

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 facilities 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 249 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 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.

Facilities provided to Councillors are for the sole use of Councillors in undertaking their duties and must be used responsibly and appropriately. The use of the provided facilities will be open for review to the extent appropriate to the proper performance of a Councillor's responsibilities.

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 / external meeting they must submit a request to the Mayor for approval. The conference / external meeting must have a direct relationship to an operational area of Council and the Councillor should be able to demonstrate professional interest or expertise in the area and be able to demonstrate a benefit to the ratepayers of Cairns. Prior to attending the conference / external meeting the CEO may provide input on relevance to the organisation.

Councillors are required to prepare and table a report at the relevant meeting immediately following return from the conference / external meeting and the report should include a summary and recommendation/s.

Expenses covered when attending conference / external meetings include:

Conference registration fees

Where Councillors have received approval to attend a conference, seminar or workshop, 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.

Exclusions

Councillors shall not be reimbursed for expenses incurred for spouses, partners or other family members.

Training and Professional Development

Where Council resolves that all Councillors are to attend training courses or workshops for skills development related to a Councillor's role, Council will reimburse the total costs of the course.

For reimbursement, the Councillor must submit details to the Chief Executive Officer prior to attending and 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 log book substantiation of the relevance of the travel to Council.

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 work stations within the Administration Building as well as kitchen amenities and ablution facilities
- 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
- 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 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.

REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

It is important to note that any expenses incurred through Council provided facilities that do not relate to the discharge of the Councillor's duties are to be reimbursed. All claims for reimbursement will be made in the approved format and submitted with original receipts to the Finance Department. Claims must be presented within 3 months of incurring the expense.

RELATED POLICIES

Management of Confidential Information (#424142)

Entertainment and Hospitality Expenditure (#1032479)

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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: 25/11/2020

DUE FOR REVISION: 25/11/2024

REVOKED/SUPERSEDED:



**Christine Posgate
A/Chief Executive Officer**