforce Strategy

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD)

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Directorate Liaison Officer Guideline

Introduction / Purpose

1. The intent of this guideline is to:
 - a. provide a set of principles regarding the management of Directorate Liaison Officer (DLO) placements across the ACT Public Service;
 - b. establish consistent expectations regarding DLO functions and responsibilities;
 - c. delineate the responsibilities of directorates and ministerial offices in the placement of DLOs; and
 - d. ensure DLOs receive the necessary support to ensure success in their placement and upon return to their directorate.
2. This guideline does not replace any existing policies regarding recruitment or performance development and management.

Application

3. This guideline applies to all directorates and DLO placements in ministerial offices.

Key Legislative Provisions

4. Adherence to this guideline ensures that public servants acquit their obligations in accordance with the [Public Sector Management Act 1994](#), [Public Sector Management Standards 2016](#), [Work Health and Safety Act 2011](#), [ACTPS Values and Signature Behaviours](#), [ACTPS Code of Conduct](#), whole-of-government [Conflict of Interest Policy](#) and relevant [Enterprise Agreement\(s\)](#).

Principles

5. The DLO role is a valuable career development opportunity that allows public servants to increase their skills in a fast-paced and challenging environment, deepen their understanding of how Parliament and Government operate, and form working relationships across government.
6. DLO roles are temporary, non-ongoing opportunities of up to 18 months which are filled by existing ACT Government employees.
7. The DLO serves as a liaison between the minister and the directorate/agency, acting as a conduit between the public service and the minister's office.
8. DLOs are not members of a minister's staff. DLOs remain public servants who are accountable to the directorate and subject to the [Public Sector Management Act 1994](#), [Public Sector Management Standards 2016](#), [ACTPS Values and Signature Behaviours](#), [ACTPS Code of Conduct](#) and [whole-of-government Conflict of Interest Policy](#).
9. While DLOs may be present when political matters are discussed, they must refrain from offering personal opinions, engaging in activity which may be perceived as political or making a comment that reasonably appears to be an official comment.
10. DLOs must maintain the impartiality of the public service by providing apolitical advice on behalf of their directorate to the minister or their advisers and avoiding party political activities (i.e., acting as a de-facto adviser or electorate officer) in the performance of their duties.

11. Directorates, ministers and minister's offices all have a responsibility to ensure DLOs are supported in their role.

Responsibilities

Directorate Liaison Officer

12. Core responsibilities of the DLO include:

- a. exercising critical thinking and sound judgement to manage the timely flow of information (including briefings, correspondence, meeting requests and other documents or submissions) between the minister's office and the directorate/agency;
- b. supporting the minister with a readily accessible source of knowledge, information and advice about the operations of the directorate/agency in relation to complex/sensitive issues;
- c. fostering a productive working relationship between the minister's office and the directorate/agency and with key stakeholders, including other DLOs, staff from other directorates, the ACT Legislative Assembly and committees;
- d. responding to queries from stakeholders, including members of the public, and providing helpful and timely advice or referring the query to the appropriate subject matter expert within the directorate/agency;
- e. maintaining a high-level understanding of emerging issues and advising the director-general and/or directorate executive of these issues in a timely manner;
- f. fielding day-to-day requests from the minister's office and coordinating responses on behalf of the directorate;
- g. physically attending the ministerial office as operational necessities require, such as Assembly sitting days;
- h. ensuring information and documents are stored and processed securely when moving between the minister's office and the directorate/agency or to other directorates; and
- i. reporting any work health and safety incidents to both the ministerial office and their directorate manager.

Directorate DLO supervisor

13. The directorate must:

- a. have regular contact with the DLO to ensure the DLO maintains a sense of belonging with the directorate;
- b. assist the DLO by responding to requests on behalf of the minister or the minister's office in a prompt and timely manner; and
- c. provide the DLO with the necessary equipment and supplies (e.g., laptop, mobile phone, etc.) to undertake their duties in the minister's office.

14. The DLO's manager must:

- a. notify the minister's office in writing of the DLO's assignment, including the commencement date and anticipated cessation date;
- b. consult with the ministerial office prior to the commencement of the DLO placement to determine the work health and safety arrangements;
- c. regularly check-in with the DLO and be available to provide support and advice to the DLO;

- d. manage the DLO's pay and leave in accordance with the relevant enterprise agreement and directorate or whole-of-government policies and procedures;
- e. consult with the minister's office on leave or other matters affecting the performance of the DLO;
- f. arrange coverage for the DLO's position while the DLO is on leave; and
- g. manage any work health and safety related issues or incidents in collaboration with the DLO and the ministerial office.

Ministerial office

15. The minister and/or the minister's chief of staff or delegate must:

- a. provide day-to-day requests to the DLO;
- b. ensure a safe workplace as far as reasonably practicable;
- c. ensure there is a health and safety management system that includes induction, training, incident reporting, reporting of WHS issues etc;
- d. manage any work health and safety related issues or incidents in collaboration with the DLO and the DLO's directorate manager;
- e. respect the apolitical nature of the DLO role and ensure the DLO is not requested to undertake any duties related to office management or political party activities; and
- f. report any concerns regarding the DLO to the directorate manager in a timely manner.

Procedure

Outposting

- 16. DLO placements provide professional development opportunities for existing, permanent ACT Government employees to gain experience in a minister's office.
- 17. DLO placements are temporary in nature and should not exceed 18 months. A further 6-month extension is possible in exceptional circumstances with director-general or delegate approval.
- 18. DLO placements are time-limited to ensure all employees have access to these career development opportunities and DLO placement opportunities should be highly visible and promoted to all directorate staff.
- 19. Directorates must provide clear expectations regarding the DLO role to potential candidates, including the:
 - a. benefits and opportunities for career development offered by the role;
 - b. need to possess a thorough and comprehensive understanding of the directorate/agency and its operations in order to provide advice and support to the minister and the minister's office;
 - c. required capacity to undertake independent work that produces outcomes whilst managing multiple stakeholder relationships in a fast-paced and sensitive environment;
 - d. apolitical nature of the role and the continued requirement of the DLO to acquit their obligations under the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*, Public Sector Management Standards 2016 and the ACTPS Values and Signature Behaviours; and
 - e. potential for longer than usual or non-standard work hours and the related enterprise agreement provisions.

20. Directorates should implement, in collaboration with the DLO and minister's office, a plan for the DLO to manage and take accrued flextime in line with clause B18 of the Administrative and Related Classifications Enterprise Agreement 2023 – 26 whilst minimising the impact to the support provided to the minister's office.
21. Directorates should consider implementing DLO shadowing opportunities where staff can gain exposure to the DLO role alongside the current DLO. DLO shadowing both promotes this unique career development opportunity and creates a pool of candidates who can provide coverage during the DLO's absences (e.g., annual leave) or who may be interested in applying for the DLO position at the next vacancy. The CMTEDD DLO shadowing program is at [Attachment A](#) for noting.

Ministerial posting

22. While DLO responsibilities are similar across ministerial offices, each office and directorate will operate according to the preferences of their minister, chief of staff and directorate executive.
23. It is the responsibility of the directorate and the minister's office to ensure the DLO is provided with adequate training and support in these operational procedures so that they may successfully complete their duties.

Return to Directorate

24. Upon the conclusion of the placement the DLO remains at their substantive level, notwithstanding any higher duties or allowances they may have received while performing the DLO role.
25. The directorate should facilitate the DLO's return by working with the DLO to identify any further professional development goals or career preferences (e.g., lateral transfer to other opportunities within the directorate, opportunities for promotion, etc.)

Review

26. This policy is due for review 3 years from the last issued or reviewed date, or earlier where there are changes that affect the operation of the policy.

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Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
On behalf of the Head of Service
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Attachment A: CMTEDD DLO Shadowing Overview

DLO shadowing is an opportunity for motivated individuals to gain exposure to the role of a DLO in-situ.

DLO shadows act in the role of a DLO while being guided by a DLO in a one-on-one fashion through the various Assembly and directorate processes that are integral to the role of a DLO.

The expected time commitment for candidates is half a day per week (1pm – 5pm) for approximately 12 weeks. This is conditional on work commitments within the participants nominal work area; however, continuity is assumed in order to achieve the best learning experience.

Wednesday afternoons are preferred – candidates then have exposure to sitting day activities that are usual to DLO roles, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons are also suitable.

Shadowing takes place in-person at the Legislative Assembly with the permission of the Chief-of-Staff of the Minister's office where the DLO is located.

Typical tasks that candidates would perform under guidance include:

- Document processing / quality assurance – ministerials, briefs, Cabinet, Assembly and committee documents and processes
- Allocation of tasks to directorates or other DLOs
- Problem solving, investigation and negotiation
- Coordinating diary events, including minister's briefings with directorates
- Ensuring minister's offices are appropriately resourced in the lead up to and during sitting weeks, including, question time brief (QTB) packs, input for speeches, debate packages etc
- Listening to question time and recording any questions taken on notice
- Liaison with Minister's & MLA offices, other DLOs, directorate staff, committee staff, chamber support, industry representatives and others
- Attending meetings alongside the DLO.

Candidates may be exposed to information that is highly confidential in nature. Candidates are required to maintain strict confidentiality at all times and not disclose such information to outside parties. Sensitivity and discretion is essential to be demonstrated by candidates throughout their placement.

Candidates do not require their own computer; they will use the DLO's which is set up with appropriate ACT Gov access and the required applications. Access to the Assembly will be arranged prior to the commencement of the role.

Expected learning outcomes include exposure to the day-to-day tasks of a DLO, an increased awareness of the Territories' political machinery, the operations of the Assembly and roles of Assembly, ministerial and committee staff.

This opportunity may lead to willing candidates acting in CMTEDD DLO roles to cover annual leave or sudden absences.