Template: Position paper

Foreword

Accounting position papers are an important tool that better-practice entities use to document key decisions and to keep stakeholders apprised of updates to accounting policies and processes, and how they will affect the financial statements. Section 7.7 ‘Preparing accounting position papers’ of the Financial Statements Better Practice Guide provides a list of suggested yearly topics and additional information you may wish to consider in relation to the content and structure.

The following template is an example on how you might structure a position paper, the detail required in relation to each issue will vary depending on each entity’s particular circumstances and the expectations of key stakeholders and the accountable authority.

Position Paper - XXXXXXXX

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Template Instructions

**Classification**

To edit the Classification demarcation in the header, double click on the header to activate the field and update the classification with relevant category (e.g. OFFICIAL or PROTECTED).

**Document Subtitle**

Update the subtitle on the cover page to help readers understand the main content of this document, without having to read every page (i.e. Implementation Options for AASB 16 *Leases*).

**Document Reference Number (202X-2X No.xx)**

Update the reference number (under the Subtitle) with relevant period and the reference number (i.e. 202X-2X No.01).

**Table of Contents (TOC)**

To update the table of contents above, right click on the TOC field, select “Update Field” and then click on “Update Entire Table”.

**Headings**

The main contents for the headings (Heading 1) have been pre-set up for the position paper, and explanation to the headings are listed underneath. However, they could be customised to suit the specific needs of your area.

# Purpose

Why are we preparing this paper?

Who originated the request? Name, entity, date and how the was issue raised.

If the position paper is dealing with implementation of a new accounting standard, the purpose should outline what the standard requires, when it is effective and a summary of the main issues that will be addressed. This may require discussion of the implications for whole of government reporting to ensure a consistent approach to preparation of budget estimates and to consolidated financial statements.

# Scope

The advice may be prepared under a restricted timeframe and with limited facts available. If the events or circumstances are changed this may affect the advice.

Outline what was in scope and what is out of scope.

# Facts, circumstances and assumptions

Outline the facts that are presented and what documents were provided outlining the facts. What assumptions are made in the absence of complete knowledge? How would a different assumption influence the conclusion reached?

# Consultation

In forming a position, whom did the preparer consult with and what was the nature of the consultation (e.g. phone discussions, draft paper circulated by email etc.)?

If a substantial amount of consultation has occurred, the main conclusion or consensus can be summarised with detailed comments included as an appendix to the paper. The consultation section should note the respondent’s position and organisation (i.e. both internal and external to Finance).

# Relevant accounting pronouncements/related documents

Document the relevant legislation AASB or GFS that has been referred to in the analysis.

# Position 1

Discuss the relevant AASB pronouncements (standards and interpretations) and how they apply to the circumstances outlined in this case. Are the facts in this case similar or different to those considered in accounting standards, in particular the facts discussed in the basis for conclusion or application guidance.

Consider any relevant research papers prepared by major accounting firms or international standards.

POSITION 1

Conclusion/recommendation

Prepared by

Signature:

Name:

Position: [e.g. Director/Section Manager]

Date:

Reviewed by

Signature:

Name:

Position: [e.g. Assistant Secretary/Branch Manager]

Date:

Approved by

Signature:

Name:

Position: [e.g. First Assistant Secretary/Division Manager]

Date:

# Attachment/Appendix

[The content in the following table is provided as an example only and should be deleted and replaced with relevant entity-specific information]

Table (a)(b)(c)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Title | Title | Title | Title | Title |
| Goods and services | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 |
|  | $m | $m | $m | $m | $m |
| Australian Capital Territory | 11,125 | 12,109 | 3.3 | 11,347 | 2.5 |
| New South Wales | 3,039 | 2,741 | -3.0 | 4,063 | -1.8 |
| Queensland | 434 | 486 | 2.7 | 1,196 | 3.1 |
| Victoria | 1,175 | 1,208 | 4.1 | 979 | 0.8 |
| Total | 12,354 | 12,354 | 5.8 | 17,585 | 1.4 |

(a) Includes Oceania and Antarctica.

(b) Goods data on a recorded trade basis, services data on a balance of payments basis.

(c) Excludes some confidential items of trade. For more information, refer to the Adjustments article   
(http://sample.address).

Based on XXXX STARS database, ABS catalogue 66666.0.55.004 and unpublished ABS data.