

Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy

Date Adopted: 25 February 2024

Version: 28.0

Policy Objectives

This policy enables the reasonable and appropriate reimbursement of expenses and provision of facilities to councillors to help them undertake their civic duties.

It ensures accountability and transparency, and seeks to align councillor expenses and facilities with community expectations. Councillors must not obtain private or political benefit from any expense or facility provided under this policy.

The policy has been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act) and *Local Government (General) Regulation 2005* (the Regulation), and complies with the Office of Local Government's Guidelines for the payment of expenses and provision of facilities to Mayors and Councillors in NSW.

The policy sets out the maximum amounts council will pay for specific expenses and facilities. Expenses not explicitly addressed in this policy will not be paid or reimbursed.

The main expenses and facilities are summarised in the table below. All monetary amounts are exclusive of GST.

Expense or facility	Maximum amount	Frequency
General travel expenses	\$1,500 per Councillor \$1,500 for the Mayor	Per year
Interstate, overseas and long distance intrastate business travel expenses	In accordance with council resolution	Per year
Accommodation and meals	\$450 per Councillor	Per day
Professional development	\$6,000 per Councillor \$9,000 for Mayor	Per year
ALGA National General Assembly and LGNSW Annual Conference	\$20,000 for all approved delegates to attend.	Per year
Joint Regional Planning Panel (Hunter and Central Coast Regional Planning Panel) meeting fee	\$600 per Councillor member *Remuneration for Councillor membership in accordance with advice from the Department of Planning and Environment	Per meeting
Refer to Section 7 of this Policy	\$71 per hour with a maximum reimbursement amount of \$1,500 per year *Remuneration for business undertaken outside of meetings in relation to the role as a member.	Per hour with a maximum yearly amount

Expense or facility	Maximum amount	Frequency
ICT expenses	\$200 per Councillor \$200 for the Mayor	Per month
Carer expenses	\$6,000 per Councillor	Per year
Access to facilities in Councillor Room	Provided to all Councillors	Not relevant
Council vehicle and fuel card	Provided to the Mayor	Not relevant
Reserved parking space at Council offices	Provided to the Mayor	Not relevant
Furnished office	Provided to the Mayor	Not relevant
Secretarial support	Provided to the Mayor and Councillors	Not relevant

Additional costs incurred by a councillor in excess of these limits are considered a personal expense that is the responsibility of the councillor.

Councillors must provide claims for reimbursement within three months of an expense being incurred. Claims made after this time cannot be approved.

Detailed reports on the provision of expenses and facilities to councillors will be publicly tabled at a council meeting every six months and published in full on council's website. These reports will include expenditure summarised by individual councillor and as a total for all councillors.

Part A – Introduction

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The provision of expenses and facilities enables councillors to fulfil their civic duties as the elected representatives of Maitland City Council.
- 1.2. The community is entitled to know the extent of expenses paid to councillors, as well as the facilities provided.
- 1.3. The purpose of this policy is to clearly state the facilities and support that are available to councillors to assist them in fulfilling their civic duties.
- 1.4. Council staff are empowered to question or refuse a request for payment from a councillor when it does not accord with this policy.
- 1.5. Expenses and facilities provided by this policy are in addition to fees paid to councillors. The minimum and maximum fees a council may pay each councillor are set by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal under Section 241 of the Act and reviewed annually.

2. Policy Objectives

2.1. The objective of this policy are to:

- enable the reasonable and appropriate reimbursement of expenses incurred by councillors while undertaking their civic duties
- enable facilities of a reasonable and appropriate standard to be provided to councillors to support them in undertaking their civic duties
- ensure accountability and transparency in reimbursement of expenses and provision of facilities to councillors

- ensure facilities and expenses provided to councillors meet community expectations
- support a diversity of representation
- fulfil the council's statutory responsibilities.

3. Principles

3.1. Council commits to the following principles:

- **Proper conduct:** councillors acting lawfully and honestly, exercising care and diligence in carrying out their functions
- **Reasonable expenses:** providing for councillors to be reimbursed for expenses reasonably incurred as part of their role as councillor
- **Participation and access:** enabling people from diverse backgrounds, underrepresented groups, those in carer roles and those with special needs to serve as a councillor
- **Equity:** there must be equitable access to expenses and facilities for all councillors
- **Appropriate use of resources:** providing clear direction on the appropriate use of council resources in accordance with legal requirements and community expectations
- **Accountability and transparency:** clearly stating and reporting on the expenses and facilities provided to councillors.

4. Private or Political Benefit

- 4.1. Councillors must not obtain private or political benefit from any expense or facility provided under this policy.
- 4.2. Private use of council equipment and facilities by councillors may occur from time to time.
- 4.3. Such incidental private use does not require a compensatory payment back to council.
- 4.4. Councillors should avoid obtaining any greater private benefit from Council than an incidental benefit. Where there are unavoidable circumstances and more substantial private use of council facilities does occur, councillors must reimburse the council.
- 4.5. Campaigns for re-election are considered to be a political benefit. The following are examples of what is considered to be a political benefit during a re-election campaign:
 - production of election material
 - use of council resources facilities and equipment for campaigning
 - use of official council letterhead, publications, websites or services
 - fundraising activities of political parties or individuals, including political fundraising events.

Part B – Expenses

5. General Expenses

- 5.1. All expenses provided under this policy will be for a purpose specific to the functions of holding civic office.
- 5.2. Expenses not explicitly addressed in this policy will not be paid or reimbursed.

6. Specific Expenses

General travel arrangement and expenses

- 6.1. All travel by councillors should be undertaken using the most direct route and the most practical and economical mode of transport.
- 6.2. Each councillor may be reimbursed up to a total of \$1,500.00 per year, and the mayor may be reimbursed up to a total of \$1,500.00 per year, for travel expenses incurred while undertaking official business. This includes reimbursement of:
 - public transport fares
 - the use of a private vehicle or hire car
 - parking costs for Council and other meetings
 - tolls
 - cab charge card or equivalent
 - documented ride-share programs, such as Uber, where tax invoices can be issued.
- 6.3. Allowances for the use of a private vehicle will be reimbursed by the per kilometre rate contained in the Local Government (State) Award.
- 6.4. Councillors seeking to be reimbursed for use of a private vehicle must keep a log recording the date, distance and purpose of travel being claimed. Copies of the relevant log contents must be provided with the claim. Councillors will be provided with a standard log form for the purposes of this clause.
- 6.5. As an alternative to the use of other forms of transport requiring reimbursement, Councillors may request the use of a Council pool vehicle for the purpose of transport to and from a conference or other professional development activity. Councillors must obtain the approval of the General Manager for such a request, which will be subject to the availability of a vehicle

Interstate, overseas and long distance intrastate travel expenses

- 6.6. Council will assess the value and need for councillors to undertake overseas travel. Councils should avoid interstate, overseas and long distance intrastate trips unless direct and tangible benefits can be established for the council and the local community.
- 6.7. Total interstate, overseas and long distance intrastate travel expenses for all councillors will be determined by resolution of Council on a case by case basis.
- 6.8. Councillors seeking approval for any interstate and long distance intrastate travel must submit a case to, and obtain the approval of, the general manager prior to travel.
- 6.9. Councillors seeking approval for any overseas travel must submit a case to, and obtain the approval of travel by resolution passed at an ordinary council meeting prior to travel.
- 6.10. The case should include:
 - objectives to be achieved in travel, including an explanation of how the travel aligns with current council priorities and business, the community benefits which will accrue as a result, and its relevance to the exercise of the councillor's civic duties
 - who is to take part in the travel
 - duration and itinerary of travel
 - a detailed budget including a statement of any amounts expected to be reimbursed by the participant/s.
- 6.11. For interstate and long distance intrastate journeys by air of less than three hours, the class of air travel is to be economy class.

- 6.12. For interstate journeys by air of more than three hours, the class of air travel may be premium economy.
- 6.13. For international travel, the class of air travel is to be premium economy if available. Otherwise, the class of travel is to be economy.
- 6.14. Bookings for approved air travel are to be made through the general manager's office.
- 6.15. For air travel that is reimbursed as council business, councillors will not accrue points from the airline's frequent flyer program. This is considered a private benefit.
- 6.16. After returning from an overseas trip a detailed report must be provided to council, outlining the achievement of objectives and the benefits to the community that have occurred as a result of the travel. This report will also be included in the annual report for the year in which the travel took place.

Travel expenses not paid by Council

- 6.17. Council will not pay any traffic or parking fines or administrative charges for road toll accounts.

Accommodation and meals

- 6.18. Council will reimburse costs for accommodation and meals while councillors are undertaking approved travel or professional development.
- 6.19. The daily limit for accommodation and meal expenses within Australia will be \$450 per day per councillor.
- 6.20. The daily limits for accommodation and meal expenses outside Australia will be determined in advance by resolution of Council when approving such travel.

Refreshments for council related meetings

- 6.21. Appropriate refreshments will be available for council meetings, council committee meetings, councillor briefings, approved meetings and engagements, and official council functions as approved by the general manager.
- 6.22. As an indicative guide for the standard of refreshments to be provided at council related meetings, the general manager must be mindful of the provisions of clause 6.18.

Professional development

- 6.23. Council will set aside \$6,000 per councillor and \$9,000 for the Mayor annually in its budget to facilitate professional development of councillors through programs, training, education courses, conferences and membership of professional bodies.
- 6.24. In the first year of a new council term, Council will provide a comprehensive induction program for all councillors which considers any guidelines issued by the Office of Local Government (OLG). The cost of the induction program will be in addition to the ongoing professional development funding.
- 6.25. Annual membership of professional bodies will only be covered where the membership is relevant to the exercise of the councillor's civic duties, the councillor actively participates in the body and the cost of membership is likely to be fully offset by savings from attending events as a member.
- 6.26. Approval for professional development activities other than conference attendance approved by resolution of council is subject to a prior written request to the general manager outlining the:
 - details of the proposed professional development
 - relevance to council priorities and business
 - relevance to the exercise of the councillor's civic duties.

- 6.27. In assessing a councillor request for a professional development activity, the general manager must consider the factors set out in Clause 6.25, as well as the cost of the professional development in relation to the councillor's funding allocation.
- 6.28. Approval to attend a conference except for Voting Delegates to the LGNSW Annual Conference and ALGA National General Assembly refer to Clause 6.29 is subject to a prior written request to the General Manager. In assessing a councillor request, consideration must be given to factors including the:
- relevance of the topics and presenters to current council priorities and business and the exercise of the councillor's civic duties
 - cost of the conference in relation to the total remaining Councillor funding allocation.
- 6.29. Council will meet the reasonable cost of registration fees, transportation and accommodation associated with approved attendance at conferences. Council will also meet the reasonable cost of meals when they are not included in the conference fees. Reimbursement for meals not included in the conference fees will be subject to Clauses 6.18-6.19.
- 6.30. Council will provide an annual allocation of \$30,000 to enable attendance of all delegates at the LGNSW Annual Conference and ALGA National General Assembly. Voting delegates attending will be determined by council resolution. Non voting delegates can be approved by the general manager based on consideration of the factors in Clause 6.27.

Information and communications technology (ICT) equipment and expenses

- 6.31. Mayor and councillors will be provided with:
- A laptop with internet connectivity for the purpose of communication with council and for council related business.
 - A colour multifunction printer
- 6.32. Councillors will be responsible for the provision of their own mobile and landline phone connection.
- 6.33. Council will reimburse councillors for expenses associated with appropriate ICT devices and services up to the following limits:
- Mayor - \$200 per month
 - Councillor - \$200 per month
- This may include monthly rental of landline phone connections, council-related business calls on landline phones, a mobile phone, mobile phone and tablet services and data, and home internet costs.
- 6.34. Councillor use of internet and email on the provided tablet must be consistent with Council's internet and email protocols.
- 6.35. Councillors may seek reimbursement for applications on their mobile electronic communication device that are directly related to their duties as a councillor, within the maximum limit.

Special requirement and carer expenses

- 6.36. Council encourages wide participation and interest in civic office. It will seek to ensure council premises and associated facilities are accessible, including provision for sight or hearing impaired councillors and those with other disabilities.
- 6.37. Transportation provisions outlined in this policy will also assist councillors who may be unable to drive a vehicle.

- 6.38. In addition to the provisions above, the general manager may authorise the provision of reasonable additional facilities and expenses in order to allow a councillor with a disability to perform their civic duties.
- 6.39. Councillors who are the principal carer of a child or other elderly, disabled and/or sick immediate family member will be entitled to reimbursement of carer's expenses of \$35.00 per hour up to a maximum of \$6,000 per annum for attendance at official business, plus reasonable travel from the principal place of residence.
- 6.40. Child care expenses may be claimed for children up to and including the age of 16 years where the carer is not a relative.
- 6.41. In the event of caring for an adult person, councillors will need to provide suitable evidence to the general manager that reimbursement is applicable. This may take the form of advice from a medical practitioner.

Corporate Wardrobe

- 6.42. Council will reimburse councillors the amounts below towards purchase of corporate wardrobe.

Mayor	-	\$595 .00 per financial year (incl. GST)
Councillor	-	\$485 .00 per financial year (incl. GST)

- 6.43. The balance of any cost of corporate wardrobe will be met by the councillor.
- 6.44. Corporate wardrobe refers to clothing sourced from Council's corporate wardrobe supplier. Items of clothing sourced from retail suppliers may, at the discretion of the General Manager, constitute corporate wardrobe provided the General Manager is satisfied such clothing meets Council's corporate branding requirements.

7. Sitting Fees

- 7.1. Councillors may be appointed to sit on Boards of Management, Advisory Committees or Regional Panels as part of their duties as a councillor.
- 7.2. Councillors appointed to a Regional Planning Panel (the Hunter and Central Coast Regional Planning Panel):
 - a) Council will pay up to the amount indicated in the expenses table of this policy for remuneration for Councillor attendance in accordance with advice from the Department of Planning and Environment.
 - b) The meeting rate in the expenses table of this policy is inclusive of all work a panel member does for a meeting, including preparation, site visits, the meeting itself and any deliberation and voting by the panel on matters considered at the meeting once the meeting is closed.
 - c) The hourly rate included the expenses table of this policy applies to any business such as electronic determinations that the panel conducts that is not connected to one of its meetings.

8. Insurances

- 8.1. In accordance with Section 382 of the Local Government Act, Council is insured against public liability and professional indemnity claims. Councillors are included as a named insured on this Policy.
- 8.2. Insurance protection is only provided if a claim arises out of or in connection with the councillor's performance of his or her civic duties, or exercise of his or her functions as a councillor. All insurances are subject to any limitations or conditions set out in the policies of insurance.
- 8.3. Council shall pay the insurance policy excess in respect of any claim accepted by council's insurers, whether defended or not.

- 8.4. Appropriate travel insurances will be provided for any councillors travelling on approved interstate and overseas travel on council business.
- 8.5. Council will meet the cost of loss or damage (subject to the provisions below) to a motor vehicle owned by a Councillor (including joint ownership with a partner/spouse of the Councillor) whilst such motor vehicle is being used by the Councillor attending meetings of the Council or a Committee of the Council. Where a Councillor is in attendance at any function or conference and Council has authorised the attendance of the Councillor by resolution, the provisions of this clause will apply; provided that:
- a) Councillors maintain a current comprehensive insurance policy on their motor vehicle to a value commensurate with the 'market value' or 'agreed insurance value' of the motor vehicle, then Council will pay a Councillor compensation for any amount not paid by the motor vehicle insurer for loss or damage up to the 'market value' or 'agreed insurance value' of the motor vehicle. Generally this will be the amount of any unrecoverable insurance policy excess
 - b) The motor vehicle covered by this policy must have been under the control of the Councillor at the time of the loss or damage or where another licenced driver is operating the vehicle with the Councillor's consent and the Councillor is in the vehicle at the time of the loss or damage
 - c) Details of the loss or damage and the circumstances that gave rise to the loss or damage must be reported to the General Manager as soon as possible
- 8.6. Council will meet the cost of a hire vehicle, of similar type and size, to replace a Councillor's motor vehicle, while such motor vehicle is unusable due to loss or damage (which complies with the criteria above) until the Councillor receives delivery of his/her repaired or replacement motor vehicle. This benefit will be paid for a maximum period of three (3) weeks. Any request for an extension to this period of time will be considered and determined by the General Manager.

9. Legal Assistance

- 9.1. Council may, if requested, indemnify or reimburse the reasonable legal expenses of:
- a councillor defending an action arising from the performance in good faith of a function under the Local Government Act provided that the outcome of the legal proceedings is favourable to the councillor
 - a councillor defending an action in defamation, provided the statements complained of were made in good faith in the course of exercising a function under the Act and the outcome of the legal proceedings is favourable to the councillor
 - a councillor for proceedings before an appropriate investigative or review body, provided the subject of the proceedings arises from the performance in good faith of a function under the Act and the matter has proceeded past any initial assessment phase to a formal investigation or review and the investigative or review body makes a finding substantially favourable to the councillor.
- 9.2. In the case of a code of conduct complaint made against a councillor, legal costs will only be met by Council where the matter has been referred by the general manager to a conduct reviewer and the conduct reviewer has commenced a formal investigation of the matter and makes a finding substantially favourable to the councillor.
- 9.3. Legal expenses incurred in relation to proceedings arising out of the performance by a councillor of his or her functions under the Act are distinguished from expenses incurred in relation to proceedings arising merely from something that a councillor has done during his or her term in office. For example, expenses arising from an investigation as to whether a councillor acted corruptly would not be covered by this section.

9.4. Council will not meet the legal costs:

- of legal proceedings initiated by a councillor under any circumstances
- of a councillor seeking advice in respect of possible defamation, or in seeking a non-litigious remedy for possible defamation
- for legal proceedings that do not involve a councillor performing their role as a councillor.

9.5. Reimbursement of reasonable legal expenses must be approved by resolution at a council.

Part C – Facilities

10. General Facilities for all Councillors

Facilities

10.1. Council will provide the following facilities to councillors to assist in the discharge their civic duties:

- A Councillors Room appropriately furnished and will include telephone and resources to enable Councillors to discharge the councillor's functions of civil office. Access to the office will be available during normal office hours or as approved by the Office of the General Manager outside normal office hours.
- access to shared car parking spaces while attending council offices on official business
- personal protective equipment for use during site visits
- a name badge which may be worn at official functions, indicating that the wearer holds the office of a councillor and/or mayor or deputy mayor.

10.2. Councillors may book up to 4 meetings per financial year in other council facilities/meeting rooms for council business. Bookings are to be made through the Office of the General Manager and will be subject to availability.

10.3. If a councillor requires the use of a non-council facility for council business, this must be approved by the Office of General Manager and booked by the councillor who may then seek reimbursement from council up to a maximum of \$200 per financial year.

Stationary

10.4. Council will provide the following stationery to councillors each year:

- 'Councillors Room' letterhead, to be used only for correspondence associated with civic duties
- Electronic councillor letterhead templates for correspondence associated with civic duties including replying to citizens
- Business cards (maximum of 500 per annum)
- A maximum of two (2) full sets of toner/ink cartridges (includes magenta, yellow, cyan and black) and an additional two (2) black toner/ink cartridges
- Use of council photocopiers, phones, computers in undertaking council business
- Other reasonable stationary requests to be used for council business.

Administrative Support

10.5. Council will provide administrative facilities through the Office of the General Manager for councillors to assist them with their duties including postage of correspondence and printing of documents.

10.6. As per Section 4, council staff are expected to assist councillors with civic duties only, and not assist with matters of personal or political interest, including campaigning.

11. Additional Facilities for the Mayor

- 11.1. Council will provide to the mayor a fully maintained vehicle. The vehicle will be supplied for use on business, professional development and attendance at the mayor's office, and for reasonable private use. Any fuel costs associated with interstate travel are to be paid for by the Mayor and such interstate travel notified to the General Manager.
- 11.2. A parking space at Council's offices will be reserved for the mayor's council-issued vehicle for use at all times.
- 11.3. Council will provide the mayor with a furnished office incorporating a computer configured to council's standard operating environment, telephone and meeting space.
- 11.4. When deputising the mayor, the deputy mayor will be provided with reasonable access to and use of the facilities provided by the mayor under this policy. Any expenses incurred during this time related to the use of facilities will be deducted from the mayors budget.
- 11.5. Staff for the mayor as determined by the general manager in consultation with the mayor (as consistent with the Delegations of Authority).
- 11.6. Business cards (maximum of 500 per annum)
- 11.7. Mayoral robes and chains.

Part D – Processes

12. Approval, Payment and Reimbursement Arrangements

- 12.1. Expenses should only be incurred by councillors in accordance with the provisions of this policy.
- 12.2. Approval for incurring expenses, or for the reimbursement of such expenses, should be obtained wherever possible before the expense is incurred.
- 12.3. Up to the maximum limits specified in this policy, approval for the following may be sought after the expense is incurred:
 - local travel relating to the conduct of official business
 - carer costs
 - Mobile and internet costs
- 12.4. Final approval for payments made under this policy will be granted by the general manager or their delegate.

Reimbursement

- 12.5. All claims for reimbursement of expenses incurred must be made on the prescribed form, supported by appropriate receipts and/or tax invoices and be submitted to the Office of the General Manager within three (3) months of the expense being incurred.
- 12.6. All claims for reimbursement will not be processed without the appropriate supporting documentation or information such as receipts and/or tax invoices, committee meeting details etc. which allow for the claim to be assessed and processed.
- 12.7. If a Councillor is not able to provide the appropriate supporting documents a statutory declaration explaining the calculation of the claim is required.
- 12.8. All claims for reimbursement will be assessed and processed, with payment being made in accordance with Councils financial processing timelines.

Advance payment

- 12.9. Council may pay a cash advance for councillors attending approved conferences, seminars or professional development.
- 12.10. Requests for advance payment must be submitted to the Office of the General Manager for assessment against this policy using the prescribed form with sufficient information and time to allow for the claim to be assessed and processed.
- 12.11. Councillors must fully reconcile all expenses against the cost of the advance within one month of incurring the cost and/or returning home. This includes providing to council:
- a full reconciliation of all expenses including appropriate receipts and/or tax invoices
 - reimbursement of any amount of the advance payment not spent in attending to official business or professional development.

Notification

- 12.12. When a claim is approved, council will make payment by electronic funds transferred to the financial institution and account nominated by the Councillor.
- 12.13. If a claim is refused, council will inform the councillor in writing that the claim has been refused and the reason for the refusal.

Reimbursement to council

- 12.14. If council has incurred an expense on behalf of a councillor that exceeds a maximum limit, exceeds reasonable incidental private use or is not provided for in this policy:
- council will invoice the councillor for the expense
 - the councillor will reimburse council for that expense within 14 days of the invoice date.
- 12.15. If the councillor cannot reimburse council within 14 days of the invoice date, they are to submit a written explanation to the general manager. The general manager may elect to deduct the amount from the councillor's allowance.

Timeframe for reimbursement

- 12.16. Unless otherwise specified in this policy, councillors must provide all claims for reimbursement within three (3) months of an expense being incurred. Claims made after this time cannot be approved.

13. Disputes

- 13.1. If a councillor disputes a determination under this policy, the councillor should discuss the matter with the general manager.
- 13.2. If the councillor and the general manager cannot resolve the dispute, the councillor may submit a notice of motion to a council meeting seeking to have the dispute resolved.

14. Return or retention of facilities

- 14.1. All unexpended facilities or equipment supplied under this policy are to be relinquished immediately upon a councillor or mayor ceasing to hold office or at the cessation of their civic duties.
- 14.2. Should a councillor desire to keep any equipment allocated by council, then this policy enables the councillor to make application to the general manager to purchase any such equipment. The general manager will determine an agreed fair market price or written down value for the item of equipment.
- 14.3. The prices for all equipment purchased by councillors under Clause 13.2 will be recorded in Council's annual report.

15. Publication

15.1. This policy will be published on council's website.

16. Reporting

16.1. Council will report on the provision of expenses and facilities to councillors as required in the Act and Regulations.

16.2. Detailed reports on the provision of expenses and facilities to councillors will be publicly tabled at a council meeting every six months and published in full on council's website. These reports will include expenditure summarised by individual councillor and as a total for all councillors.

17. Auditing

17.1. The operation of this policy, including claims made under the policy, will be included in council's audit program and an internal audit undertaken periodically under Council's Annual Internal Audit plan.

18. Breaches

18.1. Suspected breaches of this policy are to be reported to the general manager.

18.2. Alleged breaches of this policy shall be dealt with by following the processes outlined for breaches of the Code of Conduct, as detailed in the Code and in the Procedures for the administration of the Code.

19. Patron of Organisation

19.1. Where the Mayor is patron of any organisation, Council will donate up to \$50 per year to the organisation.

19.2. Where a Councillor wishes to attend a ticketed local community function (including an accompanying person) approval will be sought from the General Manager. An amount of \$500 per year is available to support official attendance at such events.

20. Accompanying persons reimbursement

20.1. For a person accompanying a councillor on official business, written approval must first be obtained from the General Manager. Council will provide limited reimbursement for reasonable costs for the accompanying person in accordance with Office of Local Government guidelines. Costs must not exceed \$1000 per year per councillor.

Policy Definitions

The following definitions apply throughout this policy.

Accompanying person	Means a spouse, partner or de facto or other person who has a close personal relationship with or provides carer support to a councillor
Appropriate refreshments	Means food and beverages, excluding alcohol, provided by council to support councillors undertaking official business
Act	Means the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> (NSW)
Clause	Unless stated otherwise, a reference to a clause is a reference to a clause of this policy
Code of conduct	Means the Code of Conduct adopted by Council or the Model Code if none is adopted
Councillor	Means a person elected or appointed to civic office as a member of the governing body of council who is not suspended, including the mayor
General Manager	Means the general manager of Council and includes their delegate or authorised representative
Incidental personal use	Means use that is infrequent and brief and use that does not breach this policy or the Code of Conduct
Long distance intrastate travel	Means travel to other parts of NSW of more than three hours duration by private vehicle
Maximum limit	Means the maximum limit for an expense or facility provided in the text and summarised in Appendix 1
NSW	New South Wales
Official business	Means functions that the mayor or councillors are required or invited to attend to fulfil their legislated role and responsibilities for council or result in a direct benefit for council and/or for the local government area, and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meetings of council and committees of the whole • meetings of committees facilitated by council • civic receptions hosted or sponsored by council • meetings, functions, workshops and other events to which attendance by a councillor has been requested or approved by council
Professional development	Means a seminar, conference, training course or other development opportunity relevant to the role of a councillor or the mayor
Regulation	Means the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 (NSW)
Year	Means the financial year, that is the 12 month period commencing on 1 July each year

Policy Administration

Business Group: Office of the General Manager

Responsible Officer: Team Leader OGM

Council Reference: Ordinary Council Meeting 25 February 2025

Policy Review Date: Within 12 months of start of each term

File Number: 35/7

Relevant Legislation & Guidance

- NSW Local Government Act 1993 - Sections 252 – 254
- Local Government Regulation 2005 – Clause 403
- Guidelines for the payment of expenses and the provision of facilities for Mayors and Councillors in NSW, 2009
- Local Government Circular 09-36 Guidelines for Payment of Expenses and Facilities
- Local Government Circular 05-08 legal assistance for Councillors and Council Employees.

Related Policies / Procedures / Protocols

- Code of Conduct
- Provision of Information and Interaction between Councillors and Staff

Policy History

VERSION	DATE APPROVED	DESCRIPTION OF CHANGES
1	1/8/1995	New policy adopted
2	13/5/1997	Periodic review
3	21/9/1999	Update of expense provisions
4	25/1/2000	Periodic Review
5	28/5/2002	Update of expense amounts.
6	26/8/2003	Update to provisions for conferences and training
7	22/6/2004	Annual review
8	24/8/2004	Changes to internet provisions
9	25/1/2005	Removal of 'Partners Conferences Expenses' after advice from DLG
10	22/3/2005	Amendment to insurance provisions

11	28/6/2005	Update to provisions of community facilities
12	22/11/2005	Annual review
13	28/11/2006	Annual review
14	11/9/2007	Clarification of internet expense provisions
15	27/11/2009	Annual review
16	24/3/2009	Changes to phone expenses
17	8/12/2009	Annual review – no changes made
18	23/11/2010	Revised Guidelines from DLG
19	13/12/2011	Annual review
20	11/12/2012	Annual Review
21	22/10/2013	Annual Review – Clarification of wording to prevent misinterpretation
22	23/09/2014	Annual Review
23	27/10/2015	Annual Review
24	28/08/2018	Reviewed in accordance with the template provided by OLG
25	27/11/2018	Addition of clause 6.24 to clarify operation of corporate wardrobe clauses
26	27/09/2022	Adjustment of various limits, introduction of delegate allowance, approval to attend conferences by the general manager and other minor adjustments.
27	10/12/2024	Adjustment in the daily accommodation and meals allowance, addition of the Joint Regional Planning Panel meeting fees, inclusion of the use of Council pool vehicle as alternate transport, amendment of the facilities for the mayor and clarification on the reimbursement of claims process.
28	25/02/2025	Additional wording added to clause 6.30 as per the adopted Council Resolution of Council Meeting 25 February 2025.