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COUNCILLOR SUPPORT AND EXPENSES POLICY 2020

**(To be presented to Council on
29 June 2020)**

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This policy, which incorporates the statutory requirements prescribed for a Councillor Expense policy in accordance with Clause 41 of the *Local Government Act 2020*, was adopted by resolution of Darebin City Council on 29 June 2020.

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1. POLICY OBJECTIVES

Councillors are elected to provide leadership for the good governance of the municipal district and the local community.

The objective of this policy is to establish the resources, facilities and administrative support to be provided to Councillors of Darebin City Council. It provides for Councillors to have out-of-pocket expenses, incurred while performing their official duties as a Councillor, either reimbursed or paid direct by the Council.

The policy also provides guidelines for Councillors on the process for claiming expenses and outlines the methods and standards for reporting and accountability.

2. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

This policy has been set out in accordance with Part 2 (Councils), Division 6 (Entitlements), Clauses 39 – 43 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (The Act).

Clause 39 – Allowances for Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors

A Mayor, Deputy Mayor or a Councillor is entitled to receive from Council an allowance in accordance with a Determination of the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal under the *Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019*.

A Mayor or a Deputy Mayor is not entitled to receive an allowance as a Councillor while the Mayor or Deputy Mayor is receiving an allowance as a Mayor or a Deputy Mayor.

A Council cannot pay an allowance to a Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Councillor that exceeds the amount specified in the relevant Determination of the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal under the that Act.

A Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Councillor may elect to receive the entire allowance to which they are entitled, or to receive a specified part of the allowance to which they are entitled or to receive no allowance.

Clause 40 – Reimbursement of Expenses of Councillors and members of a Delegated Committees

A Council must reimburse a Councillor or a member of a delegated committee for out-of-pocket expenses which the Council is satisfied –

- a) Are bona fide expenses.
- b) Have been reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of Councillor or member of a delegated committee.
- c) Are reasonably necessary for the Councillor or member of a delegated committee to perform that role.

Council must provide details of all reimbursements under this section to the Audit and Risk Committee.

Clause 41 – Council Expenses

Council must adopt and maintain an Expenses policy in relation to the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for Councillors and members of delegated committees. A policy adopted by a Council under this section must –

- a) Specify procedures to be followed in applying for reimbursement and in reimbursing expenses.
- b) Comply with any requirements prescribed by the regulations in relation to the reimbursement of expenses.
- c) Provide for the reimbursement of childcare costs where the provision of childcare is reasonably required for a Councillor or member of a delegated committee to perform their role.
- d) Have particular regard to expenses incurred by a Councillor who is a carer in a care relationship within the meaning of Section 4 of the *Carers Recognition Act 2012*.

Clause 42 – Resources and Facilities for the Mayor and Councillors

Council must make available to the Mayor and Councillors the resources and facilities reasonably necessary to enable them to effectively perform their role. Council must:-

- a) Consider the support that may be required by a Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Councillor because of a disability.
- b) Have particular regard to the support that may be required by a Councillor who is a carer in a care relationship within the meaning of section 4 of the *Carers Recognition Act 2012*.

Clause 43 – Indemnity Provision

A Council must indemnify and keep indemnified each Councillor, member of a delegated committee and member of a Community Asset Committee against all actions or claims whether arising during or after their term of office in respect of anything necessarily done, reasonably done or omitted to be done in good faith:-

- a) In the performance of a duty or a function or the exercise of a power under this Act, the regulations or a local law or any other Act.
- b) In the reasonable belief that the act or omission was in the performance of a duty or a function or the exercise of a power under this Act, the regulations or a local law or any other Act.

3. PRINCIPLES

This policy has been prepared on the basis of the following principles:-

3.1. Council Integrity

Part 6 Council Integrity – Division 1 - Improper Conduct in the Act outlines a range of actions of the Councillor or member of a Delegated Committee that would constitute misuse of position. These include the *'using of public funds or resources in a manner that is improper or unauthorised'* (Section 123). This policy provides direction and clarification to Councillors to ensure that public resources are used prudently and solely in the public interest.

3.2. Encouraging Diversity in Participation, Equity and Access

This policy encourages participation in the local government democratic process as it ensures that Councillors, in the performance of their duties:-

- Will be supported in their role; and
- Will not be financially or otherwise disadvantaged.

Reimbursement of expenses and the provision of resources / facilities / support shall be applied in a non-discriminatory and equitable manner to cater for the full participation of all Councillors in Council business and with their communities, while also recognising individual needs and circumstances. Councillors work with a wide range of constituents and need to be accessible and stay informed.

3.3. Accountability and Transparency

The Act (Section 40) provides that a Council must reimburse a Councillor or a member of a delegated committee for out of pocket expenses which the Council is satisfied:-

- Are bona fide expenses.
- Have been reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of Councillor or member of a delegated committee.
- Are reasonably necessary for the Councillor or member of a delegated committee to perform that role.

It is not appropriate for Councils to provide for general expenses and / or allowances that are unrelated to actual expenses incurred and which could be designed to supplement Councillors' annual allowances entitlements.

Councillors shall only receive reimbursement for expenses when the expense, resource and facilities support are identified in this policy and are adequately substantiated.

The overriding principle is that the reimbursement of expenses and the details and range of benefits provided to the Mayor and Councillors by the Council should be clearly stated, fully transparent and acceptable to their local community.

3.4. Reasonableness and Appropriateness

This policy should ensure that Councillors are reimbursed adequately for expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their role as a Councillor. It is acknowledged that incidental private use of Council resources and facilities may occur from time to time and that such incidental private use is not required to be reimbursed by the Councillor.

Substantial private use shall be reimbursed by the Councillor and is specifically addressed in Section 6.5 of this policy.

3.5. Separation

It is a principle that an expense reasonably incurred by Councillors in the performance of their duties and the provision of resources and facilities that support Councillors to perform their duties is separate to the provision of the annual Councillor Allowance. Councillors shall not be disadvantaged or asked to subsidise their expenses from the annual Councillor Allowance.

4. DUTIES AS A COUNCILLOR OR MEMBER OF A DELEGATED COMMITTEE

‘Duties as a Councillor or member of a Delegated Committee’ means duties performed by a Councillor or a member of a delegated committee that are necessary or appropriate for the purposes of achieving the objectives of a Council, having regard to any relevant Act, regulations, Ministerial guidelines or Council policies.

Duties of a Councillor or member of a delegated committee will therefore include, but not be limited to, attendance at:-

- Meetings of the Council or its delegated committees.
- Briefing sessions, workshops and civic or ceremonial functions convened or scheduled by the Council or the Mayor.
- Meetings of community groups, organisations and statutory authorities to which a Councillor or member of a delegated committee has been appointed as Council representative.
- A meeting, function or other official role as a representative of the Council, delegated committee or the Mayor.
- Other meetings, inspections or events attended by a Councillor or member of a delegated committee in an official capacity, together with the associated research, discussions and communication.

5. ALLOWANCES FOR MAYORS AND COUNCILLORS

The Victorian Government views Councillor allowances ‘not as a form of salary, but as some recognition of the contributions made by those elected to voluntary, part time roles in the community’.

The Government acknowledges the value and significance of local government Councillors – both through their skills and ability to represent and engage with their constituents and their leadership in developing solutions to the pressing social and cultural, environmental and economic challenges facing communities everywhere.

Clause 39 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) provides the framework for payment of allowances to Mayors and Councillors.

The allowance framework provides a three-level structure for allowances based on Council population and total revenue. The allowance is reviewed annually through a Determination of the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal under the *Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019*. In addition to the allowance, an amount equivalent to the superannuation guarantee contribution is payable.

Details of current allowances fixed for the Mayor and Councillors of Darebin City Council are available for public inspection on Council’s website and at the Council offices.

Allowances are taxable income and are paid fortnightly in advance. Personal taxation implications are the responsibility of individual Councillors.

6. RESOURCES AND FACILITIES FOR THE MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

The following resources, facilities and support will be provided to Councillors to assist in performing their duties as a Councillor.

6.1 Home Office and Mobile Communications

All Councillors will be provided with information technology devices as deemed appropriate, including an internet data plan. Councillors will also be issued with a Darebin Council email address. Indicatively, the ICT resources that have been provided over the last 4 years have been:-

- Smart phone with voice and data service.
- A laptop / tablet unit with built-in data service and associated peripherals software (“Apps”).
- Both the mobile phone and the laptop/tablet have Mobile Device Management (MDM) to secure and manage the devices. This service incurs a monthly fee to Council.
- A multifunction printing, scanning, copying, fax device and all associated consumables, toners, paper etc.

The make, model and style of the ICT devices provided will be determined by the responsible Council Officer based on current telecommunications plans and offers available to Council and in consultation with the Councillor.

Rather than being issued a Council provided mobile phone (only), a Councillor may elect to use their own personal mobile phone and claim reimbursement of call charges associated with performing their duties as a Councillor.

All equipment remains the property of Darebin City Council and must be returned at the end of a Councillor’s term of office or, if requested, during leave of absence of a Councillor.

Data Costs

Council will meet the fixed charges of the smart phone and internet services. Council will also meet the call or data costs for these services incurred for duties as a Councillor.

Usage of all ICT devices will be restricted to the Councillor to whom they have been assigned and the assigned Councillor shall be responsible for all usage incurred on the devices. Councillors will take care to safeguard any personal or Council information stored on devices so as it cannot be accessed by other persons. All devices must be kept in secure locations when not in use.

Councillors may use Council provided devices for incidental private use. Incidental private use is defined as use that incurs costs of no more than 10% of the total monthly call and data costs.

Council will not provide or contribute to the costs of existing internet services or plans of a Councillor beyond what is set out in this policy.

Overseas Travel – Use of Equipment

Councillors must obtain written approval from the Chief Executive Officer prior to taking Council equipment on overseas travel

If approval is granted by the Chief Executive Officer, the Councillor must consult with the Manager Information & Communications to discuss the most effective travel packs to be purchased for work related usage. The co-ordination of access to international voice and data services and the cost of all calls and data usage related to overseas travel for personal reasons are the responsibility of the Councillor, not the organisation.

The Councillor will be responsible to ensure phone settings are adjusted to avoid unexpected call and data charges.

Replacement of Equipment

If any Council issued equipment needs to be replaced, for whatever reason, it shall be returned to the responsible Council Officer at the same time as the replacement equipment is issued.

Equipment Not Available for Sale

All/any equipment provided to Councillors will not be available for sale or transfer to Councillors at the cessation of the Councillors term of office.

6.2 Support (Help Desk and Training)

Support for Councillors to set up their Council provided ICT resources and day to day trouble shooting assistance is provided by Council's Information and Communications Help Desk Staff.

Requests for assistance shall be made directly to the Helpdesk on 8470 8811 or via helpdesk@darebin.vic.gov.au

Training in the use of IT and Communications resources provided to Councillors may be arranged on an as required basis at the Councillor's request.

6.3 Mayoral Vehicle / Transportation

The Mayor is expected to perform a range of additional duties during the course of the mayoral year. Council will support the Mayor of the day through the provision of a vehicle or through the reimbursement of Council business vehicular travel costs. This support will be provided on the following terms and conditions:-

1. The vehicle provided will be in accordance with the Council Vehicle Policy which for passenger vehicles specifies environmentally friendly vehicles (fully electric or hybrid) (see Note 1); or
2. The reimbursement of vehicle travel costs (i.e. submitted kms claims) to an amount not exceeding the annual cost of a Council provided vehicle.(see Note 2). Any such claims must be fully substantiated

The vehicle will be fitted with a hands free mobile telephone car kit and fleet card for fuel purchases.

Note 1 The use and provision of the vehicle will be in accordance with Council’s Vehicle Policy to the extent applicable, with full private use (and no driver contribution) and with the Mayor nominated as the assigned driver. The vehicle will be exempt from the car pool.

Note 2 The annual cost of an environmentally friendly vehicle will be determined annually by the officer responsible for Council’s Fleet and will represent the total annual operating cost for this vehicle.

A Council owned bicycle can be provided in lieu of a maintained vehicle. All Councillors may use Councils electric bike fleet based at the Preston Office.

6.4 Taxi / Ride Share

Where it is not possible or convenient to use public transport or a private motor vehicle, a taxi / ride share can be used by Councillors for travel required for their official duties as a Councillor. Councillors will be supplied, upon request, with a cab charge card or e-tickets. Travel of a private nature will not be reimbursed or paid by Council.

If a Councillor incurs costs for the use of a cab charge card or e-ticket in any month, they will be sent a copy of those charges along with a *Councillors Declaration of Cab Charge Use* form. The *Councillors Declaration of Cab Charge Use* form must be completed and returned to the Governance, Council Business and Civic Services Unit within 14 days of the account being sent.

Further, where a Councillor completes a *Councillors Declaration of Cab Charge Use* form and indicates that a charge/s was for personal use, an invoice shall be generated, and the Councillor shall pay the invoice within Council’s normal payment terms and conditions.

Failure to complete the *Councillors Declaration of Cab Charge Use* form or to pay an invoice within Council’s normal payment terms for personal use charges, will result in a Councillors access to the cab charge card or e-tickets being revoked. In such circumstances the Councillor will then be required to personally pay for the use of cabs and submit a claim for reimbursement of the charges upon the supply of evidence that the charge/s was / were incurred as a result of undertaking Council related business.

6.5 Substantial Private Use of Council Provided Resources

Substantial private use of resources and facilities by a Councillor must be declared by the Councillor and substantial private use must be reimbursed by the Councillor.

A “Declaration of Usage of Resources” statement will be prepared each quarter by the Governance, Council Business and Civic Services Unit which will specify the monthly cost of the Council provided mobile phone and internet data plan. Itemised accounts will be provided to each Councillor of their mobile phone and data accounts.

Each Councillor must inspect the “Declaration of Usage of Resources” statement, make an estimate of their private use, and declare that no more that 10% of the call charges of the Council provided mobile phone (up to a maximum monthly cost of \$20) is attributable to incidental private use and no more that 10% of the internet connection plan is attributable to private use (Note – Councillor internet plans are combined with the organisational global plans with the current monthly cost being \$20 per device / service).

If a Councillor discloses incidental private use of more than 10% (or in excess of the maximum monthly cost of \$20), this shall trigger a pro rata calculation of the private use. An invoice will be generated, and the Councillor must pay the invoice within Council's normal payment terms and conditions.

Example The monthly mobile phone account for Councillor X is \$300 and the internet data plan for the mobile phone and Council provided laptop are \$20 respectively. Councillor X examines the call charges and acknowledges that a series of lengthy calls they made to an ill family member overseas during the month totalled \$100. This is in excess of the allowable 10% incidental use i.e. \$30 and over the \$20 maximum incidental use threshold. Councillor X declares this on the Declaration of Usage of Resources" statement which triggers the raising of an invoice for \$80 that is send to Councillor X for payment.

7. REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

In line with the principles underlying this policy, the reimbursement of expenses incurred while performing duties as a Councillor shall be applied in a non-discriminatory way, recognising individual needs and circumstances and ensuring a Councillor is not financially or otherwise disadvantaged.

Councillors are entitled to be reimbursed for the following expenses while performing duties as a Councillor.

7.1 Private Vehicle Use

Councillors are entitled to be reimbursed for reasonable travel expenses incurred in the use of their private vehicle (including electric vehicles) for Council purposes.

Reasonable travel expenses include travel to and from:-

- Ordinary Council Meetings, Special Council Meetings, Councillor Briefing Sessions, meetings of Committees of Council, civic functions;
- Meetings of community groups, organisations and statutory authorities to which the Councillor has been appointed the Council delegate;
- Site inspections or meetings; and
- Any meeting or other activity which the Councillor attends in performing duties as Councillor

All travel claims will be from each Councillor's notified place of residence. All expense claims will be submitted on the Councillor Reimbursement of Expense Claim Form and the Councillor shall be reimbursed, based on the distance travelled, in accordance with the applicable and current vehicle allowance as specified in the City of Darebin Enterprise Agreement in operation at the time claims are submitted.

Councillors that have an environmentally friendly vehicle which does not fit a standard cylinder vehicle classification are eligible for the 4 cylinder or less vehicle reimbursement classification amount.

Vehicle travel that exceeds 600km (for one event / trip in total) requires approval from the Chief Executive Officer.

7.2 Family Care

The Council will reimburse the cost of necessary expenses for childcare up to and including the age of 16 years and for the care of elderly, disabled and / or sick immediate family members of Councillors, while a Councillor is conducting Council business.

Childcare costs are not eligible for reimbursement if paid to a family member or a person who normally or regularly lives with the Councillor, except where a live-in (professional) helper such as a nanny is required to work extra time at extra expense because of the Councillor's duties.

Carer expenses may consist of:-

- Childcare centre fees;
- Hourly fees;
- Agency booking fees (if claimed); and
- Reasonable travelling expenses at rates no greater than those prescribed in the City of Darebin Enterprise Agreement Part B (if claimed by the carer).

Fees that can be reimbursed are per hour (or part of an hour) rate subject to any minimum period which is part of the provider's usual terms, to a maximum hourly rate approved by the Chief Executive Officer (guided by industry rate).

Travelling expenses may cover the transport costs of the carer to and from the Councillor's residence or of the person to be cared for to and from the place of care.

Claims must be accompanied by a receipt from the care provider showing the date and time care was provided and details of the reason care was needed on each occasion. All claims shall be substantiated by an invoice or receipt or other relevant documentation provided by the caregiver.

Any claims for family care by a Councillor will be considered and have regard to the definitions and provisions of the Carers Recognition Act 2012.

7.3 Conferences / Training and Development

Councillors may seek approval to attend a conference or complete training and development during their term. Any Councillor funded training and development should be approved consistent with Section 8.11 prior to committing to the activity, otherwise it will not be reimbursed by Council.

7.4 Attendance at Events When Performing Duties as a Councillor

Councillors may seek approval from the Chief Executive Officer to attend events when performing duties as a Councillor and have these costs paid for by Council or reimbursed, as outlined in Section 8.11. Such events must be directly related to the municipality and must not be events organised by political parties. If requested and approved by the Chief Executive Officer Council will fund the costs associated with the attendance of the Councillor's spouse / partner when they are accompanying the Councillor. The costs shall be specifically limited to the meal and or ticket associated with the relevant event.

7.5 Mobile Phone Reimbursement

Consistent with section 6.1, Councillors may choose to use their own mobile phone and seek a reimbursement of those costs. If a Councillor elects to do so, the Councillor shall submit their mobile phone account to the Governance, Council Business and Civic Services Unit and shall itemise the call and data charges that are attributable to performing their duties as a Councillor.

7.6 General Expenditure

General expenditure claims must relate directly to the performance of duties as a Councillor. General expenditure may include such expenses as the reasonable and minor purchase of refreshments (i.e. a coffee) car parking and public transport tickets. A claim for reimbursement of general expenditure requires evidence in the form of a tax invoice including name and address of the supplier and details of the goods or services supplied.

7.7 Green Travel Plan

Council's Green Travel Plan encourages a range of travel options conducive to the environment. Public transport can be a convenient and efficient form of travel for many Council business events in Darebin and in the central business district of Melbourne.

Public travel expenses incurred by Councillors in the course of official duties as a Councillor will be reimbursed.

7.8 Submitting Claims

All claims for reimbursement must be fully substantiated and details lodged on the Reimbursement of Expenses Claim form. The period for the lodgement of any claim must not exceed three months without written approval of the Chief Executive Officer, in response to a request in writing explaining the reason for such an extension. No claims will be permitted that exceed six (6) months and / or which do not relate to the current financial year.

7.9 Approval of Claims

Claims for reimbursement of expenses by Councillors must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer or their delegate. Mayoral expenses shall be approved jointly by the Chief Executive Officer and the EA to the Mayor and Councillors.

7.10 General

The following general provisions apply to out-of-pocket expenses that will be reimbursed to, or paid on behalf of, Councillors:-

- Reimbursements will only be made in respect of expenses already incurred.
- Travel must be undertaken as efficiently and by the shortest route possible.
- Where travel is by air or by other means of public transport, economy class will be the standard.
- Travel claims will only be made on the basis of the actual form of transport used.
- Expenses incurred which are not directly related to the official Council duties of a Councillor, cannot be included in the calculation of a claim for reimbursement.
- The cost of any penalties incurred for road, traffic or parking infringements will not be reimbursed.

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- If a particular expense is not claimed, this cannot be offset against a claim for an additional amount of another expense.
 - Council will reimburse the cost of a Councillor's partner accompanying the Councillor to civic engagements where the presence of the partner is necessary to support the business or representation needs of the Council. The engagement will normally be of a nature where other attendees will be accompanied by partners.

8. OTHER SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE

8.1 Mayoral Support

Administrative support will be made available by the EA to the Mayor and Councillors to assist the Mayor (and where appropriate the Mayor's partner) in performing their official duties.

Office accommodation and associated equipment will be provided to assist the Mayor at the Darebin Civic Centre at 350 High Street, Preston.

8.2 Building Access

Each Councillor will receive a key and security access card allowing 24-hour access to the Councillors office / lounge area and meeting rooms only at Darebin Civic Centre at 350 High Street, Preston.

An intercom system (linked to the Chief Executive Officers area) at the entrance to the Councillor office / lounge area is available for Councillors to use.

8.3 Car Parking

The car park at the rear of Darebin Civic Centre at 350 High Street, Preston accessed from Kelvin Grove is available for Councillors to park when attending the Council offices. The security access card will allow access to this car park.

Allocated car parking for Councillors is not provided (except for the Mayor). Access to parking spaces will be dependent on availability.

Councillors will be requested to register their vehicle at the commencement of their term (and advise of any changes to vehicle use).

8.4 Meeting Rooms and the Councillors Office / Lounge

The Civic Area on the first floor of Darebin Civic Centre includes the Councillors' office / lounge area and meeting rooms available for use by Councillors.

The Councillors' office / lounge is reserved for exclusive use by Councillors. The room is equipped with computer access and is suitable for office work, reading and research, and small meetings.

If materials and consumables are not available in the Councillors' office / lounge, Councillors must contact the EA to the Mayor and Councillors.

Light refreshments including water, tea, coffee and soft drinks will be made available in the Councillors' Lounge.

Councillors private and secure 'pigeon holes' are currently located in the Councillors' office / lounge.

Other meeting rooms in the Civic Area can be booked for meetings through the EA to the Mayor and Councillors. Meeting equipment, tea / coffee and chilled water can be made available for meetings upon request.

This does not extend to use by community groups or organisations.

8.5 Administrative Support and Stationery / Mail / Miscellaneous

Reasonable administrative support will be made available by the EA to the Mayor and Councillors primarily in the form of assistance with diary management, responding to correspondence, enquiries and requests for service as part of their official duties as a Councillor.

On request, the EA to the Mayor and Councillors will manage reasonable requests for stationery held or obtained for the organisation's requirements. This may include (but is not limited to) paper, writing implements, diaries, business cards, writing pads, data storage devices, envelopes etc. Council letterhead is not available for Councillors general use. No Christmas, greeting cards or postage is available.

Each Councillor will be provided with a Darebin City Council name badge for use while on Council business.

Personal mail and other Council information will predominantly be placed in Councillors pigeon holes for collection.

Council agendas / minutes, briefing agendas and the majority of information from the organisation will only be made available electronically via Council's Content Management System. Appropriate training and support for this system will be provided to all Councillors (Refer Section 6.2)

No paper/printed copies will be provided.

Meals and Refreshments

Where Council or Committee meetings are held at times which extend through normal meal times, Council will provide suitable meals served on the premises.

Access to Council Vehicle Pool - If it is assessed as the most practical means to attend a location to conduct Council related business, a vehicle from the Council motor vehicle pool may be provided for use by a Councillor or a group of Councillors.

8.6 Memberships and Subscriptions

The Chief Executive Officer will approve the costs of joining and ongoing membership of relevant professional associations (such as the Australian Institute of Company Directors) where they are satisfied that the membership will enhance the Councillor's ability to perform their role as a Councillor.

8.7 Councillors with Disabilities

The Council will meet the reasonable additional expenses to assist a Councillor with a disability to perform their duties as a Councillor. The Chief Executive Officer will be responsible to facilitate any process or plan to best support a Councillor with a disability to effectively perform their role.

8.8 Other Support and Assistance

A confidential counselling service is available for Councillors to access free of charge. This service offers confidential, short-term support for a variety of personal problems that may be affecting them in their role as a Councillor or in their personal life.

The service is free and offers private and confidential counselling on a wide range of personal and family related problems, including but not limited to: Personal and emotional stress, Relationship or family matters, Work - related stress, Financial coaching and Mental health concerns.

Contact details and background information on the Provider will be sent to all Councillors.

8.9 Civic and Community Events

From time to time, Council representatives are invited to attend community functions and events. It is usual for the Mayor to represent the Council at these functions and any payment required to attend the function is paid by the Council. If another Councillor attends the function, either representing the Mayor or in an official capacity as Council representative to that particular group, any attendance charge will be paid or reimbursed by the Council.

The cost of Council representatives attending civic functions and events hosted by other Councils will be paid by the Council.

8.10 Conferences and Training

The roles and responsibilities of Councillors are wide and varied. It is important that Council identifies the training needs of Councillors and ensures that they have access to ongoing training and professional development throughout their term.

The types of training and development activities and events at which Councillors seek approval to attend, should have a direct correlation to performing the role of Councillor. Such activities could involve seminars, conferences and more formal study courses.

Council will provide a maximum of \$7,000 per annum per Councillor for Training and Development activities (See Note 1). All approved costs related to training and development activities will be recorded against the Councillors' per term allowance.

Where it is understood that a Councillor training and development activity involves related costs such as accommodation, travel or other general costs, these should be identified by a Councillor when seeking authorisation from the Chief Executive Officer.

The Chief Executive Officer will:

- 1) Consult with all Councillors to identify training and development opportunities that best support their individual needs on an annual basis;
- 2) Provide a compulsory training program for a newly elected Council in line with legislation.
- 3) Maintain an annual budget which:-
 - a) Accommodates the individual training requirements of Councillors across the Council term; and
 - b) Limits individual Councillor expenses on training and professional development to \$7,000 per Councillor per financial year (See Note 1). If this amount has been expended, or the remaining funds are insufficient, Councillors can personally pay for costs or contribute funds towards attending an approved training or development activity.

Note 1. The Chief Executive Officer may upon application consider approving Conference attendance training and development opportunities that exceeds the \$7000 per Councillor per annum threshold if the annual cost for the Councillor training and development is maintained within the adopted budget and the relevant Councillor(s) per term training and development budget is maintained within the established parameters.

Councillor Group Training and Development

In regard to the training and development of the Council Group provision will be made by the organisation during an election year to ensure effective induction training and development can be provided to Councillors (as outlined above).

During the term of Council, the Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with Councillors will identify group training and development opportunities. These agreed collective opportunities will be funded by a budget provided by the organisation.

8.11 Pre-Approval Process

Councillors will seek approval for the funding of the following activities prior to either themselves seeking a reimbursement or Council officers organising and paying for attendance:-

- Training and development.
- Attendance at events when performing duties as a Councillor.

All requests for attendance at such activities which, if approved, will be paid for by Council (subject to in relation to training and development matters the per term maximum thresholds) shall be made in writing to the Chief Executive Officer in advance.

Councillors will outline the benefit and reasons when seeking approval.

8.12 Authorisation

The Chief Executive Officer, unless otherwise resolved by Council, is authorised to approve the funding of Councillors' attendance at training and development or confirming attendance and payment for events on criteria that ensures:-

- a) The attendance is in the community interest and reflects the identified needs of the Councillor;
- b) Equity and fair and reasonable access to all Councillors to training and development, noting that events will generally be attended by the Mayor in the first instance; and
- c) A quorum of Councillors is available to attend to the normal business of the Council.

8.13 Exception for Overseas Travel

Notwithstanding the above, any overseas travel by a Councillor in an official Council business capacity must be presented to a Council Meeting for approval prior to the travel.

8.14 Costs Related to Spouses for Specified Activities

The payment of travel, accommodation or any other expenses for spouses, partners or accompanying persons attending a conference will not be borne by Council.

9. INDEMNITY PROVISION

A Council must indemnify and keep indemnified each Councillor, member of a delegated committee and member of a Community Asset Committee against all actions or claims whether arising during or after their term of office, in respect of anything necessarily done or reasonably done or omitted to be done in good faith while undertaking the duties of a Councillor.

The following insurance covers will apply to all Councillors:-

- Public Liability.
- Professional Indemnity.
- Councillors and Officers Liability.
- Workcover.
- Personal Accident (accompanying partners are also covered).

Council will pay the insurance policy excess in respect of any claim made against a Councillor arising from Council business where any claim is accepted by Council's insurers, whether defended or not.

Council equipment provided to Councillors to assist in performing their role, is covered for damage or theft under Council's insurance policies.

10. ACCOUNTABILITY AND AUDIT

10.1 Claiming of Expenses

In addition to the provisions of 7.8 the following provisions apply when making a claim for reimbursement of expenses:-

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- All claims for expense reimbursements must be made on the [Councillor or Delegated Committee Member Reimbursement of Expense Claim Form](#). (Appendix A).
 - Original receipts must be attached for all purchases (credit card receipts will not be accepted).
 - Where the provider of the goods or service is registered for GST, a 'Tax Invoice' must be obtained for all purchases in excess of \$82.50 (including GST); if a 'Tax Invoice' is not submitted, the GST component cannot be reimbursed.
 - Claims are to be lodged with Chief Executive Officer or General Manager Governance and Engagement in a timely manner to ensure transparency and accountability. Claims will be managed by the EA to the Mayor and Councillors.
 - Reimbursements will be paid by electronic funds transfer (EFT) within 21 days of receipt of a properly completed and supported claim form.

10.2 Audit and Reporting

Councillor Expenses

Reports on Councillor expenses and reimbursements will be reported to Council in conjunction with the Quarterly Reporting regime and in the following format i.e. details of the expense, including reimbursement of expenses for each Councillor categorised separately as;

- Travel expenses (specifying car mileage expenses and cab charge or equivalent expenses).
- Childcare expenses.
- information and communications technology (specifying mobile phone expenses and data cost).
- Conferences and training (specifying all costs associated with the attendance) and
- Functions / events (specifying all costs associated with the attendance).

These reports will also be submitted to Council's Audit and Risk Audit Committee on a six monthly basis.

Audits of Councillor expenses and reimbursements may be carried out from time to time as part of Council's annual audit program.

Interstate and Overseas Travel

The Chief Executive Officer will maintain a register of overseas and interstate travel in accordance with the legislation

11. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed within 12 months of each General Election unless the Council determines that an earlier review is required.



Councillor Reimbursement of Expense Claim Form

Name: _____

Date: _____

Private Vehicle Use

Rego. No.

Vehicle Type (inc cylinders)

| Date | Trip Details | Purpose of Trip | Amount kms | Amount \$ | Tax Code (Office) | GL Code (Office) |
|--------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| Total | | | 0 | 0.00 | | |

*** Other Expenses**

| Date | Supplier | Details | Amount \$ | Tax Code (Office) | GL Code (Office) |
|--------------|----------|---------|--------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Total | | | 0.00 | | |

*** Notes ***

All expense reimbursements must be supported by documentary evidence. Please attach receipts, etc. to this form.
Where interstate travel has been taken, please complete a Travel Register Form.

Signature of Claimant: _____

Dated: / /

CEO Authorisation (or delegate): _____

Dated: / /

[SUBMIT TO COUNCIL BUSINESS UNIT](#)

