

## Transport for NSW

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Date: 8 / 4 / 24
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Ms Samara Dobbins  
Deputy Secretary, Delivery and Coordination  
Premier's Department

By email:

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### Re: Circular C2021-07 Department Liaison Officers

Dear Samara

I write in relation to the *Department of Premier & Cabinet Circular C2021-07 Department Liaison Officers (DPC Circular)*.

Transport for NSW (**Transport**) has recently considered both its processes for engaging Departmental Liaison Officers (**DLOs**) and the DPC Circular on the subject.

As a result, Transport has adopted the following processes in respect of its DLOs:

1. *DLOs to have a nominated Transport managerial contact during their time as DLO with whom they meet weekly.*

At present, and in accordance with the DPC Circular, DLOs report to the Chief of Staff in the Minister's Office. While this is a practical requirement for day-to-day activities, it does put both the Chief of Staff and the DLO in the position of being the only people to ensure the DLO's activities remain apolitical.

Having the DLOs also report to a senior person in Transport would provide an additional person who could provide direction and support to DLOs on adhering to the scope of the role.

2. *All DLOs be provided with a copy of the updated DLO Handbook.*

Transport has developed a DLO Handbook (**copy attached**), which provides additional information and clarification for them about what types of activities fall within and outside the parameters of their duties as a DLO. Transport now provides this to each DLO before they commence performing that role.

3. *DLOs be required to disclose to Transport, prior to commencing as a DLO, if they are members of a political party.*

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As a matter of course, Transport does not require employees to declare any membership of a political party. However, employees are required to declare any potential conflict of interest and put in place measures to avoid that conflict. Given the close working relationship required between a DLO and a Minister's Office, Transport has decided to provide additional guidance to DLOs to declare political party membership as a potential conflict of interest. This disclosure will enable additional controls to be put in place while they are performing the duties of DLO, should the agency assess this as appropriate in individual circumstances.

On reviewing the DPC Circular, Transport considers there would be value in that Circular being made clearer about the role(s) to be performed by a DLO, and those not to be performed, in a manner similar to Transport's DLO Handbook. Transport also suggests that consideration be given to updating the DPC Circular to reflect the dual reporting line and additional disclosure guidance that Transport has adopted.

We would appreciate meeting to further discuss these suggestions, and the reasons for them.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Tracey Taylor  
**Chief People Officer**