



Policy Name	Councillor Expenses Reimbursement Policy		
Type	Council Policy		
Owner	Executive Manager Governance and Communication		
Responsible Officer	Executive Manager Governance and Communication		
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V1	21/06/2017	2017/110	Responsible Officer Chief Executive Officer
V2	18/07/2018	2018/126	Responsible Officer Executive Manager Finance & Human Services
V3	15/07/2020	2020/114	Responsible Officer Executive Manager Governance and Communication

Introduction

This is an official copy of the **Councillor Expenses Reimbursement Policy** of **Mornington Shire Council**, made in accordance with the provisions of *Local Government Act and Regulations, Public Records Act, Mornington Shire Council's Local Laws, Subordinate Local Laws and current Council Policies*.

This Policy complies with the specific requirements of Sec 250 Local Government Regulation 2012; the **Councillor Expenses Reimbursement Policy** [Previously known as the Councillor Expenses Reimbursement and Provision of Facilities Policy] is approved by the Mornington Shire Council for the operations and procedure of Council.



1 Purpose

The Mornington Shire Council (MSC) has adopted this policy to provide guidelines for Councillors seeking reimbursement of expenses incurred in line with the duties of being an elected member in representing Council and the provision of facilities to elected members.

Section 250 of the Local Government Regulation 2012 requires a local government to adopt an expenses reimbursement policy for Councillors. This policy outlines the reasonable expenses incurred, or to be incurred, by Councillors for discharging their duties and responsibilities as Councillors and the provision of facilities for that expense.

The Policy applies to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors (herein after – elected members).

2 Application of the Policy

Council will provide reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred, or to be incurred, by elected members and provide facilities, including staff resources to assist elected members in discharging their duties and responsibilities as set out in this policy.

If an elected member suffers a disability or impairment, they can make a request to the Chief Executive Officer to provide accessible furniture, building access etc. to assist them perform their duties.

Elected members cannot receive any gain or personal benefit for undertaking their duties and only reimbursement of cost incurred in approved activities will be reimbursed.

3 Policy Statement

- Reimbursement of expenses incurred will be paid through administrative processes approved by the CEO.
- The Mayor will be provided with a Council credit card for business use in accordance with the Credit Card Policy (2016/208).
- All claims for reimbursement must be submitted on a monthly basis, with supporting documentation, receipts, invoices tabs etc.
- Elected members cannot claim expenses more than three months after the expense is incurred, without leave of Council by resolution.
- All elected member travel, accommodation arrangements and payments together with registration fees shall be undertaken by a Council officer designated to arrange corporate travel for the organisation. This ensures access to the most competitive rates available.
- Travel should be via the most practical and direct route using the most economical and efficient mode of transport.



- The policy is applicable to Where possible, the maximum standard for accommodation should be a four-star rating. However, where this is not possible or accommodation is recommended by conference organisers as part of a conference package, a higher standard of accommodation is acceptable.
- Any fines incurred while travelling in Council owned vehicles or privately-owned vehicles when attending to Council business will NOT be reimbursed by Council.
- Economy class airline travel is to be used, unless specifically approved by Council prior to travel.
- An elected member is at liberty to upgrade their travel class, at their own expense.
- Any travel transfer expenses associated with official travel will be reimbursed by Council e.g. trains, buses, taxis and ferries.
- Council will meet the costs of meals incurred which are not covered by event registration fees on a reimbursement basis, if outside the scope of the allowances provided as part of the Staff and Councillors Travel Allowance Policy.
- Costs associated with the purchase of alcohol will be reimbursed by Council, only if that purchase is made in conjunction with the purchase of a meal and is considered to be reasonable by an 'ordinary person' standards.
- Hospitality expenses related to official receptions and other functions organised by Council are met from relevant approved budgets.
- Should an elected member choose not to attend a provided meal /dinner, then the cost of the alternative meal will NOT be reimbursed by Council, unless the alternative meal is required to meet personal dietary requirements.
- Council will NOT reimburse expenses incurred by an elected members spouse or any other members of the elected member's family when accompanying the elected member on official duties UNLESS it is a Federal Government, State Government or Shire endorsed (e.g. ceremonial event) event at which the partner of the elected member has been specifically invited.

4 Allowable Expenses within the Council Area

- Elected members are entitled to claim expenses incurred in attending to their role as elected members within the Morningshon Shire Council area. Examples include:
 - Attendance at Council meetings and arranged events;
 - Attendance at functions and events;
 - Inspections; and
 - Formal attendance to constituents or constituent groups.
- In this clause, "expenses" shall include reasonable refreshments and meals incurred whilst attending such meetings/functions/events unless these are provided directly by Council or a third party.
- Elected members CANNOT claim for participation in raffles or donations to groups as an expense under this policy, as these are regarded as private expenses.

5 Allowable Expenses within the Region [Far North Queensland Local Governments]

- Elected members are entitled to claim expenses incurred in attending regional local government associated functions and events within the local region.
- In this clause, "expenses" shall include reasonable refreshments and meals incurred whilst attending such meetings/functions/events unless these are provided directly by Council or a



third party.

6 Allowable Expenses outside the Region

- Elected members are entitled to claim expenses incurred in attending to their role as elected members outside the local area or region PROVIDED such attendance has been authorised by resolution of Council.
- The Mayor will not be required to have the approval of Council if attending functions or meetings relevant to the role of Mayor where a limitation of time has prevented Council considering the matter. However, any expenses occurred and reimbursed should be ratified by Council retrospectively.
- Where elected members are appointed by the Council as Council's representative on a committee or association, all travel and accommodation associated with the elected member's fulfilment of that role is deemed as approved without the need for a further specific approval by resolution being required.
- In emergent circumstances where prior approval by resolution of Council cannot be obtained, the CEO may approve such travel on the basis of obtaining a majority positive response by directly contacting elected members. In such circumstances the CEO shall seek confirmation of the approval at the next available General Meeting of Council.
- In this clause, "expenses" shall include reasonable refreshments and meals incurred whilst attending such meetings/functions/events unless these are provided directly by Council or a third party.

7 General Provision of Facilities

- As a general rule, facilities required to assist Councillors in their official capacity will be provided by Council under these provisions.
- Council determines the reasonable standard of facilities for elected members. If an elected member chooses a higher standard of facility than that prescribed by Council, any difference in cost must be met by the elected member personally.
- All facilities provided to elected members remain the property of Council and must be accounted for during annual equipment audits. The facilities must be returned to Council when the elected members term expires.
- Council will cover all ongoing maintenance costs associated with fair wear and tear of Council owned equipment to ensure it is operating for optimal professional use.

8 Administrative Tools and Support

- The Mayor will be provided with a dedicated office in the Council Administration Building.
- Elected members will be provided access to the Council Chambers to meet with constituents or small constituent groups. Suitable alternative arrangements will be arranged through Council Administration if the Council Chambers is not available.
- Elected members will be provided with the appropriate level of administrative support (as approved in the annual budget) to undertake their respective roles and responsibilities.
- Elected members are provided with one (1) laptop computer per term for Council business use, this laptop must be returned to Council upon resignation or at the end of the elected term.



- Elected members are entitled to access photocopiers and paper shredders for business use at Council offices.
- Elected members are provided standard office stationery for official use only, including, but not limited to: Pens, Paper; Note pads, Letterhead, Business cards, Envelopes; 'With Compliments' slips, etc.
- Elected members will be provided with a mobile telephone by Council.
 - Council will place the phones on a phone plan which most suits the Council business demands of the elected members. Phones remain the property of Council.
 - It is understood that from a practical point of view this phone will be available for both their business and reasonable private use.
 - Unless the costs can be justified as a genuine business cost, all call costs above the plan limit are expected to be met by the respective Councillors as a private expense.
- Council will NOT reimburse or provide funds, services or facilities for the purposes of advertising for elected members.
- Where an Elected member established a home office the home office must be approved by Council's Workplace Health & Safety representative to ensure compliance with all workplace health and safety legislative requirements.
- For site visits, Elected members will be provided with appropriate safety equipment such as overalls, safety shoes, safety helmets or glasses, as required, in their role. This equipment remains the property of Council.
- Elected members will be provided with corporate clothing [shirts] containing a Council insignia for official use.

9 Vehicles

- Council will provide a fully serviced 4WD to the Mayor for business and reasonable [on-island] private use, subject to Council's vehicle Policy.
- A pool vehicle is available to be used by elected members on a booking basis through Council Administration, for official Council business only.
- Elected members who use their own private vehicle for business purposes can claim a mileage allowance as per mileage allowances recommended by the Australian Tax Office (ATO).
 - The mileage rate shall apply to all kilometres travelled in the financial year. Such claims shall be supported by ATO compliant records and are to be submitted on a quarterly basis.

10 Legal Costs and Insurance Cover

- Elected members will be covered under Council insurance policies while discharging civic duties. Specifically, insurance cover will be provided for public liability, professional indemnity, personal accident and/or workers compensation, and international and domestic travel insurance. Any claims over and above the stated insurance cover will require the approval of a Council resolution.
- In addition, the liability of any legal costs incurred while discharging an elected members civic duty will transfer to Council upon approval via a Council resolution.



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