

**EXPENSES REIMBURSEMENT AND SUPPORT FOR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES**

**Intent** The purpose of this policy is to set the parameters to authorise payment of reasonable expenses incurred, or to be incurred, by Councillors; and provide resources including administrative support to assist Councillors to discharge their duties and responsibilities having regard to local circumstances.

**Scope** This Policy applies to the Mayor and Councillors and is made pursuant to section 250 of the Local Government Regulation 2012.

**PROVISIONS**

Councillors are entitled to be reimbursed reasonable expenses incurred while undertaking Council business and to be provided with the appropriate facilities to assist them in undertaking their duties. A budget will be allocated each financial year for reasonable expenses to be incurred in accordance with this policy.

Resources provided to Councillors are for the sole use of Councillors in undertaking their duties and must be used responsibly and appropriately.

**REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES**

**Conference and External Meetings**

A Councillors travelling overseas in an official capacity or a Councillor attending a conference where they will be required to vote on behalf of Council must be approved by a full Council.

If a Councillor wants to attend another conference or external workshop/seminar they must submit a request to the Mayor for approval. The conference or external workshop/seminar must have a direct relationship to an operational area of Council and the Councillor should be able to demonstrate a benefit to the ratepayers of Cairns. Prior to attending the conference or external workshop/seminar the CEO may provide input on relevance to the organisation.

Councillors are required to prepare and table a report at the relevant committee meeting or workshop immediately following return from the conference, external workshops/seminars and the report should include summary and outcomes / learnings.

Expenses covered when attending conference / external workshop/seminars include:

Conference registration fees

Where Councillors have received approval to attend a conference, workshop/seminar, Council will make payment on behalf of the Councillor and/or reimburse any reasonable expenses incurred by the Councillor associated with their attendance.

Economy / Discount airfare

All Councillor travel will be booked and paid for by Council. Economy class is to be used where possible although upgrade may be approved in certain conditions or at the Councillors expense. Airline tickets will not be transferable, but flight insurance will be paid to cover Councillors travelling for official Council business.

Accommodation

Councillors will be entitled to stay at hotel accommodation when it is considered necessary to attend to Council business, or where it is not practical for the Councillor to attend an early morning commitment or return home for the night.

Councillors are entitled to be reimbursed for the cost of a meal when travelling or attending to Council business outside the region. Provided the Councillor incurs the cost personally, and the meal was not provided as part of the registration costs of the activity / event or during a funded flight and receipts are able to be presented.

### Incidental Expenses

Councillors are eligible for the following incidental expenses:

- An allowance of \$20 will be paid to cover newspapers, magazines, snacks, tea and coffee, private phone calls, and personal items whilst travelling on approved Council business;
- Cab charge facility or reimbursement for public transport will be paid for Council approved Conferences and / External Meetings.

### **Training and Professional Development**

Where Mayor or Chief Executive Officer invite Councillors to attend training courses or workshops/seminars related to a Councillor's role, Council will reimburse the total costs of the course. There is no requirement for a Council resolution to approve these attendances.

Expenses covered for Training and Professional Development is identical as that detailed in Conference and External Meetings.

### **Discretionary Professional Development**

Each Councillor can attend, workshops, courses, seminars and conferences that improve their skills relevant to the role of Councillor. This training is limited to \$2,500 per Councillor in each quadrennial term of office. Additional requests above this amount will be considered on a case by case basis by the Mayor and CEO.

There is no requirement for a Council resolution to approve these attendances. However, the Councillor must submit a request to Mayor for approval prior to attending and subject to approval provide all relevant documentation within 14 days of attending the event to ensure reimbursement of expenses.

### **Vehicles**

Councillors may use vehicles provided by Council for official business.

If a Councillor uses a private vehicle for official Council business, reimbursement may be claimed based on logbook substantiation of the relevance of the travel to Council.

Councillors are provided with parking exemption for council regulated parking zones for their private vehicle used for official council business. Councillors must be aware of the conditions of use.

### **Administrative Supports and Access to Council Office Facilities**

Council is responsible for the provision of appropriate administrative support and facilities to ensure all councillors are able to perform their duties and undertake council business. Administrative support and resources are provided to councillors for the sole purpose of legitimate council business and should be used responsibly and appropriately.

Councillors will be provided with the following:

- Access to workstations within the Administration Building as well as kitchen amenities and restrooms;
- Council meeting rooms for usage as required and when available;
- Administrative support at the Administration Building for Council related business;
- Use of Council landline telephone and internet access while at the Administration Building;
- Each Councillor will be provided with a mobile phone to assist Councillor in undertaking their role
- Laptop / computer or iPad as defined by Council
- Access to printer, photocopies, paper shredder, fax and/or scanner at the Administration Building
- Stationary and personalised letterhead including postage costs, for undertaking duties associated with their position (not campaign related);
- Any other administrative necessities, which Council resolves, are necessary to meet the business of Council.

In addition to the above, the Mayor will be provided with a separate office and dedicated administrative officer for administrative support.

Councillors are expected to comply with the same conditions of use, guidelines and processes for business and communication tools that apply to employees. Support for the Council supplied laptops, iPads and peripheral devices will be provided through the Information Services call centre (within standard business hours). If rectification requires more than phone support the Council provided laptop or peripheral devices will be returned to Spence Street office by the Councillor.

Upon receipt of a claim with relevant receipts, a maximum amount of \$600, per annum, will be reimbursed to Councillors for home communication expenditure.

### **Safety Equipment**

Council will provide to Councillors necessary safety equipment for use on official business as and when required.

### **Insurance Cover**

Councillors will be covered under relevant Council insurance policies while on Council business. Specifically, insurance cover will be provided for public liability, professional indemnity, Councillors liability and personal accident and domestic and overseas travel.

Council will pay the excess for injury claims made by a Councillor resulting from the conduct of official Council business and on any claim made under insurance cover.

Council will cover any costs incurred through injury, investigation, hearings or legal proceedings into the conduct of a Councillor where arising out of, or in connection with, the Councillor's performance of their Councillor functions. Where it has been found that the Councillor breached the provisions of the *Local Government Act 2009* or other legislation, then there will be no cover provided to the Councillor and the Councillor must reimburse Council all associated costs incurred by Council.

### **Hospitality**

Councillors may have occasion to incur hospitality expenses while conducting Council business, apart from civic receptions organised by CRC. The Mayor may particularly require additional reimbursement when entertaining dignitaries outside of official events.

To allow of this expense, the following amounts can be claimed:

<b>Councillors and Deputy Mayor</b>	<b>Up to \$500 per annum</b>
<b>Mayor</b>	As per budget

To claim the Mayor or Councillors must provide a written statement of whom they entertained and receipt of costs. Claims must be presented within 3 months of incurring the expense.

### **Exclusions**

Councillors shall not be reimbursed for expenses incurred for spouses, partners or other family members. The exception is the Mayoress when performing an official duty on behalf of Council.

Alcohol is excluded from reimbursement.

Participating in a community group event without formal invitation as a Councillor or being a representative on a Board not associated with Council, is not regarded as Council business.

## SUMMARY OF POLICY PROVISIONS

Heading	Description
<b>Conferences / Seminars</b>	Acceptance of costs, including travel and accommodation, associated with attending Council approved conferences or external workshops/seminars.
<b>Discretionary Professional Development travel</b>	Allowance of up to \$2,500 per Councillors per term of Council for a Councillor to undertake professional development course or similar, including associated travel and accommodation expenses if applicable.
<b>Travel as required by represent Council</b>	Acceptance of costs associated with travel on behalf of and representing Council.
<b>Vehicles</b>	Access for Councillors to Council fleet vehicles, or reimbursement of mileage for private vehicle use for Council business travel.
<b>Administrative Support / Access to Council Office Facilities</b>	Provision within Council of office space, carparking, laptop/IT needs, printer, copier etc
<b>Insurance Cover</b>	Insurance coverage for public liability, professional indemnity, personal accident.
<b>Council Memberships</b>	Ability for Councillors at their own expense to access staff offered benefits membership such as Fitness Passport.
<b>Support Resources</b>	Dedicated support via Executive Support Officer - Councillors and Personal Assistant to Mayor.
<b>Legal Assistance</b>	Acceptance of legal assistance costs as required in support of actions against Councillors in undertaking their role.
<b>Telecommunications</b>	Maximum amount of \$600, per annum, will be reimbursed to Councillors for home communication expenditure.
<b>Hospitality</b>	Acceptance of hospitality costs in hosting dignitaries etc outside of formal Council events: Councillors - \$500 per annum Mayor – as per budget

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This policy remains in force for a period of no longer than six (6) months after the next quadrennial election.

General Manager Responsible for Review:

Human Resources and Organisational Change

ORIGINALLY ADOPTED: 13/11/2001

CURRENT ADOPTION: 08/12/2021

DUE FOR REVISION: 08/12/2022

REVOKED/SUPERSEDED:



**Mica Martin**  
Chief Executive Officer