Philanthropy and Fundraising Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The objectives of this policy are to provide the principles and frameworks around the solicitation, acceptance and management of philanthropic gifts, including:

a. fundraising principles and conduct of those involved
b. acceptance of gifts
c. use of University philanthropic funds
d. oversight of funds raised through philanthropy donor stewardship.

Section 2 - Overview

(2) RMIT is registered as a charity with the Australian Tax Office (ATO) and has endorsed Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status and Tax Concession Charity (TCC) status. RMIT can therefore receive income tax deductible gifts, access income tax exemptions and GST concessions.

(3) This policy outlines the principles and conditions for acceptable philanthropy and fundraising activities at RMIT to ensure funds donated to the University are optimised, and that the acceptance and management of gifts is conducted in a culturally responsible manner in cases where specific cultural protocols may apply.

Section 3 - Scope

(4) This policy applies across the RMIT Group and includes all philanthropic gifts received by the University for the benefit of students, staff, controlled entities and strategic investment vehicles (e.g. Activator).

(5) Gift acceptance and administration may differ in countries where local law is different to relevant Australian law.

Section 4 - Policy

Principles

(6) RMIT encourages collaboration, connectedness and engagement with key stakeholders, both internal and external to RMIT and the RMIT Community, to maximise the impact of philanthropy at RMIT.

(7) RMIT will align its philanthropic activities to its strategic objectives and values, and foster a culture of philanthropy and giving in the RMIT community.

(8) RMIT acknowledges that specific cultural protocols may apply to some philanthropic gifts and will ensure that the principle of cultural responsibility underpins all philanthropic activity.

(9) All RMIT philanthropy and fundraising will:

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a. protect the DGR status of the university ensuring that it is not inappropriately used by others
b. be transparent, informative and professional
c. respect the privacy of donors
d. only accept gifts that meet legislative and University policy requirements
e. use gifts effectively and ethically in line with donor wishes and any applicable cultural protocols
f. acknowledge and recognise donors, and celebrate philanthropy
g. acknowledge every gift or pledge made to the University in a timely manner consistent with the size and designation of the gift or pledge, and with the donor's wishes as documented.
h. issue receipts for all philanthropic gifts to the University
i. provide reports, at least annually, to donors of endowed and significant gifts on the financial management, and impact of these gifts
j. ensure donors are aware of the impact of funds they have gifted.

Philanthropic Gifts

(10) Philanthropic gifts will only be accepted where they:

a. are able to deliver their intended purpose, align with the RMIT values and support objectives stated within the RMIT Strategic Plan
b. do not compromise the University's reputation, integrity or institutional autonomy
c. do not compromise the exercise of academic freedom and freedom of speech as outlined in the Intellectual Freedom Policy
d. such acceptance is consistent with University policies, including the intent of the RMIT Sustainability Policy and Corporate Social Responsibility Due Diligence Instruction

(11) A philanthropic gift has each of the following characteristics:

a. there is a transfer of money or property to RMIT for its own benefit or of its students or community
b. it is made voluntarily
c. it does not provide any 'material benefit' to the donor (See Definitions re 'material benefit')
d. it is motivated by philanthropic intent, and generosity, on the part of the donor; this does not preclude a donor from having a commitment to, or strong interest in, RMIT when making a philanthropic gift.
e. it will serve RMIT's best interests
f. it will not result in an administrative or financial burden.

(12) A philanthropic gift to RMIT may take the following form:

a. money (NB: The University does not generally accept gifts of cash)
b. pledges of money or non-monetary assets
c. securities and shares
d. other non-monetary assets (eg Artwork/books/buildings)

(13) Prior to acceptance of non-monetary gifts, RMIT will consider whether it:

a. will serve its best interests
b. will result in an administrative or financial burden
c. in practice, could be converted into cash
d. has been valued and can be received in accordance with relevant compliance obligations

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e. is compatible with the Sustainability Policy, Corporate Social Responsibility Framework and the Responsible Investment Principles
f. can be managed throughout its lifetime.

Fundraising

(14) All fundraising activities will abide by the CASE Statement of Ethics and Principles of Practice

(15) All fundraising activities must meet the minimum standards prescribed by RMIT policies and procedures.

(16) All fundraising initiatives are to be approved by the Philanthropy and Public Engagement, and, if required, escalated to the Philanthropy Fund Committee for final approval.

Responsibilities

(17) The Philanthropy Fund Committee:

a. provides governance and strategic direction for RMIT's philanthropic and fundraising activities
b. is responsible for determining whether to accept gifts for the RMIT Group (when referred by the head of the PPE unit or the Office of the Vice-Chancellor)
c. is responsible for ensuring that funds are distributed regularly and in accordance with donor wishes
d. is responsible for reporting to the University Executive Committee on philanthropic activities and performance at RMIT.

(18) The RMIT Delegations of Authority Policy outlines who has authority to offer or accept a gift on behalf of RMIT

(19) The Executive Director, Business Development and Partnerships is responsible for:

a. the direction and operational management of RMIT philanthropy and fundraising
b. establishing and maintaining procedures related to the management of philanthropic gifts

(20) The head of the Philanthropy team is responsible for the solicitation, administration, and management of philanthropic gifts to RMIT

(21) Finance is responsible for managing philanthropic funds in accordance with the Financial Management Policy and supporting procedures in alignment with ATO requirements and donor wishes.

(22) The RMIT Philanthropy Investment Advisory Group is responsible for the investment of funds gifted to RMIT in accordance with the RMIT Investment Strategy and the Responsible Investment Principles.

Review

(23) This policy will be reviewed every three years in accordance with the Policy Governance Policy.

Section 5 - Definitions

(Note: Commonly defined terms are in the RMIT Policy Glossary. Any defined terms below are specific to this policy).

Cultural Protocols	Principles and practices that guide the behaviour of a cultural group. For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, for example, these protocols include historic and current customs, practices, traditional lore and codes that are part of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural observances.

Material benefit	A person or organisation is considered to receive “material benefit” where the funding provider is promised: 1. logo acknowledgement 2. advertising or promotion 3. participation in promotional activities 4. rights to intellectual property 5. that a student must undertake an internship with the donor 6. items of value A donor will not receive any preferential treatment for themselves, or others (including relatives or colleagues) who are studying at RMIT, including admission to a program or any favoured treatment in grading and progression; or for employment or honorary appointments. Public recognition of a donor’s generosity, for example naming recognition, is not generally a material benefit. See ATO advice on gifts and donations for a full definition of Material Benefit.
Philanthropic gift	A philanthropic gift has the following characteristics: 1. there is a transfer of money or property to RMIT for its own benefit or of its students 2. it is made voluntarily, 3. it does not provide a “material benefit” to the donor, and 4. it is motivated by philanthropic intent, and generosity, on the part of the donor. It is not: Sponsorship, which is the provision of money, goods, or services for a specific activity or program in return for a material benefit. A material benefit will generally be a taxable supply for the purposes of Goods and Services Tax (GST) and accordingly, unlike in the case of gifts, GST will be applicable for a sponsorship. Sponsorship arrangements entered into and managed by the Philanthropy and Public Engagement will also be consistent with the Gift Acceptance Principles.

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Policy Owner	Michelle King Vice-President, Engagement
Policy Author	Joanna Watts Chief Advancement Officer
Enquiries Contact	Advancement

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