

Councillor Expense and Administrative Guidelines



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1 PURPOSE

These guidelines have been developed to outline the assistance and support provided to Councillors when conducting Council business.

2 SCOPE

These guidelines apply to all Councillors in the course of Council business. The services and facilities provided are for use while conducting Council related business. Some exceptions apply and where applicable are identified in the Guidelines.

3 PROCEDURES

3.1 Councillor Expense Provisions

Councillors should not be out-of-pocket as a result of performing and discharging official Council functions and duties. Any reimbursements claimed by Councillors must be for expenses actually and necessarily incurred in performing and discharging their official Council functions and duties.

The following general provisions apply to this policy wherever appropriate to determine the amount of out of pocket expenses that will be reimbursed to Councillors:

- (a) Councillor expenses are those costs necessarily incurred by Councillors (out-of-pocket) or on behalf of Councillors for the purpose of Council business.
- (b) When claiming out-of-pocket expenses, copies of receipts or supporting documentation must be provided to support claims.
- (c) Claims for reimbursement should be submitted to the Governance Officer.
- (d) Claims for expenses other than those included in this document should be referred to the Chief Executive Officer.
- (e) Any costs incurred by a Councillor which are not covered specifically within the Guidelines will not be met, unless the Councillor has received prior authorisation from Council or, if delegated to do so, from the Chief Executive Officer.
- (f) Travel must be undertaken by the shortest practicable route.
- (g) Time spent performing authorised Council business is not to be included in the calculation of any expenses to be paid.
- (h) Wherever possible and practicable a Councillor should seek Council approval before attending any activity where reimbursable expenses could be incurred.
- (i) Where travel is by flight the standard form of travel will be economy class.
- (j) Remuneration or fees offered to Councillors for participation in external activities in the capacity of Councillor should be paid to Council. This includes fees for presentations delivered at conferences and seminars and for positions on external boards, committees and organisations.
- (k) Travelling expenses, childcare expenses and out of pocket expenses will, unless authorised by the Chief Executive Officer, be paid in arrears.
- (l) Any other expenditure not specified as expenditure for which a Councillor is entitled to be reimbursed or paid by the Council shall be the responsibility of the Councillor, except where Council resolves otherwise.

3.1.1 Carer expenses

Councillors who require carer or support services for other immediate family members should raise the matter with the Chief Executive Officer who shall advise on possible arrangements including reimbursement processes.

Claims must be accompanied by a receipt from the care provider showing the date and time care was provided and detail the reason care was needed on each occasion.

3.1.2 Child care expenses

Council will reimburse the cost of childcare expenses incurred by Councillors for their immediate family necessarily incurred under the following circumstances:

- (a) To attend ordinary and special Council meetings and meetings of Council committees;
- (b) To attend formal briefing sessions and civic or ceremonial functions convened by Council or the Mayor;
- (c) To attend meetings scheduled by Council or the Mayor;
- (d) To attend a meeting function or other official role attended as a representative of the Council or the Mayor; and
- (e) To attend meetings of community groups, organizations or statutory authorities to which the Councillor has been appointed Council delegate or is authorised by Council.

Claims are to be submitted at a frequency convenient to the Councillor but not less than once per year on or before the 30th June. Each childcare expense claimed shall be substantiated by a receipt from the caregiver showing the date and times care was provided and the Councillor shall show why the care was needed on each occasion.

Childcare costs are not eligible for reimbursement if paid for child caring by a person who normally or regularly lives with the Councillor.

3.1.3 Provision of ICT equipment

Where requested Councillors will be provided with a laptop from Council's current device range. Alternatively a Councillor could request the provision of a tablet device up to an equivalent value of a current laptop.

This equipment will be replaced in accordance with Council's normal renewal program. All ICT equipment issued to Councillors remains the property of Council and must be returned to Council at end of use.

In addition, the Mayor will be provided with a mobile phone and, if requested, a tablet device through Council's normal supplier of telecommunications equipment. The cost of usage, including incidental and reasonable private use will be met by Council.

Ancillary ICT equipment required by a Councillor may be claimed in accordance with Communications expenses section below.

3.1.4 Communication expenses

Communication equipment and support will be made available to assist Councillors in the conduct of Council business. This includes financial support of mobile telephones, internet access and multifunction devices. Support will be approved by the Chief Executive Officer on the following basis:

- (a) Councillors shall maintain Internet and mobile telephone services and will be responsible for their own communications expenses (e.g. telephone accounts and internet connection);
- (b) Council will reimburse each Councillor upon submission of a completed reimbursement form for reasonable expenses incurred in carrying out the duties of office in relation to communication expenses;
- (c) That reimbursement of communication related costs will be limited to \$3,000 per annum for each Councillor. (Council Minute 24/xxx)

3.1.5 Conferences, seminars and functions

- (a) The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are delegates as of right to the annual conference of the Local Government Association of Tasmania. All other Councillors may attend the conference if they wish and Council will meet the costs.
- (b) Councillors are entitled to attend the Local Government Association of Tasmania and other relevant local government seminars at Council's cost.
- (c) For conferences of a local government nature, other than the annual conference of the Local Government Association of Tasmania Council will determine on each occasion whether a Councillor shall attend and if attendance is approved the cost will be met by Council;
- (d) Where approved events and functions involve luncheons and evening activities and be of a nature where other attendees will be accompanied by partners a Councillor may be accompanied by a partner or guest and the cost will be met by Council; and
- (e) Where a Councillor is invited to a function as a representative of Council, and attendance is approved by Council, Council will meet the costs.

3.1.6 Council vehicles

To assist in meeting the demands and expectations of the role Council will provide the Mayor with a fully maintained motor vehicle. The type of vehicles provided to the Mayor shall comply with Council's Motor Vehicle Policy. The allocated vehicle is for use by the Mayor when attending Council related activities and may also be used by the Mayor for private purposes.

The Chief Executive Officer may approve the temporary allocation of a fleet vehicle or car hire vehicle to a Councillor as transport when the Councillor is undertaking an official function of Council.

3.1.7 Memberships and subscriptions

The Council will reimburse Councillors or directly pay membership and subscription fees to bodies and organisations whose activities are relevant to Council and the Councillor's role. In seeking membership or subscription, the Councillor will identify the link to Council business and how membership will assist in development or fulfilment of their role. Eligible subscription fees include newspaper subscriptions.

3.1.8 Training courses and development opportunities

The Council strongly supports the enhancement of skills required by Councillors to assist in carrying out their role. This includes participating in a range of one-off or short-term training courses and activities in a variety of areas of professional and personal development. Where there is a relevant link to the role of Councillor, and approval is given by the Chief Executive Officer, the cost of subscribing to these activities will be met by Council.

Councillors wishing to undertake any training courses offered outside Tasmania or have professional or personal development needs which involve on-going, longer-term support should first discuss these requirements with the Chief Executive Officer. Any potential assistance will be considered in line with acceptable practices and Council needs, and taking into account the relative benefits between a Councillors role and any personal or professional role. Assistance may include the whole or partial payment or reimbursement of associated fees. The Chief Executive Officer will inform all Councillors of implemented arrangements.

3.1.9 Travelling expenses

Travelling expenses to be reimbursed for meetings of Council or committees of Council and other relevant Council authorised business at the required user rate based on the State Service Rates.

Council will reimburse each Councillor upon submission of a completed claim itemising Council related travel details.

3.2 Administrative Arrangements

3.2.1 Access to Council papers

Should the Chief Executive Officer deny a Councillor access to any document, the Councillor is entitled to seek access to the document by an application to Council.

3.2.2 Common seal

The Chief Executive Officer has been delegated via a separate Instrument of the Delegation issued by the Council (64/21) to authorise the affixing of the Common Seal in accordance with this policy.

The Council's seal will be used only for documents that relate to the business of the Council, and without limiting the use of the seal, will normally only include:

- The exercise by the Council of its functions in relation to contracts for the purchase, exchange, leasing, disposal of, and otherwise dealing with real property;
- Contracts and tenders that have been endorsed by the Council;
- Any contract documents which includes any formal deed;
- Executing a contract of employment for the Chief Executive Officer;
- Completing agreements or contracts from State or Federal Government departments where they have requested the agreements or contracts be under seal;
- Entering into Planning Agreements;
- Approving final plans and surveys;
- Any other legal document the Council is required to affix the Seal to from time to time.

The Chief Executive Officer may authorise affixing the Common Seal to any document, as outlined above in accordance with the following conditions:

1. The execution of a document sealed by Council is to be attested by two signatories, one being either the Mayor or Deputy Mayor and the other the Chief Executive Officer or a person acting in that capacity or a Councillor.
2. A quarterly information report detailing the Use of Council's Seal is to be made available to Councillors.
3. The Chief Executive Officer will not witness the affixing of the Council's seal to the contract of employment for the Chief Executive Officer.
4. The seal of the Council may be affixed to a document only in the presence of:
 - a. The Mayor and the Chief Executive Officer (including those acting in that capacity); or
 - b. The Mayor and at least one other Councillor.

Details of the use of Council's seal must be recorded in the Use of Seal Register and to include the following:

- Date Document Sealed; and
- Council Resolution Number where relevant; and
- Document Details; and
- Signed by.

The Chief Executive Officer is to ensure the security of the Council's Common Seal at all times.

3.2.3 Distribution of agenda papers

All agenda papers and accompanying information reports and attachments will be distributed electronically to Councillors unless otherwise agreed with the Chief Executive Officer.

3.2.4 Distribution of minutes

Councillors will be notified once copies of Council minutes are available on the Council website. Minutes for the current and preceding calendar year will be retained on the website.

3.2.5 Gifts and benefits

From time to time Councillors may be offered gifts or benefits. In some limited circumstances gifts and benefits may be accepted however Councillors need to abide by Council's Gifts, Benefits and Donations Policy and associated reporting requirements.

Token gifts of nominal value may generally be received. Non – token gifts of significant value should not generally be accepted. When deciding whether to accept or decline a gift or benefit, consideration should be given to both the value of the gift or benefit and also the intent of the gift or benefit being offered.

3.2.6 Insurance

Councillors and accompanying partners/spouses are covered by Council's Business Travel insurance policy and Group Personal Accident insurance policy. These policies cover Councillors whilst engaged in any activity connected with or on behalf of the Council.

Non-business related travel and non-business related items are not covered by these policies.

3.2.7 Media statements

The Mayor and Chief Executive Officer, or any persons acting in those capacities, are the only authorised persons able to release press statements on behalf of Council.

In accordance with Council's Communication Policy and by virtue of the Local Government Act the Mayor will be the Council spokesperson for Council business or matters before Council. Therefore, all media enquiries should be directed to the Mayor in the first instance.

If the Mayor is absent, and appoints the Deputy Mayor to act in the position of Acting Mayor, media enquiries should be directed to the Acting Mayor.

If the Mayor and Acting Mayor are not available for comment, media enquiries should be directed to the Chief Executive Officer.

Members of staff should not talk to the media without prior consultation with the Chief Executive Officer.

3.2.8 Public meetings

All public meetings shall be called by the Mayor and advertised under the Council's logo.

Notices given of public meetings shall be under the name of the Mayor and are to be advertised twice with the first advertisement being at least 7 days prior to the meeting date.

3.2.9 Public office

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993*, Council has designated the Council Chambers at West Street, Beaconsfield as the "Public Office".

3.2.10 Signing of agreements

The Chief Executive Officer is authorised to sign agreements on behalf of Council, where, such terms and conditions have been approved by Council, or, where such document is required as a consequence of a delegated power.

The Chief Executive Officer may delegate release of specialist information to an appropriate officer.

3.2.11 Special events

The locations of the following special events are endorsed by Council:

- | | | |
|-----|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| (a) | ANZAC Day | Beaconsfield |
| (b) | Australia Day | Venue determined by Council each year |

4 LEGISLATION AND REFERENCES

Local Government Act 1993

Gifts, Benefits and Donations Policy

5 APPROVAL

Approved by the Council on 17 December 2024 (reference 24/171)

Signed: 
Chief Executive Officer