



Expenses Reimbursement – Provision of Facilities for Councillors POLICY

Policy Version 4.0
Category: Statutory
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Expenses Reimbursement – Provision of Facilities for Councillors Policy

Purpose

This Winton Shire Council (Council) policy will ensure accountability and transparency in the reimbursement of expenses incurred, or to be incurred by Councillors.

This Policy will also ensure that elected members are provided with reasonable facilities to assist them in carrying out their civic duties.

Scope

This Policy applies to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors of Winton Shire Council.

This Policy does not provide for salaries or other form of Councillor remuneration. Councillor remuneration is in accordance with the determination of the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal.

Definitions

Term	Definition
Councillors	Refers to the Council's Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors
Authorising Person	Is the person with delegated authority to approve expenditure or reimbursement for Councillor expenses and facilities.
Council	Winton Shire Council (WSC)
Council Business	Refers to official business conducted on behalf of Council, where a Councillor is required to undertake certain tasks to satisfy legislative requirements or achieve business continuity for the Council, i.e. official Council meetings, Councillor forums and workshops, Committees/Boards as Council's official representative, scheduled meetings relating to portfolios or Council appointments. Council Business should result in a benefit being achieved either for the local government and/or the local government area, for 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.
Expenses	Costs reasonably incurred, or to be incurred, in connection with Councillors discharging their duties. The expenses may be either



	reimbursed to Councillors or paid direct by Council for something that is deemed a necessary cost or charge. Expenses are not included as remuneration.
Facilities	The facilities deemed necessary to assist Councillors in their role.
Public Record	Any record created, received or kept in an official capacity.
Reasonable	Council must make sound judgements and consider what is prudent, responsible and acceptable to the community when determining reasonable levels of facilities and expenditure.

Policy Statement

The payment and/or reimbursement of expenses and provision of facilities for Councillors must only be for the actual cost of legitimate business use and only in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2009* and the *Local Government Regulations 2012*.

Council is committed to ensuring that Councillors are provided with the facilities required to enable them to perform their duties. The payment and/or reimbursement of expenses and provision of facilities for Councillors:

- Is to be open and transparent, prudent, responsible, acceptable to the community and in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Based on ensuring economy and efficiency.
- Subject to budget provisions.

Process

Council's Annual Report must contain the information as stipulated in the *Local Government Act 2009* and associated Regulations. Spouses, partners and family members of Councillors are not entitled to reimbursement of expenses or to have access to facilities allocated to Councillors.

Councillors are only entitled to the expenses contained in the categories listed below.

Travel as Required to Represent Council

All Councillor travel requires the approval of Council via a report to Council identifying the relevance of such event to the Council and as far as practicable indicate the cost of attendance.

Council may approve local, intrastate, interstate, and overseas travel for Councillors where Council considers it appropriate to promote or represent the Winton Shire area



for a local government purpose. Where time does not permit the presentation of a report to Council:

- The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) may approve any requests for travel by the Mayor subject to a report being submitted to the next available Council Meeting.
- The Mayor may approve any Councillor's travel subject to a report being submitted to the next available Council Meeting.

Where Councillors are appointed by the Council as Council's representative on Regional, State or Federal committees or Government associations, all travel and accommodation associated with the Councillor's fulfilment of that role is deemed as approved without the need for a further report to Council.

Where Councillors are attending to Council business such as meetings, functions or other activities in an official capacity, Council will pay for the approved expenses associated with that activity.

The following restrictions apply in the following circumstances:

- Mayor - No limit to travel to attend meetings to represent Council in undertaking his/her responsibilities.
- Councillors - No limit to travel to attend meetings to represent Council when nominated or requested by the Mayor, Committee Chair or CEO.

When attending a meeting where the Councillor is representing Council on official business, Council should consider the benefits of having an appropriate Council Officer accompany them. This arrangement is to be organised through the CEO.

All travel and conference arrangements must be made in accordance with Council's Travel Policy.

All expenses incurred in relation to travel and conference attendance will be reimbursed in accordance with Council's Travel Policy.

All requests for travel (including associated registrations) should be made in sufficient time to take advantage of discounts and gain access to the widest range of accommodation and flights. Failure to do so will limit flight and accommodation options.

Conference Attendance

The Mayor attends the following Conferences as the primary Delegate:

- Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ).
- Australian Local Government Association (ALGA).



The Council shall appoint the other delegates and/or attendees at the above conferences.

In addition to the above, the following limits apply to conference attendance:

- Mayor - 5 conferences per year.
- Councillors - 3 conferences per year.

The CEO, where possible, will advise Councillors of upcoming conferences.

Councillors shall give notice of their desire to attend a conference by giving notice to the CEO seven (7) days prior to the relevant Committee/Council Meeting.

Where possible, the annual budget allocation for attendance at conferences will be divided evenly between all Councillors.

Where the Councillor wishes to attend a conference and has exceeded the above limits, the CEO will submit a report to the table and the Council will determine if the Councillor is able to attend.

Where the Mayor or a Councillor attends a conference, a report is to be presented at the next available Council meeting on the key learnings from the conference.

Representing Council at Events

Councillors may be required to attend a range of events and functions as part of their role in attending to Council business.

Councillors may, for example, be required to attend significant sporting and other community events in an official capacity.

Where Council resolves or when the Mayor or CEO determines that a Councillor is required to attend such an event as a delegate of Council, Council will pay for expenses associated with attending that event.

Council will provide tickets to events for Councillors for the purpose of addressing Council's advocacy strategy and to provide support for community social and economic development activities.

Professional Development

The payment of expenses for professional development requires Council approval. There are two categories of professional development for Councillors:

- Mandatory Training.
- Discretionary Training.



Mandatory Training

Mandatory training/Professional Development is training where one or more Councillors are required to attend courses, workshops, seminars or conferences for skill development related to the Councillor's role. Examples of this type of training include Councillor Induction, meeting procedures and legislative obligations.

Attendance at conferences include:

- Major industry events i.e. ALGA Conference, Australian Local Government Women's Association Conference, LGAQ Conference.
- Conferences that are related to all Councillors or a particular portfolio for that Councillor.

Council will meet all costs.

Discretionary Training

Where a Councillor wishes to attend a conference, workshop or training to improve skills relevant to their role as a Councillor (other than mandatory training), Council approval is required to pay the expenses of the event.

The funding limit for discretionary training is \$5,000 for each Councillor during their four (4) year term in office. Travel, meals, accommodation and other costs associated with discretionary training are included in the relevant expenditure categories.

If the Councillor wishes to attend discretionary training, the CEO will approve the discretionary training if costs are within the limits of \$5,000 per term, however this may count towards the number of conferences under the requirements of Conference Attendance.

Where the Councillor wishes to attend a conference and has exceeded the limits, the CEO will submit a report to the table and the Council will determine if the Councillor is able to attend.

Payment of Expenses

Expenses will be paid to a Councillor through administrative processes approved by the CEO subject to the limits outlined in this Policy and other associated policies/procedures subject to the following variation:

Expenses relating to the consumption of alcohol will be reimbursed only where such expense is incurred with the provision of a meal and which on review would not be deemed to be excessive.

Note: Should the Councillor choose not to attend a provided dinner/meal, then the full cost of the alternative meal shall be met by the Councillor.



Hospitality Expenses

Where Councillors incur hospitality expenses while conducting Council business, apart from official civic receptions organised by the Council, the maximum amount that may be reimbursed is:

- \$1,000.00 per annum for each Councillor.
- \$4,000.00 per annum for the Mayor.

Hospitality expenses related to official receptions and other functions organised by council officers are met from relevant approved budgets.

Provision of Facilities

Facilities provided for Councillors must be deemed necessary and required to assist Councillors in their official capacity.

Council shall determine the reasonable standard for facilities for Councillors. If a Councillor chooses a higher standard of facility than that prescribed by Council, any difference in cost must be met by the Councillor personally.

All facilities provided to Councillors remain the property of Council and must be accounted for during annual equipment audits.

The facilities must be returned to Council when the Councillor's term expires, unless Council agrees to dispose of the facility in some other manner.

In accordance with statutory provisions, Council may only provide Councillors with the facilities listed below.

Administrative Tools and Office Amenities

The Mayor will be provided with a dedicated office in the Winton Shire Council building.

Council provides access to occasional office accommodation and meeting rooms for all Councillors to meet with constituents and the public. Such accommodation should be booked through the Executive Assistant to the CEO and Mayor.

Secretarial Support

The Mayor will receive shared secretarial support with the CEO through the Executive Assistant to the CEO and Mayor.

Limited secretarial support will be provided to other Councillors as approved by the CEO and based on demand.



Computer and Printer for Business use

Councillors will be provided at their request with a laptop computer and printer for Council business use.

The CEO may determine that a desktop established at the location of the Councillors choice be provided in lieu of a laptop.

Photocopier, Paper Shredder and Facsimile

Councillors are entitled to access photocopiers, paper shredders and facsimile for Council use at the various Council offices and service centres.

Access to domestic photocopiers/scanners may be provided for the home-based offices, on request by Councillors.

Stationery

Councillors are provided stationery for official purposes only, including, but not limited to:

- Pens and pen sets
- Paper Note paper
- Letterhead Business cards
- Envelopes with Compliments' slips
- Compendium

Council stationery is not to be converted or modified in any way and may only be used for carrying out the functions of the role of Councillor.

Stationery does not include any form of advertising by Council.

Other Administrative Necessities

Subject to Council approval, Councillors may be provided with any other administrative necessities to meet the business of Council.

Advertising

Council will not reimburse or provide funds, services or facilities for the purposes of advertising for Councillors.

Community Consultation

Councillors may use facilities provided to correspond with community representatives for the purpose of clarifying issues that are relevant to their region in general.



Where a Councillor chooses to undertake further community consultation on a particular matter, in addition to that approved by Council, the Councillor is responsible for those costs.

Communication

Council's management team shall ensure that:

- Councillors and Council employees have access to this policy and are provided with the opportunity to be involved in the review of this policy.
- Changes and/or amendments made to this policy shall be communicated to Councillors and Council employees.

Related Council Documentation

- Code of Conduct for Councillors
- Fraud and Corruption Management Policy WSC-GOV-POL-004
- Complaints Management Policy WSC-GOV-POL-003
- Internal Audit Policy WSC-GOV-POL-002

Legislation, Recognised Authorities and Other Sources

- *Local Government Act 2009 (Qld)*
- *Local Government Regulation 2012 (Qld)*
- *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*
- *Code of Conduct for Councillors in Queensland*

Review of Policy

The policy shall to be reviewed annually and/or when changes occur to the relevant legislation.

RECORD OF AMENDMENTS and ADOPTIONS			
DATE	REVISION NO	REASON FOR AMENDMENT	ADOPTED BY COUNCIL
November 2019	V1.0	Adopted by Council	21 November 2019
July 2020	V2.0	Review by Council	23 July 2020
July 2021	V3.0	Review by Council	2 July 2021
April 2022	V4.0	Review by Council	



