



EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

Adoption Date: July 2023

Revision Date: July 2024

Division: Corporate

Responsible Officer: Director Corporate Services

Note: P – Primary Author
S – Secondary Author

1. Policy objective:

To provide the Mayor and Councillors with reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of their roles.

2. Relevant legislation:

Local Government Act 2009

3. Procedures:

This Councillor Expenses Reimbursement Policy complies with the Statement of Principles, set out in the Department of Local Government guidelines:

- **No private benefit to be derived:** Facilities provided to Councillors are for the sole use of councillors in undertaking their duties and must be used responsibly and appropriately.
- **Reasonable Expenses Reimbursement:** Councillors should not be financially disadvantaged when carrying out their roles, and should be fairly and reasonably compensated in accordance with community expectations.
- **Public accountability and transparency** The use of the provided facilities will be open for review to the extent appropriate to the proper performance of a Councillor's responsibilities.
- **Public perceptions and community expectations** The council will provide only those facilities reasonably necessary for the efficient performance of a Councillor's responsibilities.
- **Equity and Participation** To maximise equity and the participation of councillors from diverse backgrounds and circumstances, this councillor Expenses Reimbursement Policy expressly permits the reimbursement of expenses that are necessarily incurred to allow the participation of councillors who experience unusual barriers to participation, such as a disability or cultural responsibilities.

4. Scope:

This policy applies to the Mayor and councillors for the reimbursement of expenses incurred by them undertaking their roles.

5. Definitions:

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
<i>Officials Council Business</i>	<p>Activities conducted on behalf of council where a Councillor is required to undertake certain tasks to satisfy legislative requirements or achieve business objectives for the Council. Official council business should result in a benefit being achieved either for the local government and/or the local community.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">– Attendance at council, committee and Briefing meetings– Attendance at prescribed Local Government training/workshops, seminars and conferences– Attendance at civic ceremonies and community events where a formal invitation has been received inviting councillors in their capacity to undertake official duty– Attending public meetings, annual meetings or presentation dinners where invited as a Councillor– Attending meetings of community groups were invited to speak about council programs of initiatives– Attending private meetings with constituents, where arranged through official council channels and details of discussions are documented in official records or diaries– Attending civic Reception functions on behalf of the Mayor– Attending organised meetings / deputations / inspections / community– Consultations on a one off basis; and– Attending organised meetings pertaining to the meeting of a community organisation whereby a Delegate of the Council has not appointed to attend or is unavailable to attend.
<i>Reasonable</i>	<p>Councillors must make sound judgements and consider what is prudent, responsible and acceptable to their communities when determining reasonable levels of expenditure.</p>
<i>Expenses</i>	<p>Council will reimburse Councillors for their reasonable and necessary expenses incurred or to be incurred when discharging their duties as councillors.</p>
<i>Professional Development</i>	<p>Attendance at workshops, course, seminars and conferences that improve councillor's skills relevant to the role of councillor.</p> <p>Mandatory Professional Development is the title that applies when the council resolves that all councillors must attend the event. Discretionary Professional Development is the title used to describe all professional development that is not Mandatory Professional Development.</p>
<i>Policy</i>	<p>The Council will reimburse councillors for expenses as set out in this policy. In addition to the expenses expressly referred to in the section of this Policy headed Expenses Categories, the Council will reimburse other expenses that are necessarily incurred to allow the participation, such as a disability or cultural responsibilities.</p>

6. Expense Category:

▪ **Professional Development**

The council will reimburse expenses incurred for:

- All mandatory professional development; and
- Discretionary professional development up to a maximum of \$5,000 (Indexed to CPI annually) during a single local government term

▪ **Travel as required to represent Council**

The Council will reimburse local, interstate and overseas travel expenses (e.g. flights, car, accommodation, meals and associated registration fees), 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 have been endorsed by resolution of Council

Councillors must travel via the most direct route, using the most economical and efficient mode of transport. The amount of the reimbursement will be the actual amount expended by the Councillor, or where an actual amount cannot be directly substantiated, an equivalent mileage allowance.

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.

▪ **Travel Bookings**

All councillor travel approved by Council will be booked and paid for by Council. Economy class is to be used where possible although council may approve business class in certain circumstances.

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

▪ **Travel transfer costs**

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

▪ **Private vehicle usage**

Payment for use of the Councillor's private vehicle on council business will be reimbursed to the Councillor on a kilometre rate as set out in the Australian Taxation Office allowable deductions for motor vehicles.

In other circumstances, Councillor's private vehicle usage will 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.

- **Accommodation**

All Councillor Accommodation for council business will be booked and paid for by Council
Accommodation should be selected that provides:

- Council with the best price value; and
- Convenient to the conference/meeting

Councillors will be reimbursed for the actual cost of meals when:

- The Councillor incurs the cost personally
- The meal was not provided within the (registration) costs of the approved activity/event/travel; and
- The Councillor can produce documents sufficient to verify the actual meal cost.

If a Councillor cannot produce a receipt for a meal they have purchased then a Statutory Declaration must be completed to claim the reimbursement.

No alcohol will be paid for by Council.

- **Hospitality Expenses**

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

- **Facilities Categories – ‘Administrative tools’**

Administration tools will be provided to councillors as required to assist councillors in their role. Administration tools include:

- Office space and meeting rooms
- Computers
- Stationery
- Access to photocopiers
- Printers
- Facsimile machines
- Publications
- Use of council landline telephones and internet access in council offices
- Secretarial support may also be provided for the Mayor and Councillors as required

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