

## **EXPENSES REIMBURSEMENT FOR COUNCILLORS POLICY**

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### **AUTHORITY**

- Local Government Act 2009
- Local Government Regulation 2012 - Section 249 - 252
- Councillor Code of Conduct Policy

### **PURPOSE**

This policy provides for payment of reasonable expenses incurred, or to be incurred, by councillors for discharging their duties and responsibilities as councillors and for the provision of facilities to councillors for that purpose. This policy does not provide for salaries or other forms of councillor remuneration as this is determined independently by the Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal.

### **STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES**

The policy complies with the following principles:

- Reasonable expenses reimbursement to councillors
- Public accountability and transparency
- Public perceptions and community expectations
- No private benefit to be derived
- Equity and participation

### **EXPENSES CATEGORIES AND PAYMENT**

Expenses will be paid to a councillor through administrative processes approved by the Chief Executive Officer subject to:

- The limits outlined in this policy, and where necessary
- Council endorsement by resolution.

Council will reimburse expenses incurred for:

- Mandatory professional development
- Discretionary professional development deemed essential for the councillor's role

### **TRAVEL AS REQUIRED TO REPRESENT COUNCIL**

The Council will provide local, interstate and overseas travel expenses deemed necessary to achieve the business of Council when:

- A Councillor is acting as an official representative of Council; and
- The activity/event and travel has been endorsed by the Mayor and/or CEO. Councillors must travel via the most direct route, using the most economical and efficient mode of transport.

NOTE: Any fines incurred while travelling in Council-owned vehicles or privately-owned vehicles when attending to Council business will be the responsibility of the Councillor incurring the fine.

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## **TRAVEL BOOKINGS**

All councillors travel approved by council will be booked and paid for by council.

Economy class is to be used.

Airline tickets are not transferable and can only be procured for the councillors travel on council business. They cannot be used to offset other unapproved expenses. (e.g. cost of partner or spouse accompanying the councillor.)

Airline ticket changes will only be made in exceptional circumstances. Fees incurred for where changes are made will be the responsibility of the councillor and will be required to be reimbursed to Council.

## **TRAVEL TRANSFER COSTS**

Any travel transfer expenses associated with Councillors travelling for Council approved business will be reimbursed, eg. Trains, buses, taxi and ferry fares. Receipts must be provided with all claims for reimbursement.

## **PRIVATE VEHICLE USAGE**

Councillors private vehicle usage may be reimbursed by council if the:

- travel has been endorsed by council resolution
- claim for mileage is substantiated with log book details and
- total travel claim does not exceed the cost of the same travel using economy flights plus the cost of taxi transfers.
- evidence of comprehensive insurance cover
- The amount reimbursed will be based on the published Australian Tax Office business-use-of motor vehicle-cents-per kilometre method and kilometre rate applicable at the time of travel.

## **ACCOMMODATION**

All councillor accommodation for council business will be booked and paid for by council. Council will pay for the most economical deal available. Where possible, the minimum standards for councillors' accommodation should be three or four-star rating.

Where particular accommodation is recommended by conference organisers, council will take advantage of the package deal that is the most economical and convenient to the event.

Only in exceptional circumstances will Council alter pre-booked accommodation or reimburse a councillor for accommodation bookings. Substantial evidence must be provided as to why the original booking is unsuitable. Change of mind or lack of ability to manage travel time efficiently will not be supported.

Council will endeavour to organise accommodation which will include breakfast and evening meal to assist in reducing the amount of out of pocket expenses to be paid to/by councillors.

## MEALS

Council will reimburse costs of meals for a councillor when:

- the councillor incurs the cost personally and
  - the meal was not provided:
  - within the registration costs of the approved activity/event
  - during an approved flight.

The following limits apply to the amount council will reimburse for meals on sufficient evidence and production of a proper tax invoice:

Brisbane or other capital cities		all other
+ Breakfast	\$26.45	\$23.70
+ Lunch	\$29.75	\$27.05
+ Dinner	\$50.70	\$46.65

No alcohol will be paid for by council.

## Incidental allowance

\$19.05 per trip will be paid by Council to cover any incidental costs incurred by councillors required to travel, and who are away from home overnight, for official council business.

The Mayor will be reimbursed up to \$1,000 per annum for hospitality expenses deemed necessary in the conduct of Council business.

## PROVISION OF FACILITIES

All facilities provided to councillors remain the property of council and must be returned to council when a councillors term expires or at the retirement of the councillor, whichever comes first.

### Private use of council owned facilities

Based on the principle that *no private benefit is to be gained* the facilities provided to councillors by Council are to be used only for council business unless prior approval has been granted by resolution of council.

The council resolution authorising private use of council owned facilities will set out the terms under which the councillor will reimburse council for the percentage of private use. This would apply when councillors have private use of council owned motor vehicles and/or mobile telecommunication devices.

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### Facilities Categories

#### Administrative tools

Administrative tools may be provided to councillors as required to assist councillors in their role.

Administrative tools include:

- office space and meeting rooms
- computers in council offices
- necessary stationery
- laptop computer or notebook
- access to photocopiers in council offices
- access to printers in council offices
- access to facsimile machines in council offices
- publications
- use of council landline telephones and internet access in council offices

Secretarial support may also be provided for the mayor and councillors.

Council will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance and reasonable wear and tear costs of council-owned equipment that is supplied to councillors for official business use

This includes the replacement of any facilities which fall under council's asset replacement program.

Council may provide councillors with:

- a name badge (if required)
- the necessary safety equipment for use on official business, e.g. safety helmet/boots
- uniforms as decided from time to time

Council calls made on private mobile phones of councillors will be reimbursed on production of a receipt to the CEO.

#### **Mayor Telephone (Mayor must choose one of the below options for each 4-year term of Council)**

The Mayor will be provided with a council mobile phone for business use only.

or

The Mayor may elect to utilise their personal mobile telephone and be paid an annual allowance (\$1,000 p.a) to cover the cost of calls and data used

#### **Insurance**

Councillors will be covered under Council insurance policies while discharging civic duties. Specifically, insurance cover will be provided for including public liability, professional indemnity, personal accident and/or workers compensation and travel (domestic).

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Council will pay the excess for injury claims made by a councillor resulting from conducting official council business.

**Use of Council owned Vehicles on Council Business**

Councillors shall be given access to a council vehicle for official business from time to time where such purpose has been approved by Council or the CEO in advance.

The Mayor will be provided with a Council vehicle which will be used from time to time to assist other councillors travel to and from meetings, conferences and workshops.

Fuel for a council-owned vehicle used for official council business will be provided or paid for by council

Council is to provide councillors with:

- car parking at the local government office premises and / or attending to official council business

**REPORTING**

Council's Annual Report must contain information on councillor expenses reimbursement and provision of facilities as stipulated in the Local Government Regulation 2012.

Stephen Wilton  
**Chief Executive Officer**

<b>DATE OF ADOPTION:</b>	25 July 2019
<b>REVIEWED:</b>	17 June 2021
<b>TIME PERIOD OF REVIEW:</b>	Annual
<b>DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:</b>	June 2022