
NUMBER:	S0017/GOV
ACT:	LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2009
POLICY TITLE:	COUNCILLORS' EXPENSES REIMBURSEMENT AND PROVISION OF FACILITIES

POLICY

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 1.1 The expenses reimbursement policy is a policy providing for the following—
- (a) payment of reasonable expenses incurred, or to be incurred, by councillors for discharging their duties and responsibilities as councillors;
 - (b) provision of facilities to councillors for that purpose.

2. COMMENCEMENT OF POLICY

- 2.1 This Policy will commence from its adoption by resolution of Council's General Meeting of 18 September 2018. It replaces all other policies relating to Councillors' Expenses Reimbursement Policy (whether written or not).

3. APPLICATION OF POLICY

- 3.1 This policy complies with the local government principles contained in section 4(2) of the Local Government Act 2009 –
- (a) transparent and effective processes, and decision-making in the public interest; and
 - (b) sustainable development and management assets and infrastructure, and delivery of effective services; and
 - (c) democratic representation, social inclusion and meaningful community engagement; and
 - (d) good governance of, and by, local government; and
 - (e) ethical and legal behaviour of Councillors and local government employees.

4. DEFINITIONS

4.1 Council Business:

This is official business conducted on behalf of, and approved by, council where a councillor is required to undertake certain tasks to satisfy legislative requirements or achieve business continuity for the council.

Attendance at Portfolio Meetings.

Council business should result in a benefit being achieved either for the Charters Towers Regional Council and/or the Charters Towers Region.

Example: *Council may decide that council business includes civic ceremony duties such as opening a school fete*

Participating in a community group event or being a representative on a board not associated with council, is not regarded as Council business.

4.2 Expenses:

Expenses are payments made by council to reimburse councillors for their reasonable expenses incurred or to be incurred when discharging their duties as councillors. These payments are not regarded as remuneration. The expenses may be either reimbursed to councillors or paid direct by council for something that is deemed a necessary cost or charge when performing their roles.

4.3 Facilities:

Facilities provided by councils to councillors are the 'tools of trade' required to enable them to perform their duties with relative ease and at a standard appropriate to fulfill their professional role for the community.

4.4 Reasonable:

Council must make sound judgements and consider what is prudent, responsible and acceptable to its community when determining reasonable levels of facilities and expenditure. The community expects limits and does not want to see excessive use or abuse of public funds.

5. POLICY PROVISIONS

5.1 PAYMENT OF EXPENSES

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

- the limits outlined in this policy and
- Council endorsement by resolution

5.2 EXPENSE CATEGORIES

5.2.1 Professional Development

Council will reimburse expenses incurred for:

- mandatory professional development eg. Elected Member Updates (LGAQ) and Councillor Information Sessions (Department of Local Government) and discretionary professional development deemed essential for the councillor's role to limit of \$5,000.00 per councillor per term.
- only with the express prior approval of such development expenses by Council.

5.2.2 Travel as required to represent Council

Council may reimburse local and in some cases interstate and overseas travel expenses (eg flights, car, accommodation, meals and associated registration fees) deemed necessary to achieve the business of Council where:

- a councillor is an official representative of Council;
- the activity/event and travel have been endorsed by resolution of Council; and
- the activity/event is in accordance with the Councillor's portfolio responsibilities.

Councillors are to travel via the most direct route, using the most economical and efficient mode of transport.

Council will pay for reasonable expenses incurred for overnight accommodation when required.

The payment of expenses of Councillors' spouses attending Local Government Association of Queensland Inc. Conferences are to be borne by the individual Councillors and this includes spouse's airfares.

If a change is required to airfares, by Councillors, after the airfares have been booked and payment effected, then the cost of the difference is to be borne by the Councillor, unless otherwise stated.

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

5.2.3 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. (eg. Cost of spouse accompanying the Councillor)

Councillors requesting to fly on specific airlines for the purpose of acquiring frequent flyer points, be invoiced the difference of the cost of a cheaper flight on a different airline, which departs at time within ten (10) minutes of the requested airline, unless otherwise stated by the Chief Executive Officer.

5.2.4 Travel transfer costs

Any travel transfer expenses associated with Councillors travelling for Council business will be reimbursed.

Example: Trains, taxis, buses and ferry fares

Cab charge vouchers may also be used if approved by Council where Councillors are required to undertake duties relating to the business of Council.

5.2.5 Private Vehicle Usage

Councillors' private vehicle usage may be reimbursed by Council if:

- the travel has been endorsed by Council resolution;
- a Council vehicle is not available;
- the claim for mileage is substantiated with log book details;
- the total travel claim does not exceed the cost of the same travel using economy flights plus the cost of taxi transfers; or
- it is considered impracticable to use a Council vehicle, due to the distances required to travel to Charters Towers to collect the vehicle, to attend to Councillor Portfolio and official functions.

5.2.6 Accommodation

All Councillor accommodation for Council business will be booked and paid for by Council. Council will pay for the most economical and convenient to the event.

Accommodation bookings for Councillors are to be made by staff in the Office of the Chief Officer – Governance, in the first instance.

In the event that the Councillor's flight leaves early morning eg 6.00 a.m. or arrives into the returning airport at eg 10.00 p.m., accommodation will be offered to the Councillor at Council's expense.

5.2.7 Meals

Charters Towers Regional Council will reimburse reasonable 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.

Guidelines relative to meal claims are contained within the Travel and Expenses Claim Form attached to Administrative Directive D0016/COR.

No alcohol will be paid for by Council with the exception of events that are in accordance with Council's Statutory Policy - S0028/REG - Entertainment and Hospitality Expenditure Policy.

In accordance with Section 186(b) of the Local Government Regulation 2012, Councillors attending conferences, ensure that expenses eg breakfasts and dinners (unless included in the registration) be booked to individual Councillors accounts/rooms, to ensure that an accurate reflection of individual Councillor expenses are included in Council's annual report.

5.2.8 Incidental Allowance

Other actual expenses may 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 provided documentation including but not limited to receipts received and approved by Council.

ADDITIONAL EXPENSES FOR THE MAYOR

5.2.9 Hospitality

Council may reimburse the Mayor up to \$1,000 per annum for hospitality expenses deemed necessary in the conduct of Council business.

5.3 PROVISION OF FACILITIES

All facilities provided to Councillors remain the property of Council and must be returned to Council when a Councillor's term expires.

5.3.1 Private Use of Council owned facilities

Based on the principle that *no private benefit is to be gained* the facilities provided to Councillors by Charters Towers Regional 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 term under which the Council will reimburse Council for the percentage of private use. This will apply when Councillors have private use of Council owned motor vehicles and/or mobile telecommunication devices.

5.4 FACILITIES CATEGORIES

5.4.1 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 (upon request)
- laptop computer
- stationery (upon request)
- publications
- use of Council landline telephones and internet access in Council offices (upon request)
- use of photocopiers in offices
- Mobile telephone upon request
- Administrative support by the Elected Member Support Officer
- Council may provide a Councillor with home office equipment including computer, internet access if necessary
- electronic and paper-based agendas/documents until 2010

5.4.2 Maintenance costs of Council owned equipment

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 will fall under Council's asset replacement program.

5.4.3 Name badge

Council will provide Councillors with a name badge.

5.4.4 Safety equipment for Councillors

The necessary safety equipment for use on official business eg. Safety Vest, helmet/boots.

5.4.5 Uniforms

All Councillors will receive an allowance of \$500.00 each for the term plus:

- One (1) jacket (branded as per Uniform policy)
- One (1) polo shirt (branded as per Uniform policy)

This allowance is non-transferable.

All Councillors' corporate clothing is to be within Council's corporate clothing range and Council's Corporate Services Directorate will arrange for the corporate branding to be applied.

5.4.6 Use of Council vehicles on Council business

Councillors may have access to a Council vehicle for Official business.

5.4.7 Private Use of Council Vehicles

Private use of Council owned vehicles is permitted if prior approval has been granted by resolution of Council. Council will, in its resolution authorise private use, set out the terms for the Councillor to reimburse Council for private use.

5.4.8 Motor Vehicle - Mayor

Council authorises the reimbursement at the current rate as prescribed by the Australian Taxation Office, for the Mayor's private vehicle for official use in lieu of

the provision of a vehicle by Council (refer to Annexure “A” to this policy for further information). The Mayor may have access to Council vehicles similar to provision for Councillors.

5.4.9 Telecommunication needs – mobile devices

- (i) Mobile telecommunications devices owned by Council may be used by Councillors for Official Council business use.

Where Council deems it necessary to acquire new mobile devices, extra facilities may be approved by Council resolution.

Example: Mobile telephones or hand-held personal digital assistants (ie iPhone)

- (ii) Council, may by resolution, purchase for Councillors mobile phone/personal digital assistance hardware and software to be owned by those Councillors and to enable Councillors to more efficiently effect their civic duties.

5.4.10 Insurance Cover

Council will indemnify or insure Councillors in the event of injury sustained while discharging their civic duties.

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

5.4.11 Fuel Costs

Fuel for a council-owned vehicle used for official Council business including the Mayoral use specifically provided for, herein, will be provided or paid for by Council.

5.4.12 Car parking amenities

Council will provide Councillors with:

- Car parking at the Charters Towers Regional Council office premises and/or
- Reimbursement of parking costs paid by Councillors while attending to official Council business on the presentation of an official receipt or Statutory Declaration in the event of no receipts being presented eg. Airport parking

5.4.13 Miscellaneous Support and Expenses

- (i) Where Council meetings, functions or events are held at times that extend through normal meal times, Council will provide suitable meals for Councillors.
- (ii) Councillors will be afforded the opportunity to discuss relevant portfolio matters in appropriate mediums available to the public. Eg regular Councillor column in local newspaper
- (iii) Opportunities will be provided for Councillors to build and maintain relationships with Senior Officers eg Matters of Interest Briefings

6. POLICY REVIEW

The policy is to be reviewed whenever legislation changes, OR every two years if no changes have been required to be enacted, at the direction of the Chief Executive Officer.

Variations

CTRC reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate this Policy from time to time.

Associated Documents

- Local Government Act 2009
 - D0016/Travel Arrangements & Expense Claims - Councillors and Staff
 - S0028/REG - Statutory Policy - Entertainment and Hospitality Expenditure Policy
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STATUTORY POLICY

Official Use Only:

POLICY VERSION AND REVISION INFORMATION

Policy Authorised by: Aaron Johansson Original issue: 14 December 2011
 Title: Chief Executive Officer
 Policy Maintained by: Catherine McCabe Current version: [6]
 Title: Elected Member Support Officer
 Review date: 17 January 2020

 CEO Signature:

_____19September 2018

DIRECTIVE TO P&C:

Key Stakeholders identified and engaged within this development process	(Names/Sections here): Aaron Johansson - CEO Helen Dixon - Governance Compliance Officer Jenny Brown - Executive Assistant to the Mayor David Metcalfe - Director Planning and Sustainable Community Services Cameron Scott - Director Infrastructure Services Marnie Taylor - Director Corporate and Customer Services Councillors - Liz Schmidt Sonia Bennetto Roma Bailey Alan Barr Bernie Robertson Graham Lohmann Mike Power
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Distribution & Dissemination of approved:

Policy / Administrative Directive / Procedural Guidelines / Other:

Process	Stakeholders identified	Date completed
Email		
Notices		
Noticeboards		
P&C Newsletter		
Corporate Newsletter		
Payslips		
Section/Toolbox meetings		
Other:		
Other:		

Signed (for and on behalf of P&C): _____ Date: _____

Recorded/evidence in Document Management System (ECM): _____

(NB: This page is optional – use only if required)

WORKPLACE PARTICIPANT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge:

- *receiving the CTRC Councillors' Expenses Reimbursement and Provision of Facilities Policy;*
- *that I should comply with the policy; and*
- *that there may be disciplinary consequences if I fail to comply, which may result in me being dismissed from my employment.*

Your name:

Signed:

Date:

In accordance with the Australian Taxation Office rates for reimbursement of private vehicle usage.

Reference:

<https://www.ato.gov.au/individuals/income-and-deductions/deductions-you-can-claim/vehicle-and-travel-expenses/car-expenses/>

“Cents per kilometre method

The cents per kilometre method is available for use with some changes. Separate rates based on the size of the engine are no longer available from 1 July 2015. Under the revised method, individuals use 66 cents per kilometre for all motor vehicles for the 2015–16 income year. The Commissioner of Taxation will determine the rate for future income years.

- Your claim is based on 66 cents per kilometre for 2015–16 income year
- You can claim a maximum of 5,000 business kilometres per car
- You don't need written evidence but you need to be able to show how you worked out your business kilometres (for example, by producing diary records of work-related trips).

Where you and another joint owner use the car for separate income-producing purposes, you can each claim up to a maximum of 5,000 kilometres.”