

SUMMARY OF GIFT-GIVING CUSTOMS ARRANGED ALPHABETICALLY BY COUNTRY

NOTE:

This document was last reviewed in January 2020.

The document should be used as a guide only. Government departments/ agencies seeking tailored advice on gifts or for countries not included in this list should seek advice from Posts via the relevant geographic desk in Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Ministerial and Executive Liaison Section in Executive Branch can direct departments/agencies to the appropriate geographic desk (ministerial.liaison@dfat.gov.au).

This document is shared with the Australian Government's contracted gift provider 'Intandem'.

Distribution should be for in-house reference only.

AFGHANISTAN

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Islam (Sunni 80%; Shia 20%).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Pashto, Dari (Persian).

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

The exchange of gifts is a low key exercise not a ceremony and photo taking of the exchange is not recommended. Gifts are presented using the right hand, or both hands. The left hand is never used alone to hand someone a gift, as it is considered unclean. It is not advisable for men to give gifts to the wife of a male dignitary.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

All gifts presented to the President or other high office holders are likely to be searched robustly. Gifts that are simple in structure or easily disassembled and reassembled are more likely to reach the recipient intact.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Afghanistan is an Islamic country therefore gifts must be 'halal' (i.e. no alcohol, pork products, pigskin objects, etc.). Objects depicting animals or people, other than in a highly stylised way, are also unacceptable. It is not advisable to give men silk, gold or perfume as gifts. Dogs are considered unclean, so any dog item, even something with a picture of a dog would not be given. Knives because they have a sharp edge – severing relationships – are not appropriate.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Ceramic items (especially large bowls or plates) and well-done, artistic wood carving would be acceptable. Any sort of Australian precious stones would be desirable. In the clothing line, good quality sheepskin jackets for men, sheepskin rugs, lambskin coats would go well.

ALBANIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Officially a secular country. Islam (60%), Christianity (17%).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Albanian.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Exchange through protocol of Parliament/government.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

No financial limitations. Expensive gifts not presented.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Nil.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Nil.

ALGERIA**MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Islam.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

French and Arabic.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Nil.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Gifts valued at more than 2,000 Algerian Dinars cannot be retained by recipient. Gifts not retained are held by the state for display in Museums etc.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Algerian society is traditionally Islamic and conservative. Gifts revealing of the female body (books showing bikini clad sunbathers, videos of some Australian movies) and gifts of inappropriate female apparel could cause offence. In addition, things proscribed by Islam – alcohol, gambling, pork products, pigskin leather, would be inappropriate.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Nil.

ANDORRA**MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Roman Catholic.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Catalan and Spanish.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

According to the MFA, gift exchanges are customary for initial high-level meetings with the head of government and ministers, but there is no written protocol. In practice, the Andorran authorities are responsive to recommendations, such as if the visiting State advises against gift exchanges.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Traditional Andorran crafts include fancy carved pinewood items, pottery and ironwork. Unless there is something very distinctive about Australian items, these should be avoided.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Nil.

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA**MAJOR RELIGION/S**

74% of the population is Christian (largest denomination Anglican 26%).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Nil.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Nil.

GENERAL COMMENTS

All types of gifts are acceptable especially those with distinctively Australian flavour. Wine and cricket memorabilia are popular.

ARGENTINA**MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Roman Catholic.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Spanish.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Nil.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Books should be in Spanish preferably although books in English and French are acceptable.

AUSTRIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Officially a secular country.
Roman Catholic.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

German.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Austria is moving away from elaborate gift exchange at the government level. The trend is to exchange gifts corresponding to local customs. Examples of gifts exchanged between politicians such as ministers and parliamentarians are porcelain plates, small Swarovski crystals, shawls, music CDs and coffee table books. There are special rules for government officials relating to the acceptance of gifts (see below). It is customary to take a small gift "Mitbringsel" (a box of chocolates, flowers, a bottle of wine, etc.) whenever hospitality is accepted privately. Packaging is important.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

There are legal rules for government employees relating to the acceptance of gifts, but not for politicians. Government employees are not entitled to retain gifts, except for customary gifts of low value or symbolic gifts. For acceptance of gifts, a government employee is required to obtain approval of his office. The gifts become the property of the federal government, which stores and, after some time, sells them for charitable purposes.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

No specific concerns.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Nil.

THE BAHAMAS

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christianity (Protestant 72% and Baptist 35%).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Items of a personal nature.

GENERAL COMMENTS

All types of gifts are acceptable especially those with a distinctively Australian flavour. Wine and gifts with a beach/coral reef/maritime flavour are popular.

BAHRAIN (SEE GULF STATES)

BANGLADESH

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Islam.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Bengali.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Exchange of gifts is traditional and takes place when dignitaries meet each other during overseas visits and on official calls. In most cases it is pre-arranged. Avoid the use of black in packaging.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Gifts worth Taka 500 may be kept for personal use. More expensive gifts to government figures are supposed to be deposited with the Cabinet Division or clearance obtained for retention for personal use. Gifts deposited with Cabinet Division are ultimately sold at an auction.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Alcohol.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Materials with strong Australian flavour considered most acceptable.

BARBADOS

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christianity (Anglican 23.9% and Pentecostals 19.5%).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gifts are usually given at the end of meetings.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

The receipt of gifts is normally reported to the Permanent Secretary. Gifts of small value (up to \$250) may be retained by the recipient. Gifts of higher value are handed to the Ministry for display for a period of 5 years. Gifts given to Ministers in their Ministerial capacity become the property of the Government and do not need to be declared.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Items of a personal nature.

GENERAL COMMENTS

All types of gifts are acceptable especially those with a distinctively Australian flavour. Wine and cricket memorabilia are popular.

BELGIUM

Note: See separate entries for the European Union and NATO.

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Roman Catholic.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

French, Dutch, small German-speaking minority

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Consult the federal government's Protocol service in advance of visits.

Gift exchange is normal practice for state visits and high level working visits (head of government / ministers). The protocol for gift exchange varies according to the rank and personal preference of the individual.

It is customary for visiting heads of state to exchange gifts with the King and Queen. Gifts should be delivered ahead of time, unwrapped, to the Palace protocol service.

The Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs will generally present gifts to visiting counterparts, and a return gift is appreciated.

For meetings with the Prime Minister, gifts are exchanged via the Protocol service of the federal government.

For meetings with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, gifts are exchanged in person at the conclusion of the meeting.

Gift exchanges are common with parliamentary groups and are arranged through the federal parliament's Protocol service.

Australian wine or small items with an Australian Indigenous theme are appreciated as gifts for advisers, protocol and support staff.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Gifts usually retained.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Nil.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Books could be in French or Dutch (or German) if the first language of the recipient is known. Otherwise safest to stick with English but concentrate on picture books rather than literature. It is worth making sure that you have enough gifts suitable for presentation to spouses of recipients where hospitality is given to visiting Ministers etc who are travelling with spouses.

BELIZE

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christianity (Roman Catholic (40%) Protestant).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gift exchanges between visitor/host are common on official calls. No special protocol – usually initiated by guest at the end of meeting.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Gifts are generally not expected.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Items of a personal nature.

GENERAL COMMENTS

All types of gifts are acceptable, especially those with a distinctively Australian flavour. Wine and gifts with a tropical environmental theme (coral reef, rainforest, etc.) are popular.

BHUTAN

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Buddhism, Hinduism.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Dzongkha and English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Quite relaxed about accepting gifts. It appeared customary to provide gifts of high quality handicrafts to each member of visiting team at major official functions.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

No specific rules – quite liberal in accepting gifts.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Due to requirement of compulsory national dress, formal Western attire and accessories such as ties, cufflinks, etc. are of limited use.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Nil.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Officially a secular country. Islam, Christianity (Roman Catholic and Orthodox).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Bosnian (official), Croatian (official), Serbian (official).

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Generally, if a guest does not present the host with a gift, then neither does the host. Guests should confirm with protocol whether a gift would be acceptable or appropriate in advance of a visit.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

If officials receive gifts the value of which exceeds Euro 150 they must pass them to a relevant verifying authority for evaluation.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

When meeting a Bosniak official, the usual sensitivities about gifts to Muslims apply. Generally, avoid wine, brandy, oils (olive/lavender) and tea as they are produced locally.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Nil.

BRAZIL

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Roman Catholic, Evangelical Christians.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Portuguese.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

It is normal for Ministers to exchange gifts with their counterparts although sometimes gift exchanges can be avoided by mutual agreement beforehand – arranged via Post. Small gifts are required for those who may have been of particular assistance during the visit e.g. liaison officer, interpreters, drivers etc. Gifts to

Ministers should be easy to unwrap in the event the recipient wishes to open the gift immediately.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil. Gifts are retained.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Books in English unless they have decorative coloured graphics/pictures are not appropriate unless specifically requested. The leather industry in Brazil is well advanced, gifts of leatherware would not be highly regarded.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Small gifts (kangaroo pins, koala bears for children) peculiar to Australia are appropriate for officials/assistants down the line.

BRUNEI

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Islam.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Malay, but no problem with books with English text.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gift exchange between visitor/host are common on official calls. No special protocol – usually initiated by guest at the end of meeting. Wrapped gifts are not opened in the presence of donor. Avoid yellow/gold paper, which is reserved for royalty. Gifts should also avoid the human form.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

When gifting food products, ensure it is Halal as Brunei has a high discipline towards products being Halal certified. When invited to someone's home for dinner, gift recommendation includes chocolates or fruits. It is not recommended to give items resembling dogs or pigs or give anything made of pigskin as these are culturally and strictly unacceptable by religious standards. Gifts are generally not opened when received. Gifts should not "outrage modesty" – nudity, erotica, etc is not acceptable. Paintings should be strictly representational and preferably landscape.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Preference would be for decorative items with strong visual impact and suitable for display.

BULGARIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Eastern Orthodox (59.4%), Muslim (7.8%), None/Unspecified (31.1%).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Bulgarian is the major language spoken. Books in English and French would be welcomed.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Exchange of gifts should be made through the protocol department of the parliament/government.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Personal clothing and food items.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Nil.

BURUNDI

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Roman Catholic (62.1%) Protestant (23.9%) Unspecified (7.9%).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Kirundi (Official) French (Official).

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gifts are appreciated, but are not expected. Something small from the gift giving country is acceptable.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Currently no financial limitations or other restrictions on acceptance or retention of gifts.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Expensive gifts are considered inappropriate.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Coffee table books on Australia are appreciated.

CAMBODIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Buddhist (96%).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Khmer. English is the preferred second language, particularly among younger people. French is often spoken by the older generation of Cambodians.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gifts are appreciated. Offer gifts with your right hand or both hands. Avoid black or white packaging. Bouquets of flowers are often gifted at significant official events, national days or funerals. Gifts for Royalty and for Head of Government should be delivered prior to the visit.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Knives / weapons. Wine is inappropriate gifts for royal or religious ceremonies.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Nil.

CANADA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christian (Protestant, Roman Catholic).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English/French.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

In general, Canada prefers not to engage in gift exchange. However, for those occasions when a gift is warranted, Canada's preference is to exchange gifts "Protocol to Protocol" avoiding personal gift exchanges between Principals. Nevertheless there are exceptions and Global Affairs Canada will adapt preferences as appropriate.

For incoming State Visits, longstanding practice at Rideau Hall has been to have a private viewing of the gifts usually immediately prior to the State Dinner. The Governor-General and Visitor are escorted to an area where gifts are displayed (no media, official photographers only) prior to moving on to the State Dinner.

For the Prime Minister it depends on their preference at any given time for incoming visits. In most cases gifts are exchanged Protocol to Protocol but some Prime Ministers have opted for brief private viewings of gifts on margins of official meeting at the Prime Minister's Office. For Ministers the usual practice is Protocol to Protocol though on occasion some Ministers have wanted to personally hand over the gift.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Gifts valued up to \$200 Canadian dollars can be kept by recipient. Gifts valued between \$200 and \$999 Canadian can be kept by recipient but must be "Declared". Gifts valued at \$1000 Canadian or more are normally "forfeited" (eventually turned over to Archives) though the recipient does have the option to keep the gift if they

accept to “declare” the gift and personally repay to the Crown the estimated cost of the gift (\$1000 or more).

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Nil.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Nil.

CHAD

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Islam, Catholic, Protestant.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Arabic and French.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gifts are presented using the right hand, or both hands.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Chadian society is traditionally Islamic and conservative. Gifts revealing of the female body (books showing bikini clad sunbathers, videos of some Australian movies, nude figures in visual art) and gifts of inappropriate female apparel could cause offence. In addition, things proscribed by Islam – alcohol, gambling, pork products, pigskin leather – would be inappropriate.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Nil.

CHILE

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Catholic.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Spanish.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

No special customs.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Currently no financial limitations or other restrictions on acceptance or retention of gifts.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

While Chile does not have items which could be considered restricted or inappropriate (other than those which would fall into those categories in Australia), most Australian wine should be avoided, with the exception being Australian Shiraz, which Chileans often love. Post suggests only a few bottles of quality Shiraz are brought as gifts as customs can be difficult.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Chilean ministers and agency heads tend to offer gifts more than their Australian counterparts. Post suggests gifts be included for ministerial travel, at least. As a general rule Chile presents gifts of a high-quality, such as silver and lapis lazuli objects or jewellery to women. High-quality Australian Indigenous print items (scarves etc.) are popular.

CHINA

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Clocks (particularly to older, traditional Chinese); handkerchiefs (symbolise tears and death); knives and scissors (symbolise severing a relationship); commemorative medals or tokens (may be mistaken for foreign currency which cannot be accepted).

GENERAL COMMENTS

In general, obviously expensive gifts may cause embarrassment and sensitivity should be shown when a gift is presented. Avoid writing in red ink. Australian wine has been well accepted.

COLOMBIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Catholicism.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Spanish.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Practice is flexible. Exchange of gifts should be cleared first.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Customarily, Colombian ministers and agency heads tend to offer gifts more than Australian counterparts. Post suggests gifts be included for ministerial travel, at least. Popular items include Australian wine and high-quality items for display such as

coffee table books, decorative plates, and items with an indigenous print (ties, scarfs, wood carvings etc).

COMOROS

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Islam.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Comorian and French.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Check with Post as the occasion arises.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

The usual restrictions on gifts to Muslims should be observed.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Books should only be in French if chosen as a gift.

COOK ISLANDS (SEE NEW ZEALAND REALM COUNTRIES)

COSTA RICA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Roman Catholicism.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Spanish.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Traditional.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

The warm climate should be taken into account in deciding gifts. Cufflinks are generally not used and woollen items are not suitable. Any books given should be in Spanish, as English is not widely spoken.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Local artisanal products are often given as gifts.

CROATIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Roman Catholic.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Croatian.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Official gifts are normally exchanged with Guests-of-Government, as well as with guests of Ministers for official visits and usually determined by protocol offices beforehand.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

There are restrictions for Heads of State/Heads of Government and ministers: all gifts in excess of HRK 500 need to be recorded in official inventory lists.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

N/a.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Gifts such as handicrafts, books and local produce (such as wine) are appropriate.

CUBA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Catholicism.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Spanish.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

No fixed rules.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Wool not appropriate because of climate.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Cubans usually give what they call “representative” gifts, e.g. paintings by Cuban artists or crocodile leather belts, which they consider one of their best handicrafts.

Books in Spanish preferable as most Cuban officials do not speak or read English. They frequently give books as gifts. While wool is inappropriate due to the climate,

silk is very much appreciated. It is not usual to give gemstones but opals might be considered a “representative” gift.

CYPRUS

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Orthodox Christian (80%) (Republic of Cyprus controlled areas) / Sunni Islam (18%) (Turkish-Cypriot areas in the north not controlled by the Republic of Cyprus).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Greek (80%). Turkish (18%). As a former British colony, English is widely spoken/understood in major cities.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

While exchange of gifts is expected during official visits at Head of State, Ministerial level, the matter is usually discussed prior to a particular visit.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Gifts are usually retained or on rare occasions given to very close family members.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Nil. Overly ‘rustic’ handicrafts may not elicit an enthusiastic response.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Identifiably ‘Australiana’ objects will be appreciated. Cypriot gifts to others/themselves are overwhelmingly fist or hand-sized silverware objects/religious icons/ancient & classical art reproductions/plaques which are usually then expected to be displayed together in similar sets.

CZECH REPUBLIC

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Predominantly non-religious, traditionally Catholic.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Czech.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Gift giving is not a must, but is appreciated. Will normally provide a modest gift reflecting the country’s cultural and artistic strengths.

DENMARK

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Lutheran Church (95%).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Danish, (Faroese - Faroe Islands), Greenland – Inuit. English and German widely spoken and/or understood.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Preference is not to exchange gifts. If the visitor insists, the gift exchange should only be between guest and host. Ministers/officials should not bring gifts for the Queen (if they have a chance to meet her); gifts for the Queen are only for official state visits.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Gifts should be kept at a low price, under AUD100.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Avoid woollen blankets or sheepskin rugs. These are available locally. Denmark is a major food exporter so food items (except perhaps tropical fruits) should be avoided.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Gifts need not be expensive and can most certainly be in the form of books on Australia. Most Danes read and understand English. Danish Ministers and officials travelling abroad frequently carry gifts in the form of Danish craftware of Royal porcelain, books etc. The value of the gift is attuned to the occasion e.g. the Queen and Consort carry more expensive gifts on official trips and the value would taper down with level of importance of the mission.

DOMINICA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christianity (Roman Catholic (53%), Evangelical Protestants (20%).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Nil.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Gifts of higher value (over \$1000) are declared.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Items of a personal nature. The warm climate should be taken into account in deciding gifts. Cufflinks are generally not used and woollen items are not suitable. Any books given should be in Spanish, as English is not widely spoken.

GENERAL COMMENTS

All types of gifts are acceptable, especially those with a distinctively Australian flavour. Wine and gifts with a tropical environmental theme (rain forests etc.) are popular. Local artisanal products are also good options.

ECUADOR

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Catholicism.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Spanish.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Practice is flexible. Exchange of gifts should be cleared first.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Avoid leather goods.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Ecuadoran ministers and agency heads tend to offer gifts more than Australian counterparts. Post suggests gifts be included for ministerial travel, at least. Australian wine and high-quality Australian Indigenous print items (scarves etc.) are popular.

EGYPT

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Islamic, Christian minority.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Arabic.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gift exchanges are relatively common, particularly at higher levels and in both public and private sectors – during calls, public meetings, official meals. Normally photographed. Generally opened on the spot.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Anything connected with or alluding to Israel.

Personal items and clothing gifts (cufflinks, ties), particularly those that require 'size' to be known (e.g. hats). Cheap and vulgar objects are not appreciated in this environment, nor are items of kitchen equipment e.g. tea towels.

Items depicting excessive self-satire or exaggerated nationalism.

Gifts revealing of the female body (books showing bikini clad sunbathers, DVDs of some Australian movies) and gifts of inappropriate female apparel could cause offence.

Alcohol, gambling, pork products, pigskin leather.

Woollen items not suitable because of climate.
Dates are inappropriate as they are produced locally.
Need to avoid offending religious sensitivities, need to avoid any material which might be considered racist/Islamophobic.
Avoid religious insignia/symbols.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Materials with strong Australian flavour considered most acceptable. Books, small carpets/rugs, scarves, decorative items such as ornamental boxes, ceramics and small replicas of Egyptian artefacts are commonly given as gifts by Egyptians. Coptic Christians often give religious iconography.

EL SALVADOR

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Catholicism.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Spanish.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Usually give paintings.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

The warm climate should be taken into account in deciding gifts. Cufflinks are generally not used and woollen items are not suitable. Any books given should be in Spanish, as English is not widely spoken. Hats are not usually worn in El Salvador.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Examples of gifts exchanged are local artisanal products.

ESTONIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Majority atheist, followed by Lutheran and Eastern Orthodox.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Estonian and Russian. A basic level of English is widely spoken, particularly by those under 30.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

The exchange of gifts at senior official levels can be done directly or indirectly, though a direct exchange of gifts is practiced between Heads of State during State and Official visits. During the ceremonial gift exchange of a State visit, the gift should be presented unwrapped.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

In general, no restrictions on acceptance or retention of gifts.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Flowers should be presented in odd numbers, as an even number of flowers are reserved for when a person is in mourning. Roses should be avoided as they are used at funerals.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Estonians are generally quiet, reserved and softly spoken, and do not enjoy drawing attention to themselves. Gifts, though well received, should not be expensive. Estonians tend to appreciate gifts which have a recognisably Australian character. Gifts of Australian paintings, books and other cultural material would be welcome.

ETHIOPIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Ethiopian Orthodox (Christian) 60%, Islam 30%, Protestant Christian (10%).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Amharic. Oromiffa

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Ethiopian principals are likely to offer gifts to visiting Australian dignitaries, and would expect a small gift from Australia in return. A direct exchange of gifts between principals is normal in most situations, but advice should be sought from Post before exchanges involving Heads of State and Government.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Gifts should be passed and received gifts with two hands, or the right hand only. It can be seen as rude to use the left hand alone.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Due to the significant Muslim and Protestant population, the usual restrictions on gifts to Muslims and Protestants should be observed, unless the religion of the recipient is known. For example, alcohol may not be an appropriate gift.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Gifts do not need to be expensive and should reflect Australia in some way.

EUROPEAN UNION (European Parliament, European Council, European Commission)

MAJOR RELIGIONS

N/A

MAJOR LANGUAGES

English, French

For individuals, any of the 24 languages of the European Union, depending on the individual's country of origin.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

There is no set protocol for official gift exchanges. Common practice is no gifts.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Gifts with a value of more than EUR 150 may not be accepted.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

None.

GENERAL COMMENTS

It has not been the custom for ministers visiting the European Parliament, European Council or European Commission to give gifts. In the case of gifts for advisers, support and protocol staff, Australian wine or items with an Australian Indigenous theme are appreciated.

FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA (SEE MICRONESIA)

FIJI 20.11

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christian (64 percent), Hindu (27 percent), Muslim (7 percent)

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English (National language), Fijian (not widely spoken by Indo-Fijians), Hindi (not widely spoken by indigenous Fijians).

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Fiji is a gift-giving country, we should be prepared to accept gifts and reciprocate.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Financial limitation of FID 500. If not retained gifts are given to the relevant government ministry.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Cow or calf hide to Hindu, pigskin to Muslim. Wine is not generally or widely consumed. Apart from religious restrictions with individuals there are few gifts which would be considered offensive. Head coverings are appropriate for village chiefs and elders only.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Gifts don't need to be lavish, just thoughtful, and should have some personal connection to the recipient. (For example, it is not appropriate to give female ministers a set of coasters.)

FINLAND

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Evangelical Church of Finland (Lutheran), Finnish Orthodox.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Finnish and Swedish, though English is spoken by a majority of the population.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

The exchange of gifts at official levels is a very old and valued tradition in Finland. It is a normal practice that gifts are exchanged through Protocol in all visits except incoming State visits. In incoming State visits, gifts between the Presidential couple and the visiting Head of State are exchanged discreetly in person. It is Finnish custom that the guests present more gifts than the host.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Finnish officials may only accept gifts of a minor monetary value, though there is no specific instruction determining the value of the gift.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Finland has world-renown homewares and glasswares industries, so unless there is something distinctive about an Australian gift from either of these sectors, they should be avoided. Finnish officials usually present objects of Finnish design, glass or art as gifts. Flowers should be given in even numbers, and never in white and yellow, as these are colours reserved for funerals.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Design, functionality and simplicity underscore gift giving in Finland. Gifts need not be expensive and can most certainly be in the form of books on Australia as the majority of Finns read and understand English. Premium Australian wines and merino wool products are very well regarded.

FRANCE 26.11

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christian (Catholic majority).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

French.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gifts are always exchanged at Head of State level and are frequently exchanged during official visits. Exchanges are not usual practice during working visits. French officials take into account custom of host country. Contact is made through the Protocol Section of the Foreign Affairs Department, which will deliver gifts if requested.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

No restrictions on the value of gifts. The President may decide to present a prestigious item such as Lalique crystal or Sevres porcelain. French authorities always seek to choose a gift corresponding to the tastes and interest of the recipient and of a value comparable with that offered to the French counterpart.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Wine and food unless of finest quality. A popular superstition considers that offering a knife could cut the friendship. Some flowers: carnations are considered as a sign of bad luck and chrysanthemums are associated with death (e.g. funeral, All Saints Day)

GENERAL COMMENTS

French people appreciate gifts with a recognisably Australian character.

FRENCH POLYNESIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Protestant, Roman Catholic.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

French and Tahitian.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

At a ministerial/parliamentary level, an exchange of gifts is usual with the senior French administrator (the High Commissioner), the President of French Polynesia, the President of the Territorial Assembly, Ministers and Mayors. With the senior French administrator and the President of French Polynesia, a more substantial gift is usual (e.g. ceramics, artwork). For the others a book, preferably pictorial, is usual. Although the presentation of traditional flower or shell garlands is very common, there is no requirement to reciprocate.

GABON

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christianity, Animism.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

French.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Customary to provide gift on introductory call on senior public figures including State Governors, traditional leaders, federal leaders (less so but preferable). When in doubt, give a gift.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Nil.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Observe common prudence and sensitivity. Something distinctly Australian most suitable.

GAMBIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Predominantly Islam, with a small Christian minority.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Customary to provide gift on introductory call on senior public figures including State Governors, traditional leaders, federal leaders (less so but preferable). When in doubt, give a gift.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Avoid “unclean” items for Muslims –pork-based products, religious insignia/symbols, alcohol.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Observe common prudence and sensitivity. Something distinctly Australian most suitable.

GERMANY

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christianity.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

German (English is the first foreign language taught in schools).

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

No particular protocol issues relating to the exchange of gifts – practice varies with the individual. Gifts are not given to hosts of a higher protocol rank i.e. a visiting Prime Minister would not give a gift to the Federal President, nor would a visiting Minister give a gift to the Chancellor.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

In general no restrictions on acceptance or retention of gifts, however the Federal President must relinquish all gifts on retirement.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Gifts made of products derived from endangered or threatened species, also some sensitivity about the giving of arms or weapons (e.g. ceremonial swords) and wooden objects as gifts.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Wine very favourably received. Gratuities given to official drivers, police escort and any service personnel. Small souvenirs should be given to any security guards, guard of honour, helicopter crew, protocol officers and officials present at any calls.

Business gifts are seldom exchanged in Germany, so if there is such a presentation ensure it is appropriate and low key.

GHANA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christianity, Islam, Animism.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Customary to provide gift on introductory call on senior public figures including State Governors, traditional leaders, federal leaders (less so but preferable). When in doubt, give a gift.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Pork based products. Overtly religious material or designs that may appear religious. Alcohol in the north can be a problem.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Ghanaians are interested in distinctly Australian products and show particular interest in Indigenous art and books/prints showing the diversity of the Australian landscape.

GREECE

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Greek Orthodox.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Greek.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gifts are often exchanged at high-level meetings and at meetings in regional Greece. Post would normally discuss exchange of gifts before calls.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

By arrangement but depends on level of call.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Nil.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Nil.

GRENADA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christianity (Roman Catholic (44.6%), Anglican (11.3%)).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Nil.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Items of a personal nature.

GENERAL COMMENTS

All types of gifts are acceptable, especially those with a distinctively Australian flavour. Wine and gifts with a tropical environmental theme (rain forests etc.) are popular.

GUATEMALA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Catholicism.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Spanish.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gift exchange between presidents and ministers only at the beginning of a visit. Gift is given to the Directorate of Protocol to pass on to the President. Receiving state gives gift to the other country's Ambassador. When meeting at a reception, for example, the President's appreciation is expressed. Gifts are not usually exchanged between Ambassadors, but they are exchanged between Foreign Ministers and between other Ministers on a reciprocal basis. There is usually an exchange of decorations between Foreign Ministers and in that case a gift is not usually necessary.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil, but excessively expensive gifts are not in good taste.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

The warm climate should be taken into account in deciding gifts. Cufflinks are generally not used and woollen items are not suitable. Any books given should be in Spanish, as English is not widely spoken.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Examples of gifts exchanged are local artisanal products.

GULF STATES (BAHRAIN, KUWAIT, OMAN, QATAR, SAUDI ARABIA, UAE AND YEMEN)

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Islam.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Arabic.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gift exchanges are frequent at all levels and in both public and private sectors – during calls, public meetings, official meals. Normally photographed. Generally opened on the spot.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

It would be considered rude to decline a gift.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Gulf countries are traditionally Islamic and conservative. Personal items should be avoided. Avoid clothing gifts that require size to be known. Cheap and vulgar objects are not appreciated, nor would items of kitchen equipment e.g. tea towels be appreciated. Anything connected with or alluding to Israel. Items depicting excessive self-satire or exaggerated nationalism would not be appreciated. Gifts revealing of the female body (books showing bikini clad sunbathers, videos of some Australian

movies) and gifts of inappropriate female apparel could cause offence. In addition, things proscribed by Islam – alcohol, gambling, pork products, pigskin leather, would be inappropriate. Ties and cufflinks would not be appropriate as they are not compatible with national dress. Woollen items not suitable because of climate. Dates are inappropriate as they are produced locally. Need to avoid offending religious sensitivities, need to avoid any material which might be considered racist/islamophobic. Avoid religious insignia/symbols.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Materials with strong Australian flavour considered most acceptable. Dates are commonly given as gifts by these countries.

GUYANA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christianity (64%); Hinduism (25%), Islam, mainly Sunni (7%).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Very often presented at the end of a meeting, but generally a token gift only.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Items of a personal nature.

GENERAL COMMENTS

All types of gifts are acceptable, especially those with a distinctively Australian flavour. Wine, tropical Australia themes (rainforest, wildlife) and cricket are popular.

HAITI

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christianity (Roman Catholic (55%); Protestant (29%)). 50 to 80 percent of the population practices some form of Vodou, often blended with elements of other religions

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Kreyòl, French.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Nil.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Nil.

HONDURAS

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Catholicism.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Spanish.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Nil.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

The warm climate should be taken into account in deciding gifts. Cufflinks are generally not used and woollen items are not suitable. Any books given should be in Spanish, as English is not widely spoken.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Examples of gifts exchanged are local artisanal products.

HUNGARY

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Officially a secular country. Roman Catholic, Protestant .

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Hungarian.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Exchange of gifts is arranged on a case-by-case basis and should generally be agreed upon in advance by Protocol. Gift exchange at the political level is important. Gifts at the highest level (President, Prime Minister, Speaker of the National Assembly) should be organised through protocol office. They are usually not handed over in person. At Ministerial level, it is more usual for gifts to be exchanged in person, subject to procedure previously agreed upon with Protocol. The process for exchanging gifts below Ministerial level is less formal. During the Presentation of Credentials, gifts should be exchanged in advance of the ceremony. Packaging is

usually simple. Examples of gifts that are often given by Hungary include music, handicraft, porcelain, books, wine and food.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

There is no set limit for the value of the gift. Usually, offices coordinate about the value of gifts when preparing a visit, including to prepare a gift in return.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Hungary has a gift-giving culture.

ICELAND

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christianity (Church of Iceland).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Icelandic.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gifts are generally not expected. Gift exchange at Ministerial level should be arranged in advance.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Icelandic officials are not permitted to accept expensive gifts personally.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Nil.

INDIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Hinduism 79.8%, Islam 14.2%, Christianity 2.3%, Sikh 1.7%, Buddhism 0.7%, Others 1.3%.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

The Indian Constitution (Article 343) prescribes Hindi as written in Devanagari script and English as official languages for government communication. With 43.6% of Indians using Hindi as their primary language, it is the most widely used language. Hindi and English are widely used in national, political and commercial communications.

There are 21 other recognised (scheduled) languages in the Constitution: Bengali 8%, Marathi 6.9%, Telugu 6.7%, Tamil 5.7%, Gujarati 4.6%, Urdu 4.2%, Kannada 3.6%, Odia 3.1%, Malayalam 2.9%, Punjabi 2.7%, Assamese 1.3%, Maithili 1.1%, Others (such as: Bodo, Dogri, Kashmiri, Konkani, Manipuri, Nepali, Sanskrit, Santhali, Sindhi) constitute 5.6%. These languages are ordinarily spoken by the majority in a particular state or region.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gifts of a modest value (Indian gifts perhaps less than AUD \$50), usually of a cultural nature, exchanged during official calls, particularly in cities and states outside capital, New Delhi. Gifts given at the higher level could range up to \$200.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Avoid giving gifts made from animal skin or leather, which could cause offence. Handkerchiefs and, knives are best avoided. Gifting alcohol in dry states such as Gujarat and Bihar would be inappropriate.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Felicitating visitors with flowers or symbolic items for presentation is a common practice, however there is no expectation that gifts will be given to officials. Small low value gifts are well received by support staff in India during high level visits e.g. police, hotel staff; protocol, airport staff. High-level gift giving is best pre-decided and gift exchanges are generally conducted through protocol staff.

INDONESIA (Nil-return 7.11)

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Islam (87.2%), Christianity (9.9%), Hinduism (1.7%), Buddhism (0.7%), Confucianism and others (0.2%).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Indonesian.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

In formal meetings, an exchange of gifts usually signals the end of the meeting. State guests exchange gifts with the President at the official dinner. However, in most cases the exchange of gifts is not done by leaders. Rather it is done behind the scenes via protocol officers. All videos are supposed to be surrendered on arrival for viewing by the State Censorship Board.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil. The President usually puts his gifts in display cabinets at the State Palace.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Alcoholic beverages, any product made from pig. Indonesian officials rarely wear ties or cufflinks. Warm clothing is inappropriate. Wombats are not well received as it is felt they resemble pigs.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Australian items well received. With books, most of the elite speak good English, though books with many illustrations are most appropriate (check for pictures that may be offensive to their religious beliefs). Art (both originals and prints) of the Australian landscape are well-received and hung in prominent places. Even if a gift exchange is not expected or scheduled, it often occurs nevertheless.

IRAN

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Islam (Shia).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Farsi.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gift exchange common practice.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

No financial restrictions at any level.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Short sleeved shirts, ties, visual representation of unclad or semi-clad male or female form, videos, music, products (food, hide) from pig, any pork or alcohol products. Anything connected with or alluding to Israel. Any products related to or bearing symbols relating to Christianity, Judaism or any religion. Jewellery is best avoided

IRAQ

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Islam.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Arabic, Kurdish.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Arab tradition – gifts should praise the receiver and should not be of a type which cannot reasonably be reciprocated.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Anything connected with or alluding to Israel. Anything obviously cheap.

IRELAND

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christianity (Roman Catholic, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian, Methodist).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English, Irish.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Exchange of gifts is not expected. Where it is the intention of an Australian Minister or Parliamentary Delegation to give a gift, the Irish would appreciate prior knowledge of the gift and its value so that a reciprocal gift can be arranged.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

An officer may accept and retain gifts of modest value (e.g. diaries, pens, etc.). Any gift of more significant value will be refused or, if such refusal would cause offence, will be handed over by the civil servant concerned to his or her Department/Office.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Ivory of any sort, fur items, snakeskin and crocodile items, live or dead specimens of endangered species, foodstuffs, cash, vouchers or similar items that can be handed over for cash.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Gifts should only be exchanged on significant visits or occasions.

ISRAEL

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Judaism, minority of Islam (Israeli Arabs).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Hebrew is the official language and Arabic also has a special status. English is widely spoken.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

For official visits gifts are usually left at the hotel (or alternatively given to a representative of the receiving country to take back to the hotel). The visiting country may, if they wish, present their gift at a meeting/dinner/reception - but usually informally – i.e. not a lot of fanfare, usually at the end of a speech. Certain colour combinations should be avoided – i.e. white, red and black (Nazi flag), red, black and green (Palestinian flag).

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Gifts should be kept to within a reasonable price range; expensive gifts would be inappropriate. Gifts of a value greater than 250INS cannot be accepted by Members of the Knesset.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Any pork products, any shelled seafood – generally best to avoid foodstuffs. Any books or pictures that allude to the New Testament of the Bible, any books of World War 2 or the Holocaust, anything alluding to Christmas, anything to do with Christianity (or any other faith), no calendars (Christian year differs from the Jewish and Muslim year). In general anything with a religious theme should be avoided in case of offence.

ITALY

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Catholic.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Italian.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gift exchanges are frequent at all levels and in both public and private sectors – during calls, public meetings, official meals. Normally photographed. Generally opened on the spot. Should seldom be carried “off stage” by the recipient in person.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Much the same as Australia, tending towards greater generosity on the part of the Italians.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Clothing, leather goods, jewellery of the “coal to Newcastle” category.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Italy is perhaps the world’s leading style/design centre, so where possible it would be best to ask the post for comment in relation to proposed recipients.

JAMAICA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christianity (Protestant (69%)).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Nil.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

No apparent limitations.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Gifts of a personal nature.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Jamaicans will be receptive to a gift during a first time official/business meeting, but nothing too expensive. Wine, especially with cricket and tropical environmental themes (mainly environment, birds, animals).

JAPAN

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Shinto religion, Buddhism.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Japanese.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Very strong tradition of gift-giving and exchange. Culturally, the tradition of gift-giving should be seen in the context of social reciprocity – the duty/obligation basis upon which most social relations in Japan are based. Gifts are normally exchanged at the beginning of a meeting and should be passed and received with both hands. Gifts are not usually opened in front of the giver.

The Japanese consider it impolite to give a gift without wrapping. Traditionally, they believe that wrapping a gift in a white wrapping protected it from all evils, but nowadays it is sufficient that the article be properly packaged and suitably gift-wrapped. Elaborate bows are not pleasing to the Japanese eye.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Gifts to Japanese Ministers, unlike the case of the Prime Minister, may be accepted personally and retained. The Prime Minister and spouse may not receive gifts personally, regardless of the value of the gift, the gifts will be received by the Official Residence and remain at the Residence. There is no financial limit on gifts received by Ministers.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

If gifts come in more than one component the numbers 4, 7 and 9 should be avoided as they are considered to bring bad luck in Japan. Generally speaking, given Japanese pre-eminence in this field, pottery and ceramics from other countries may be of lesser appeal in Japan although high quality Australian pottery can be popular. Indigenous art is likely to be suitable only in cases where the recipient is known to have a particular interest in such items. Gifts of containers such as ornate wooden boxes, which are empty, have been known to cause confusion among their Japanese recipients.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Most Japanese have either been to Australia or know people who have and are therefore familiar with the value and type of souvenirs and gifts available in Australia. Emphasis should be on high quality, well-made and suitably packaged items. Koalas and kangaroo pins should be avoided. Australian designer goods are well known in Japan and would be suitable. Sporting goods popular (golf/tennis items in particular).

JORDAN

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Islam.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Arabic (but English widely used).

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gift exchanges are frequent at all levels and in both public and private sectors - during calls, public meetings, official meals. Normally photographed. Generally opened on the spot.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

No limitations.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Anything connected with or alluding to Israel. Items depicting excessive self-satire or exaggerated nationalism. Gifts revealing of the female body (books showing bikini clad sunbathers, DVDs of some Australian movies) and gifts of inappropriate female apparel could cause offence. Alcohol, gambling, pork products, pigskin leather. Dates are inappropriate as they are produced locally. Need to avoid offending religious sensitivities, need to avoid any material which might be considered racist/Islamophobic. Need to avoid offending the King or the monarchy. Avoid religious insignia/symbols.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Materials with strong Australian flavour, particularly native animal motifs, are considered most acceptable. King Abdullah II appreciates books. Jordanians commonly give official plaques, decorative boxes or Dead Sea products as gifts.

KENYA**MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity (80%), Islam (approx. 15%).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Kiswahili, but English is widely spoken.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Not a great emphasis on gift exchanges, done through officials. Not unusual for a senior officials to gift an ornament (of wood or soapstone) of an African animal or a picture. County Governors and organisations such a universities often give a maasai shuka/blanket/wrap, traditional jewellery or carved box (Joho in Mombasa) but they don't necessarily expect reciprocity.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Due to the significant Muslim population the usual restrictions on gifts to Muslims should be observed, unless the religion of the recipient is known.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Coffee table books on Australia are well received.

KIRIBATI

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christianity.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English, Gilbertese.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

No particular customs, although visits to traditional Maneabas (meeting houses) are usually occasions for the presentation of small gifts to the Maneaba as a whole e.g. cash, books, food bowls.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

No apparent limitations. However modest gifts are best since Kiribati is a poor country and very lavish gifts could not be reciprocated.

KOREA (Republic of)

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Buddhism. Christianity (Catholicism/Protestant).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Korean.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gifts are exchanged as a matter of course. In the case of official visitors, gifts should be taken for every call and the spouse of the host (if the visitor's spouse also accompanies). Gifts should be presented and accepted with both hands. Names should not be written in red ink. Gifts usually not opened at presentation. Strong emphasis is placed on presentation

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

For officials there are value limits on gifts that may be accepted so a very valuable gift may cause embarrassment to a government official.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Leather goods are readily and cheaply available in Korea. The number 4 is considered unlucky so do not give a set of four items.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Golf and tennis items popular also good Australian wine.

KOSOVO

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Officially a secular country. Islam.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Albanian and Serbian.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

The value of a gift should be based on reciprocity, and not exceed the “limits of courtesy and legal limits”.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The exchange of gifts may be discussed and agreed upon with Protocol in advance. The following Kosovan representatives usually present gifts during official visits: President; Prime Minister; President of the General Assembly; Minister of Foreign Affairs.

KUWAIT (SEE GULF STATES)

LAOS

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Buddhism.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Lao.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

All gifts for Ministers and Prime Minister should be delivered/exchanged through the MFA Protocol Department.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

No restrictions.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

The Laos would be unlikely to take offence at any gift.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Smiling and laughing at any time during a meeting is common.

LATVIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Latvian and Russian. A basic level of English is widely spoken.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

The exchange of gifts at senior official levels can be done directly or indirectly, though a direct exchange of gifts is practiced between Heads of State during State and Official visits. The exchange of gifts should be initiated by the visiting state.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

In general, no restrictions on acceptance or retention of gifts.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Flowers should be presented in odd numbers, as an even number of flowers are reserved for when a person is in mourning. Roses, particularly red roses, should be avoided as they are used at funerals.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Latvians tend to appreciate gifts which have a recognisably Australian character. Gifts of Australian paintings, books and other cultural material would be welcome.

LEBANON

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Predominantly Islamic and Christian.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Arabic, English, French.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gift exchanges are frequent at all levels – during calls, public meetings, official meals. Normally photographed. Generally opened on the spot.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Anything connected with or alluding to Israel. Personal items and clothing gifts, particularly those that require size to be known (e.g. hats). Items depicting excessive self-satire or exaggerated nationalism. Alcohol, gambling, pork products, pigskin leather would be inappropriate for Muslims. Need to avoid offending religious sensitivities, need to avoid any material which might be considered racist/islamophobic. Avoid religious insignia/symbols.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Materials with strong Australian flavour considered most acceptable. Scarves and ties are also appropriate and acceptable. Individually-engraved plaques (often in English) are commonly given as gifts by Lebanon, as are high-end chocolates and glossy picture/history books

LITHUANIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Catholicism.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Lithuanian.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Gift giving is not a must, but is appreciated. Will normally provide a modest gift reflecting the country's cultural and artistic strengths.

LUXEMBOURG

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Roman Catholic.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

French, German, Luxembourgish.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Varies with the rank of the person.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Gifts usually retained

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Nil

GENERAL COMMENTS

Most Luxembourg officials will speak fluent English, so giving a book in English will be acceptable. If giving flowers, avoid chrysanthemums, which are commonly used in funerals in Luxembourg. It is worth making sure that you have enough gifts suitable for presentation to spouses of recipients where hospitality is given to visiting Ministers etc who are travelling with spouses

MADAGASCAR

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Indigenous beliefs (50%), Christianity (40%), Islam (7%).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Malagasy, French.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

The Madagascans have adopted the Western (French) practice.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Would not appear to be any financial limitations.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Nil.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The Madagascan hierarchy is sophisticated and travel regularly to Europe. Any gifts should consequently be of an appropriate standard.

MALAWI

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Scottish Presbyterian.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English, Chi Chewa.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Frequent giving to "Big Men" who are by and large expected to share. Packaging needs to allow gift to be easily opened before a crowd.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

With books there is heavy censorship on moral political grounds. Videos best avoided unless pure geography (country has no TV and few videos). No wine.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Unless to the Life President or very small (ties, cufflinks) should be capable of being enjoyed by many e.g. wall hangings, pictures. Is a very conservative country, and very formal (women wear gloves and hats and skirts to at least mid-calf).

MALAYSIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Islam 61%, Buddhism 20%, Christianity 9%, Hinduism 6 %.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Malay, although English is widely spoken. Chinese dialects (Hokkien, Cantonese, Hakka, Teochew) and Tamil also spoken.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

It is customary to give gifts in Malaysia, and reciprocating in kind is appreciated. Advice on gift-giving plans for a particular meeting or event can be sought in advance.

Gifts placed in a dedicated gift box, bag or simply wrapped will suffice. Many Malaysians like to unwrap and show their gift to you, and sometimes also expect to do the same with yours, so it should be bagged/wrapped to be easily accessible.

Avoid white, blue, black, and yellow gift-wrap. White and black are associated with death and mourning, and yellow is reserved for royalty. Red and green are good colour options for gift-wrapping or adornments.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

In 2018, Prime Minister Mahathir announced that Malaysian ministers can no longer accept gifts other than food and flowers. This includes ministers, deputy ministers and political secretaries (i.e. advisers). In practice, it is still acceptable to provide non-food gifts, but they should not be of high value. Some dignitaries have previously provided small non-food gifts that carried sentimental value.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Generally avoid pewter and alcohol products. As pig-based products are offensive to Muslims and cow-based products are offensive to Hindus, it would be wise to avoid leather products altogether. Toy dogs or gifts that picture dogs, gifts with images of nude or partially clad women (even in paintings or sculptures with artistic merit) should be avoided. Yellow colour is reserved for royalty. Australian chocolates are widely known and liked, but avoid those that may include gelatine. Food gifts for Muslim recipients should be confirmed as halal.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Coffee table books, small ornate items, stationery and fabric/shawls (for women) are commonly presented to Australian officials. Reciprocating in kind is appreciated.

MALDIVES

MAJOR RELIGION

Islam.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Divehi.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Exchange of gifts is customary and takes place when dignitaries meet each other during overseas visits and on official calls. Avoid the use of black in packaging.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

No.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Alcohol.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Materials with strong Australian flavour considered acceptable.

MALTA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Roman Catholic.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Maltese and English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

A visiting Head of State would be expected to pass his gift to the President of Malta through the office of the Chief of Protocol early in the visit to enable reciprocation to be arranged during his farewell call on the President. Similar arrangements apply for visiting Prime Ministers. Ministers usually exchange gifts during calls on their counterparts. Official Maltese gifts are usually packaged in the national colours of red and white.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

There are no limitations stipulated for acceptance of gifts, but gifts of great value or artistic significance would be expected to remain the property of the State.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

GENERAL COMMENTS

The Maltese are generally both hospitable and generous and share the same cultural values as Western Europeans and Australians. The existence of a strong Maltese Australian community ensures that gifts of Australian paintings, books and other cultural materials would be well received.

MARSHALL ISLANDS (SEE MICRONESIA)

MAURITANIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Islam.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

French and Arabic. Pulaar, Soninke, Hassaniya and Wolof are also spoken.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gifts are presented using the right hand, or both hands.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Mauritanian society is traditionally Islamic and conservative. Gifts revealing of the female body (books showing bikini clad sunbathers, videos of some Australian movies, nude figures in visual art) and gifts of inappropriate female apparel could cause offence. In addition, things proscribed by Islam – alcohol, gambling, pork products, pigskin leather, would be inappropriate.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Nil.

MAURITIUS**MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Hindu (50%), Christianity (30%), Islam (15%).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Creole, French, English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gifts are exchanged at the conclusion of ceremonies, usually with considerable public/press coverage. The usual gift from the Government of Mauritius is a scale model sailing ship valued at about \$500.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Due to the significant Muslim population the usual restrictions on gifts to Muslims should be observed, unless the religion of the recipient is known.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Nil.

MEXICO**MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Catholic.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Spanish.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

It is common for gifts to be exchanged at senior-level meetings. Examples of gifts exchanged between politicians and given to senior officials are local artisanal products and tequila. Gifts between Heads of State or Government are always exchanged personally in a private meeting. Gifts for Ministers or Senior officials are sent to the Directorate General of Protocol of the MFA who will deliver the gift to the recipient.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Mexico has rules relating to the acceptance of gifts valued over a certain amount by public servants. Post can provide further advice as required.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Nil.

MICRONESIA (FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA, MARSHALL ISLANDS AND PALAU)

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christian denominations and sects. Small minority Islam.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English (common to all States in addition to local languages).

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gift giving is widely practised. Brief remarks made by the giver and receiver, opening with acknowledgement of dignitaries present in order of precedence. The gifts are normally exchanged at the end of a visit but if an appropriate occasion arises during a visit gifts can be exchanged at that time.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

No official restrictions or regulations covering gift giving. Gifts are normally of symbolic rather than high commercial value.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

No reasonable gift is likely to cause offence. Liquor and wine would be more suitable for men than women. Any Indigenous artefacts should be accompanied by representation of the aspects of our culture. Ties and cufflinks are not used.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Australia is very well regarded. Either decorative or functional items are appropriate. Ceramic or wooden items are suitable. Personal and office ornaments appreciated (e.g. glassware; brooches, pens, light scarves, artefacts). Cotton is the preferred fabric – there is no dry cleaning available. . Warm temperatures and high humidity need to

be recognised in the choosing of gifts. Basketball, volleyball, softball and baseball are played; fishing is a common recreation.

MONACO, PRINCIPALITY OF

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christian - Catholic majority.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

French.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gifts are always exchanged at Head of State level and are frequently exchanged during official visits. Exchanges are not usual practice during working visits. Monaco officials take into account custom of host country. Contact is made through the Protocol Section of the Foreign Affairs Department.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

No restrictions on the value of gifts.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Monaco people tend to appreciate gifts with a recognisably Australian character.

MONGOLIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Buddhist (50%) and non-religious (30%).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Mongolian. English is the preferred second language, particularly among younger people. Russian is spoken by the older generation of Mongolians.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gifts are appreciated. Offer gifts with your right hand or both hands. Avoid red and black packaging.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Anything facing downwards, such as hats. Knives or weapons.

MONTENEGRO

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Orthodox.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Montenegrin.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

During the official visit of the President of a foreign country, President of the Parliament or Government of a foreign country to Montenegro, the host presents the guest with a gift either personally or through State Protocol after the official meetings with Montenegrin dignitaries, depending on the agreement that is made prior to the visit. Exceptions can be made if guests request to exchange gifts with their counterparts directly. Gifts are given if the visit is official and in case of reciprocity. Gifts can also be presented to the members of the official delegation and symbolic gifts may be given to personnel in charge of technical support.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Money, sovereign securities or precious metal. An appropriate gift of smaller value is of value up to 50 EUR. The market value of the gift on the day of its acceptance is taken as the value of the gift.

Protocol gifts become the property of the state/municipality regardless of their value.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Example of gifts given by Montenegrin officials: books, clothing items, souvenir with national motives/details, wine.

MYANMAR

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Myanmar, English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Traditionally, gift exchanges are common in high-level meetings. This practice may evolve during the term of the NLD Government. In an attempt to crack down on corruption, State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi has banned officials from retaining gifts valued at more than 25,000 kyat (US\$21). Gifts valued at more than 25,000 kyat are to be declared to the Government and are either used by the organisation or donated to charity.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Government officials are unable to retain gifts valued at more than 25,000 kyat (US\$21).

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Nil provided that the gift matches the rank of its recipient. As Government Ministers and officials continue to wear traditional dress in meetings, ties are rarely worn and are not valued as gifts.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Appropriate gifts could include books, pens, or Australian red wine. Golf is a popular pastime amongst men.

NAURU

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Congregational, Roman Catholic.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English and Nauruan.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gifts usually exchanged during high-level meetings (ministers, Heads of State).

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

No financial limitation/restriction on acceptance or retention of gifts.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Nil.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Gifts reflecting our shared history and culture well regarded. For example, gifts related to Australian AFL teams followed by the intended recipient are highly appreciated as are gifts reflecting the historical connection between Australian and Nauru (e.g. photographs or documents from the Australian National Archives).

NEPAL

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Nepal is a secular state but has nearly 80 per cent Hindu population. It also has a significant Buddhist population, along with small Christian and Muslim communities.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Official language is Nepali. English is widely spoken in government and industry.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

The exchanging of gifts is a widespread social custom. Receive and give gifts with right hand rather than left hand.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Ties and cufflinks are not compatible with national dress. Gifts linked to religious beliefs would not be appropriate. Gifting of alcoholic beverages to government officials would be inappropriate.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The preference of the Nepalese would be for items that reflect cultural identity of the country providing such gift such as indigenous arts, statuettes of kangaroos, boomerang etc. Coffee table books could be another alternative.

NETHERLANDS, THE

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christian.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Dutch, although English is widely spoken.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

The Prime Minister and Ministers have requested the protocol department to keep a low profile and therefore not to buy very expensive gifts. If the Prime Minister and Ministers travel to other countries, only the head of a delegation will receive a gift, not his or her staff members. Dutch citizens who work abroad, for instance directors of factories, will never receive a gift. With packaging, orange is usually reserved for the Royal family.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

The King is not allowed to keep any gift. The Prime Minister and Ministers are not allowed to keep any gift once they have left office. Gifts of the Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs are displayed in showcases at the Ministry of General Affairs.

Civil servants are not allowed to keep gifts with a value of more than €50. Those gifts are stored in the ministry. Gifts valued at less than €50 are usually raffled-off amongst staff members of the directorate of the civil servant concerned at the end of the year.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

None.

GENERAL COMMENTS

In principle, the Netherlands discourages the exchange of gifts unless the other party insists. Should there be an exchange of gifts, it is generally managed through both protocol departments. The value of gifts from the Prime Minister are generally limited to around €500, but in most cases the gifts have a lesser value. The value of gifts from Ministers is limited to around €300, but most of the gifts have a lesser value. The limit for gifts to be handed out by the Secretary-General (that is: if she represents the minister) is €50.

NEW CALEDONIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Roman Catholic, Protestant.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

French and local Melanesian languages.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

At Ministerial/parliamentary level an exchange of gifts is usual with the senior French administrator (the High Commissioner), the President of the Government of New Caledonia, the President of the New Caledonian Congress, Ministers, Presidents of Provincial Assemblies and Mayors. With the senior French administrator and the President of the Government of New Caledonia, a more substantial gift is usual (i.e. ceramic, artwork). For the others a book, preferably pictorial, is usual.

There are also customary exchanges during meetings with Kanak customary authorities, including the President of Customary Senate. As a code of social relations, custom (“coutume” in French) is central to the Kanak community, short similar to a “Welcome to country” ceremony in Australia. For a visitor, custom is to present a gift to the Chief responsible for the place the visitor wants to enter; it entails specific rules. By doing custom, the visitor pays his/her respect to Kanak culture, acknowledges the traditional owners of the land and asks permission to be present on traditional land. The traditional gifts (which can be acquired locally) are:

- a piece of cloth, the length of which reflects the importance of the visitor
- yams
- a token amount of cash money (usually XPF1000 or approximately AUD15).

Australian Indigenous-themed gifts are an appropriate addition to the traditional gifts.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

There is a certain order to customary exchanges. Post in Noumea will provide briefing and prepare set remarks for the occasion. As the customary exchanges occur in French, HOP Noumea can introduce and speak on behalf of the visitor.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

While gift exchanges are usual, gifts of an extravagant nature are not required. Tobacco or cigarettes are often given as part of a customary exchange. However, Australian Government policy prohibits giving tobacco or cigarette. This restriction is understood and accepted locally.

NEW ZEALAND

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Protestant and Catholic.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English, Maori and sign language.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

None.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

The practice of gift giving in New Zealand is essentially the same as in Australia. Australia and New Zealand do not routinely exchange gifts for bilateral meetings and generally both sides discourage such gifts. The exceptions will be personal gifts (for example, the Prime Ministers have exchanged gifts such as wine) or, conceivably, significant events/anniversaries (for example, centennials).

GENERAL COMMENTS

There may be gift protocols involved if Australians were involved with a visit to a marae in New Zealand, but that we have not come across this at post in recent memory (and would assess on a case by case basis what was appropriate/required). By way of background, it is traditional for all visitors to a marae to present a *koha* or gift to their hosts during the welcome as a token of their gratitude for the hospitality received and an expression of their regard for the hosts. It is not a payment (as this would be to spurn the open hospitality given by the hosts) but rather an acknowledgement of the hosts' efforts. It is usual to leave a gift of money in an envelope as a *koha*. There is no standard amount for a *koha*, that depends on the visitors – they give as little or as much as they are able. The *koha* is placed on the marae by the last speaker from the visitors group at the conclusion of the song accompanying his speech.

NEW ZEALAND REALM COUNTRIES (COOK ISLANDS AND NIUE)

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Protestant and Catholic.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English, Polynesian.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

None.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

GENERAL COMMENTS

New Zealand MFAT has advised that gift protocols for the Cook Islands and Niue are determined on a case-by-case basis. This is consistent with our own approach. We would generally establish whether there are specific gifts/protocols/expectations for each visit (especially if it is a high-level visit, e.g. Leader or Ministerial).

Each gift would be approached on an individual basis, taking into account the purpose of the visit, previous gifts (if relevant) and the individual or group concerned.

NICARAGUA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Catholicism.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Spanish.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gifts are usually exchanged at the end of the first official meeting i.e. between Heads of State or Foreign Ministers.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Examples of gifts exchanged are local artisanal products.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

The warm climate should be taken into account in deciding gifts. Cufflinks are generally not used and woollen items are not suitable. Any books given should be in Spanish, as English is not widely spoken.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Nicaragua usually gives original paintings by Nicaraguan painters or Nicaraguan handicrafts.

NIGERIA**MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christian 40%, Islam 40%, Animism/Traditional 20%.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Customary to provide gift on introductory call on senior public figures including State Governors, Traditional leaders, Federal leaders (less so but preferable). When in doubt, give a gift.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Avoid "unclean" items for Muslims – pork based products, alcohol. Avoid religious insignia/symbols.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Observe common prudence and sensitivity. Distinctly Australian gifts good.

NIUE (SEE NEW ZEALAND REALM COUNTRIES)

NORTH MACEDONIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Macedonian Orthodox, Muslim.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Macedonian, Albanian (both are official languages).

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Prior to the visit Protocol inquires with the delegation whether the guest has any hobbies or special interests so that a gift can be selected accordingly.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

The value of gifts should not be very high. No exact values have been indicated.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Personal clothing and food items.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The origin and meaning of gifts should be clear. If there is a certificate that goes with a gift it should be translated. The gift should be elegantly wrapped. When giving a gift the Macedonians take care that the gift is linked to Macedonian history, culture, ethnography and was produced in North Macedonia. Gifts usually given by officials are copies of museum artefacts, souvenirs, Ohrid pearls, filigree, and paintings.

NORWAY

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christianity.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Norwegian.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

There is no tradition for exchange of gifts. If there is a gift exchange at Ministerial level it should be handed over through protocol.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

The value of the gift should not exceed NOK500,00 (about AUD100).

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Live animals are not acceptable gifts. Nor are products/artefacts made from animals defined as endangered under international conventions.

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION (NATO)

NATO maintains a general 'no gifts' policy.

OMAN (SEE GULF STATES)

PAKISTAN 27.11.19

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Islamic (96.28% Muslim population).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Urdu and English are the official languages of Pakistan. English is common in most government ministries, and is widely spoken by the elite – particularly by likely recipients of such gifts.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

In Pakistan it is customary to present gifts to official or state visitors. Reciprocity is therefore expected.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Pakistani dignitaries are allowed to retain small mementoes, like cuff-links, books and photographs, received from foreign dignitaries in an official capacity. The law requires all other gifts to be deposited in the ‘Toshakhana’ (state-owned gift treasury). Pakistani dignitaries who wish to retain the gifts can pay the price as determined by the Toshakhana Evaluation Committee. This rule also applies to spouses and dependents.

Gifts are often retained by Pakistani dignitaries, therefore, it is recommended to give something appropriate to their liking.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Liquor or containers for liquor (e.g. crystal decanters, silver hip flasks, wine jugs) and especially anything made from pigskin or the like. Anything in gold or silver should be genuine and not plated. In jewellery, Pakistani women do not customarily wear brooches, unless it is a personal affectation.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Ceramic items (especially large bowls or plates) and well-done, artistic wood carving would be acceptable. Gifts of Australian cultural material would be welcome. Any sort of Australian precious stones, diamonds, sapphires, emeralds and particularly opals, would be desirable. In the clothing line, good quality sheepskin jackets for men, sheepskin rugs, lambskin coats would go well. The High Commission should always be asked to sound out personal likes and dislikes of the principal host and hostess in advance.

PALAU (SEE MICRONESIA)

PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Islamic, Christian minority.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Arabic (English and French also widely spoken).

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gift exchanges are frequent at all levels – public/private sectors, during calls, public meetings, official meals. Normally photographed. Generally opened on the spot.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Anything connected with or alluding to Israel. Personal items should be avoided. Avoid clothing gifts (cufflinks, ties), particularly those that require ‘size’ to be known (e.g. hats). Items depicting excessive self-satire or exaggerated nationalism would not be appreciated. Gifts revealing of the female body (books showing bikini clad sunbathers, videos of some Australian movies) and gifts of inappropriate female apparel could cause offence. In addition, things proscribed by Islam – alcohol, gambling, pork products, pigskin leather, would be inappropriate. Dates are inappropriate as they are produced locally. Need to avoid offending religious sensitivities, need to avoid any material which might be considered racist/Islamophobic. Avoid religious insignia/symbols. Glassware (as it is a significant industry in Hebron).

GENERAL COMMENTS

Materials with strong Australian flavour considered most acceptable. Ornamental gifts, usually from Jerusalem or Bethlehem and often with Christian motifs, are commonly given as gifts. If a Palestinian kufieh scarf (black and white) is received, recommend it is not worn for photographs. Be alert to gifts portraying maps (e.g. of historic Palestine).

PAPUA NEW GUINEA**MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity (Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism, Anglican, Seventh Day Adventist, Baptist, United Church, The Salvation Army, and Pentecostal).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English, Tok Pisin (Pidgin English), Hiri Motu (language of southern coastal areas of PNG, including the original inhabitants / landowners of Port Moresby and surrounds).

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

For official formal visits, Papua New Guineans would expect an exchange of gifts. But for informal visits, no gift exchange would be necessary. Art work (including Indigenous art work) is well received, as are iconic Australian gifts (e.g. Akubra hats and RM Williams boots) or gifts related to Australian sporting teams which are

popular (particularly rugby league). In the Highlands region, senior visitors may be gifted a pig. It is appropriate to donate the pig back to the community, or to a local hospital or school.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

The Seven Day Adventist community in PNG does not consume alcohol or pork.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Seventh Day Adventists (strongly represented in the current Government) observe the Sabbath from Friday evening through to Saturday evening and have their church services on Saturday. All other churches observe Sunday as their day of worship. Church attendance and the Sabbath are strongly observed in Papua New Guinea, which makes it difficult to arrange meetings or conduct business with Government on Friday evenings and over weekends.

PANAMA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Roman Catholicism.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Spanish.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Practice flexible. Exchange of gifts should be cleared first.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

The warm climate should be taken into account in deciding gifts. Cufflinks are generally not used and woollen items are not suitable. Any books given should be in Spanish, as English is not widely spoken.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Examples of gifts exchanged are local artisanal products. Australian wine is popular.

PARAGUAY

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Catholicism.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Spanish and Guarani (native language).

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Nil.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Gifts which offend accepted behaviour and morality.

PERU

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Catholicism.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Spanish.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gifts at Ministerial level or above would expect to be exchanged. Sometimes exchanges of gifts can be avoided by mutual agreement. Small gifts are appropriate for those people who have been of particular assistance during the visit (drivers, ceremonial, liaison, interpreters). Gifts to Ministers should be easy to unwrap in the event the recipient wishes to open immediately.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

None.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Peru has a very large textile/handcraft industry. Gifts of textiles, unless outstanding should be avoided as should handcrafts. Silver is a major mineral product in Peru and should also be avoided.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Small gifts peculiar to Australia are always popular. The post should be consulted on gift requirements prior to a Ministerial visit.

PHILIPPINES, THE

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Roman Catholicism 85%; Islam 4%.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English and Filipino, based on Tagalog, is the official language, English is widely spoken. There are about 20 indigenous languages.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gifts are often exchanged at senior government level. Gifts should not be opened in the presence of the giver.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

The code of conduct and ethical standards for public officials prohibit public officials and employees from soliciting or accepting anything of monetary value when this is given by reason of his/her official position. A thing of monetary value is one which is evidently or manifestly excessive by its very nature. Gifts are usually retained or given to colleagues/friends, except for the President who keeps all gifts received in a museum at the Presidential Palace.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Need to avoid offending religious sensitivities – both Roman Catholic and Muslim, including by avoiding any material which might be considered lewd or racist (including literature and art). No wine, chocolates, tobacco, pig leather.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Wealthy Filipinos very generous with gifts, often quite expensive, and would expect the same in return. Filipinos are very fond of good food and wine and like to receive these as gifts.

POLAND

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Catholicism.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Polish.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Gift giving is not a must, but is appreciated. Will normally provide a modest gift reflecting the country's cultural and artistic strengths.

PORTUGAL

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Roman Catholic.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Portuguese.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

No gift protocols in Portugal. In general, Portuguese will give gifts that are representative of the country or of a particular region. This can include books, ceramics or textiles. Post recommends conventional gifts for exchange.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

None known.

QATAR (SEE GULF STATES)

ROMANIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Eastern Orthodox (81.4%)/Roman Catholic (4.33%).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Romanian.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Exchange of gifts should be made exclusively through Protocol Department of the Parliament/Government.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

There is no financial limitation on acceptance of gifts. However, if officials receive very expensive gifts they must pass them to the competent authorities. Gifts such as works of art would be displayed in Parliament/Government buildings.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Personal clothing and food items would be inappropriate.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Romanian gifts are usually souvenirs.

RWANDA**MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Protestant (49.5%), Roman Catholic (43.7%)

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Kinyarwanda (official, universal Bantu vernacular), French (official).

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gift exchanges between visitor/host are acceptable on high-level official calls. When exchanging a gift it is customary to use both hands.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

A presidential order in 2010 sets out the modalities for the acceptance of gifts. The financial limit on a gift is AUD150, more expensive gifts will be accepted but given to the institution and must be reported to the Office of the Ombudsman.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Expensive gifts.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Cultural and artistic gifts from the giving country are most appropriate. Coffee table books on Australia are appreciated.

SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christianity (Anglican (17%)).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gift exchanges between visitor/host are common on official calls. Usually initiated by guest at the end of meeting.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Items of a personal nature.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Gifts that reflect Australia including wine are popular. Cricket and tropical Australian theme (maritime, wildlife) go down well.

SAINT LUCIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christianity – Roman Catholic (61%).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Nil.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Items of a personal nature.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Gifts that reflect Australia including wine are popular. Cricket and tropical Australian theme (maritime, wildlife) are appreciated.

SAN MARINO

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Roman Catholic.

MAJOR LANGUAGE

Italian.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Exchange through protocol of Parliament/government at the level of Ministers and heads of Government and State. In the case of the Ambassador's presentation of credentials, the exchange of gifts would be done directly.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Officials may not accept gifts of a value higher than 100 euro. At the level of heads of state and government and ministers there is no financial limitation but expensive gifts are not appropriate.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Expensive gifts.

GENERAL COMMENTS

San Marino is quite a formal country. Gifts should not be too original.

SAINT VINCENT AND GRENADINES**MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity (82.3%) (Pentecostal (27.6%), Anglican (13.9%)).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Nil.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Gifts of a personal nature.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Gifts that reflect Australia including wine are popular. Cricket and tropical Australian theme (maritime, wildlife) are appreciated.

SAMOA**MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Christianity.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English and Samoan.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Exchange normally takes place at the final function before departure and is accompanied by a short informal speech. Farewell dinner is the normal venue.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

No financial limitation. Gifts to the Head of State are displayed at his Official Residence.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

None.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Samoans are very hospitable and exchanges of gifts frequent.

SAUDI ARABIA (SEE GULF STATES)

SERBIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Serbian Orthodox.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Serbian.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Exchange of gifts should be made through the Chief of Protocol or protocol officer at the conclusion of the visit.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

If officials receive expensive gifts these must be passed to the Palace of Serbia.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Personal clothing and food items.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Gifts given include crystal, fresco copies, items from the national souvenir shop such as coffee or tea sets, tablecloths, wallets, attaché cases etc. ceramic, leather, collections of silver or gold ducats, sometimes original paintings.

SIERRA LEONE

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Islam, Christianity, Traditional/Animism.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Customary to provide gift on introductory call on senior public figures including State Governors, Traditional leaders, Federal leaders (less so but preferable). When in doubt, give a gift.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Avoid “unclean” items for Muslims – pork based products. Avoid religious insignia/symbols.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Observe common prudence and sensitivity. Distinctly Australian gifts good.

SINGAPORE

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Taoism and Hinduism.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Mandarin, English, Malay and Tamil.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gifts should be wrapped, please avoid black and white colours. Check with Post in advance. While officials in Singapore suggest it is a country where gift-giving is not required, gifts are sometimes presented to visitors anyway. Having small gifts 'just in case' is good practice.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Gifts should be presented with both hands to the recipients.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Avoid gifts which have a negative local cultural connotation: clocks; watches; sharp objects (knives, scissors); and items made from cow or pig for Muslim/Hindu recipients.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Advice has been that it is inappropriate to present gifts to Singapore Ministers. This should always be checked with post.

SLOVAKIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Officially a secular country. Roman Catholic.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Slovak.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Exchange of gifts should be made exclusively through the Protocol Department.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

There is no financial limitation on acceptance of gifts, but the unspoken rule of modesty applies.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Avoid crystal glass, ceramics items, objects made of leather as they are produced locally.

SLOVENIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Officially a secular country. Roman Catholic.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Slovene.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Rules on the exchange of gifts depend on the office holder, and should be agreed upon beforehand on a case by case basis. In general, if the guest does not present a gift to the host, the host should not present a gift to the guest. Gifts should be given to foreign guests on State or official visits, except where there is a reciprocal obligation. If the guest is accompanied by a spouse/partner, a gift should also be presented to the spouse/ partner. In general, gifts are opened in the presence of the visitor. Exchange of gifts takes place either at the conclusion of a meeting, or after lunch/dinner. If the visitor is of a lower rank (for instance a minister visiting the President), then gifts will be received by protocol in advance, with no gift to be received in return.

When the President or high representatives of Slovenia are on state or official visits abroad, one main gift will be given to the host and one to the host's spouse or partner. Gifts of smaller value should be given to the host's security and technical personnel and may also be given to the host's children if they are included in the programme of the visit.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Weapons (e.g. knives), unless the receiver is a known collector of these items.

SOMALIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Islam.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Somali.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

No particular traditions.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

None.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

The usual sensitivities about gifts to Muslims apply.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Coffee table books on Australia are appreciated.

SOUTH AFRICA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Majority Christianity (Catholicism; protestant denominations), also Islam, Hinduism, Judaism.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English (language of business). In addition, ten other official languages (Southern Sotho, Pedi/Northern Sotho, Tswana, Swati, Ndebele, Xhosa, Zulu, Afrikaans, Venda and Tsonga).

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Exchange of gifts is not expected and is relatively rare. Where it is the intention of an Australian official to give a gift, South African counterparts would appreciate prior knowledge of gift and value so that a reciprocal gift can be arranged (and vice-versa).

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

MPs are expected to declare gifts of a value in excess of R1,500.00 (A\$150.00).

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

None.

GENERAL COMMENTS

In the rare event that (likely by prior agreement) gifts are exchanged, the more distinctly Australian the better. Safest items are prints, wall hangings and books.

SPAIN

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Roman Catholic.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Spanish.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

No special protocol relating to gift exchanges, spontaneity and affection surpass formality in choice of occasion to exchange gifts.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil. If a gift is to an official and that person does not retain it, then it is displayed in an official place.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Spain has a traditional ceramics industry and ceramic items, and Spanish leather goods are top quality and world famous. These should be avoided, unless there is something very distinctive about Australian items. Wooden items should only be selected if they are distinctive, silver is a better choice if item tends towards functional (e.g. bowls).

GENERAL COMMENTS

Timing, simplicity and elegance, together with affection and attention to detail are the most important elements of gift giving in Spain. Gifts should not be fragile or overly large objects and they should not be too expensive or insignificant.

SRI LANKA**MAJOR RELIGION/S**

Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Sinhalese, Tamil, English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Exchange of gifts is customary. This can be either directly or through protocol, by negotiation during visit planning.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

No specific limits on value.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Generally avoid alcohol, as some visitors may be representatives of the Muslim community. Animal-product gifts should also generally be avoided (leather, etc). Avoid gifts with colonial themes or references.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Materials with strong Australian flavour are appreciated.

SURINAME

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christianity (48%) (Roman Catholic (22%)); Hinduism (22%); Islam (14%).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Dutch (official), although English is widely spoken, Sranan, Hindi.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Nil.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Gifts of a personal nature.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Wine and gifts with a tropical Australian theme (rainforests, wildlife, Indigenous).

SWEDEN

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Church of Sweden (Lutheran).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Swedish, though English is spoken by a majority of the population.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

The exchange of gifts at official levels is a very old and valued tradition in Sweden.

Gifts should be presented in an elegant box/container that may be easily opened.

Avoid the royal colours of blue and yellow in packaging.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

The value of a gift to be presented by a Swedish official to a high-level host/ counterpart is approximately SEK 1000 (A\$180). Swedish gift recipients must declare the gift to customs authorities – if they are not able to retain the gift, it is displayed in an official place.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Sweden has sizeable homewares, glassware and apparel industries, so unless there is something distinctive about an Australian gift from any of these sectors, they should be avoided.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Design, functionality and elegance are the most important elements of gift giving in Sweden. Gifts need not be expensive and can most certainly be in the form of books on Australia as the majority of Swedes read and understand English. Premium Australian wines, as well as R M Williams footwear, are very well regarded.

SYRIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Islam.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Arabic.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gifts are usually not exchanged directly between the visitor and host government representative but at a protocol level between a delegation official and the person in charge of protocol in the host government representative's office.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

There are no formal financial or other restrictions on acceptance of gifts.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Alcohol. Pig-related products.

TANZANIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Islam 35% (97% of population on Zanzibar are Muslim), Christian 30%, other 30%.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Swahili, English is also spoken.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

No particular traditions.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

It is considered rude to return or decline a gift.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Due to the significant Muslim population the usual restrictions on gifts to Muslims should be observed, unless the religion of the recipient is known.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Coffee table books on Australia are appreciated.

THAILAND

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Buddhism (Theravada tradition) (94.6%), Islam (4.6%).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Thai.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gifts for Royalty and Head of Government are delivered prior to the major official function of the visit and displayed. Thai gifts are often elaborate and impressive. In other situations involving the services e.g. visit by Chief of Staff, the gift is exchanged during the call on the Thai counterpart. Do not use black in packaging.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

None.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Tradition is not to give sharp objects (such as a knife, dagger-type letter opener, etc.). Cufflinks only useful for very senior Thais who move in international circles.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Golf equipment popular.

TONGA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christianity (Wesleyan Methodism, some Mormonism).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Tongan, English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gift giving is very significant in Tongan culture. It is reciprocal and participation may incur obligations of a social or other nature. Implications should be checked with post beforehand. Presentation should be public. Gift may be placed on a suitable tray or cushion. Gifts to Royal Tongans may be passed on to attendants quite quickly.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

None.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Anything which obviously or by implication makes fun of Royalty, the Church or Polynesia.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Tongans like to give and to receive. Gift exchanges are symbolic public gestures and should therefore be given appropriate publicity.

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Protestant (26%), Roman Catholic (22%), Hinduism (18%); Islam (5%).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gifts are usually given at the end of meetings, sometimes with a photo.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Gifts should not be lavish or expensive.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Items of a personal nature.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Australia, cricket themed gifts or books are popular.

TUNISIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Islam.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

French and Arabic.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

No limitation.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Tunisia is an Islamic country therefore gifts of material proscribed by Islam (alcohol, pork products, pigskin objects) should be avoided.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Tunisians are worldly and sophisticated and a wide range of Australian gift items would be appreciated. If it is known that the person concerned drinks alcohol, gifts of Australian wine would be appreciated

TURKEY

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Islam.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Turkish.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Usually gifts are exchanged after the first formal call on each individual. However where a host Minister or another host individual is concerned, this tradition varies: either at the end of the first call or during speeches at the formal dinner. The post seeks clarification before each visit. Spouses tend to exchange gifts at luncheons organised by the host spouse. Gifts to officers involved with the visit e.g. interpreters are usually given at the end of the visit e.g. at the airport.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

No financial limits or restrictions.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Pork based or pigskin. Religious motifs. Liquor, wines. Leather goods. Clothing apparel for females.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Turks place great importance on gift exchanges. They tend to be lavish in selecting gifts but do not expect gifts in return of equal value. Australian woollen artefacts, jewellery or office knickknacks are recommended.

TUVALU

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christianity.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

No set protocol. Australian practice is followed.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Tuvaluan people are strong Christians. Gifts which may offend Christian morality, such as depictions of the nude human body, R-rated videos etc should be avoided.

GENERAL COMMENTS

In clothing or decorative pieces bright colours are preferred.

UGANDA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christianity (85%), Islam (15%).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

No particular traditions.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

None

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

The usual restrictions on gifts to Muslims should be observed, unless the religion of the recipient is known.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Coffee table books on Australia are appreciated.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (SEE GULF STATES)

UNITED KINGDOM 20.11

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Church of England, Roman Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian, United Reform and Baptist.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Exchange of gifts is not expected as the UK Government operates on a 'no gift policy'. Where it is the intention of an Australian Minister or Parliamentary Delegation to give a gift the British would appreciate prior knowledge of gift and value so that a reciprocal gift can be arranged.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

There is a £300 financial limit on gifts that can be retained by MPs and Officials.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Ivory of any sort, fur items, snakeskin and crocodile items, live or dead specimens of endangered species, foodstuffs.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Gifts should only be exchanged on significant visits or occasions.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christianity.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English, Spanish.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Exchange of gifts is not expected.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Gifts are never lavish and are always viewed more as mementos or have company logos.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Expensive/gifts of a personal nature.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Gifts may be in the form of entertainment (dinner, play or a sporting event, travel).

URUGUAY

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Catholicism.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Spanish.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Gifts are exchanged between Heads of state or Heads of Government. The exchange takes place either at the President's office or the President's residence. The Minister for Foreign Affairs exchanges gifts with his counterpart at the Foreign Ministry. The same procedure applies with other high-level government officials. Officials of a lower rank exchange gifts through the Department of Protocol.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

The Legislative and Judiciary Powers may give a medal commemorating the visit. The Executive Power gives different types of gifts.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

None.

VANUATU

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christian.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

National language is Bislama, Bislama, English and French are the official languages.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Exchanges of gifts form an integral part of Vanuatu's culture and visiting dignitaries could be expected to be presented with gifts during their stay. Visitors should be prepared to reciprocate gifts exchanged in bilateral meetings unless Post makes

arrangements through protocol for no gift exchange to take place. The atmosphere attending gift exchanges is generally informal with the exchange accompanied by brief remarks on both sides including description of the gift, its origin and its significance. From the Vanuatu side the most common type of gifts presented are wood carvings and handicrafts. Gift exchange through protocol is not normal practice in Vanuatu; direct exchange is preferred.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

No financial restrictions.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Ties and cufflinks are not worn. Leather goods tend to deteriorate in the hot, humid conditions. Wool is not a tropical fabric. Gifts which are likely to offend public morality, which may, in certain circumstances, include alcohol.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Acceptable gifts: aboriginal art and artefacts, desk sets, clocks, pens, pottery, diaries, books. For males – Akubra hats, signed sports jerseys (if not gifted previously). For females – Australian jewellery, scarves, bags shawls.

Gifts provided in Vanuatu generally are based on organic materials and may require fumigation **before** return to Australia. Post can arrange for return of any gifts that are to be retained by diplomatic bag after the visit. Cost of return of gifts from Vanuatu including packaging are very high.

VENEZUELA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Catholicism.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Spanish.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Practice flexible. An exchange of gifts should be cleared first.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Nil.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Australian wine very popular and high-quality Australian Indigenous print items (scarves, etc.) are also popular.

VIETNAM

MAJOR RELIGION/S

None (80%), Buddhism (9%), Catholicism (7%).

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Vietnamese.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

The Vietnamese are very conscious of observing the formalities and so tend to give gifts at most functions, even if they have advised that gifts will not be exchanged. The meeting lead (host) always presents gifts first and then it is appropriate to give gifts in return. Gifts should be presented and received using two hands, and the exchange normally takes place at the end of meetings. Photos will usually be taken.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

There are no particular rules relating to the acceptance of gifts, apart from receiving it with both hands. The gift-giver will sometimes open the gift to show it to you. If they don't, you can either accept the gift and leave it wrapped, or you could ask if you should open it – normally they will say yes.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Avoid black or white items, as these colours are associated with death and funerals. Avoid gifts with yellow and gold leaf patterns, shapes or prints as leaves can be associated with growing old (yellowing) and death (falling). Similarly, the gift of a watch or clock should be avoided (particularly to the elderly) as this implies limited time on earth. Owls are considered unlucky so avoid gifts depicting owls.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Both decorative and functional gifts would be acceptable. Coffee table books on Australian wildlife, landscape, cities, society, are generally appropriate. Australian wine – especially red wine – is popular with the more worldly elite, although gifts that can be displayed rather than consumed are preferred. Vases are often valued as they symbolise containers of wealth. Other identifiably Australian items, including Indigenous Australian items, are also suitable. Gifts for leaders should be in red colour, symbolising power.

Wrapping and presentation is important, gold and red are favoured colours. Avoid handkerchiefs, knives, shoes, anything black or white, and chrysanthemums (often used at funerals). Vietnamese prefer odd numbers to even numbers, so if giving a collection of items, an odd number is preferable – but this is not essential.

WALLIS AND FUTUNA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Roman Catholic.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

Official National language is French, however French could also be a second language with some parts of Wallis and Futuna. Wallisian is the first spoken language in Wallis and Futunian is the first spoken language in Futuna.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

At a ministerial/parliamentary level, an exchange of gifts is usual with the senior French administrators (the French Prefect in Wallis and his delegate in Futuna Island), the three (3) Kings of Wallis and Futuna (1 King in Wallis and 2 Kings in Futuna), the President of the Territorial Assembly of Wallis and Futuna, the MP, the Senator.

For the three Kings, a more Australian indigenous-themed gift is appropriate. For the others a book, preferably pictorial, or vases are usual.

As a code of social relations, custom (“coutume” in French) is central to the Wallisian and Futunian community. For a visitor, custom is basically a gift presentation and verbal exchange with the Kings of Wallis and Futuna (or their representatives in their absences). By doing custom, the visitor pays his/her respect to Wallisian and Futunian culture, acknowledges the traditional owners of the land and seeks their symbolic approval to undertake their mission on traditional land. The visitor also describes the work/mission intended to be done in Wallis and Futuna.

The traditional gifts include (in addition to the Australian Indigenous-themed gifts):

- there is an expectation for gifts of cash money (usually XPF10,000 or approximately AUD 150) with the amount reflecting the context and/or hierarchy of the visitor and the importance of the meeting/event. Seek Post’s advice beforehand as to the necessity and/or appropriateness of offering such sums.
- a wrapped bottle (preferably in its original box) of Australian spirits (whisky/rum but not wine) is also usually given as a western substitute for the traditional Kava root.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

When meeting with the Kings it is advised to be accompanied by an intermediary to announce your visit to the receiving custom authorities. The intermediary can either be a nominated person by the Prefect or the Prefect himself or an official translator nominated by the customary authorities office or a representative of the customary authorities. Usually, there is a certain order and procedure to customary exchanges. Seek post advice.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

While gift exchanges are usual, gifts of an extravagant nature are not required.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Normal business dress code applies. Hats are not allowed at Coutume. Women should note that shoulders should be covered and skirts/dresses should be below knee-length; business trousers are acceptable.

YEMEN (SEE GULF STATES)

ZAMBIA

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christianity.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Generally reciprocal - gift giving very common. People open gifts when they are presented – so packaging needs to unfurl so contents can be seen.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Important gifts are considered as belonging to the state, e.g. the President's collection of paintings. Gifts to office holders are regarded as going to the office.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

It is a hot climate so wool is largely out. People are very sensitive about colonialism but love materials which show Australian outback looking like Central Africa. Anything with a "Whites only" image (e.g. classical music) is considered tasteless.

GENERAL COMMENTS

People like distinctively Australian gifts especially Indigenous gifts or those featuring Australian flora and fauna. They would be disappointed with a wallet (which could come from anywhere) unless it had a boomerang fastening or something equally distinctive.

ZIMBABWE

MAJOR RELIGION/S

Christianity.

MAJOR LANGUAGE/S

English, Shona, Ndebele.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO GIFT EXCHANGE OR PACKAGING

Although people do not necessarily have an expectation to receive a gift, it is customary to present a gift, even a small one, which is considered a token (or something that "accompanies" a greeting). People usually open gifts when they are presented – so packaging needs to unfurl so contents can be seen.

RULES RELATING TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS

Generally people are happy to receive gifts. If giving to an official, a gift that can be utilised or displayed in an office is preferred. Examples are paintings/prints (Indigenous art is admired) or quality smaller items such as business card holders, pens, journals/note books/diaries. Gifts to office holders are regarded as going to the office and not the person.

INAPPROPRIATE GIFTS

Gifts that are a reminder of the colonial era or a depiction of war are considered offensive.

GENERAL COMMENTS

People appreciate distinctively Australian gifts or those featuring Australian flora and fauna. Gifts which symbolize the culture and/or heritage of Australia are most appreciated (anything that is unique to that country and which cannot be purchased locally).