

MAPOON ABORIGINAL SHIRE COUNCIL

Councillor Expenses Reimbursement Policy

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

The Councillor Expense Reimbursement Policy is a Statutory Policy.

Statutory policies are prepared in response to legislative requirements and mandate employee behaviour. This Policy is approved by the Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council for the guidance of Council and Council staff.

DOCUMENT VERSION CONTROL			
VERSION	DATE	RESOLUTION N°.	DETAILS
1.0	16/01/2018	08/2018	Responsible Officer: Corporate Services Manager Policy Type: Statutory Policy
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5.0	16/07/2024	C094/2024	Responsible Officer: CEO Policy Type: Statutory Policy
			Recommended Review Date – June 2027

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1. Introduction/Policy Statement

This Policy applies to the Mayor and Councillors and is made pursuant to section 250 of the Local Government Regulation 2012.

The purpose of this policy is to set the parameters to authorise payment of reasonable expenses incurred, or to be incurred, by Councillors.

2. Policy Scope

This policy provides for payment of reasonable expenses incurred, or to be incurred, by Councillors for discharging their duties and responsibilities as Councillors and for the provision of facilities to Councillors for that purpose.

3. Definitions

Official Council Business - Activities conducted on behalf of MASC where a Councillor is required to undertake certain tasks to satisfy legislative requirements or achieve business objectives for the MASC. Official MASC business should result in a benefit being achieved, either for the Local Government and/or the local community.

This includes:

- i) Attendance at Council, Portfolio and Briefing meetings;
- ii) Attendance at prescribed Local Government training activities/workshops, seminars, and conferences;
- iii) Attendance at civic ceremonies and community events where a formal invitation has been received inviting Councillors in their capacity to undertake official duty;
- iv) Attendance at public meetings, annual meetings or presentation dinners where invited as a Councillor;
- v) Attendance at meetings of community groups where appointed as a MASC delegate to the group or invited to speak about MASC programs and activities;
- vi) Attendance at private meetings with constituents, where arranged through official MASC channels and details of discussions are documented in official records or diaries;
- vii) Attendance at civic functions on behalf of the Mayor;
- viii) Attendance at organized meetings/deputations/inspections/community consultations on a one-off basis; and
- ix) Attendance at organized meetings pertaining to a meeting of a community organization where a delegate of the MASC has not been appointed to attend or is unavailable to attend.

Reasonable - Councillors must make sound judgements and consider what is prudent, responsible and acceptable to their communities when determining reasonable levels of expenditure.

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Expenses - MASC will reimburse Councillors for their reasonable and necessary expenses incurred or to be incurred when discharging their duties as Councillors e.g., Flights, car hire, accommodation, meals and associated registration fees.

Professional Development - Attendance at workshops, courses, seminars and conferences that improve Councillor's skills relevant to the role of a Councillor.

Mandatory Professional Development is the title that applies when the MASC resolves that all Councillors must attend the event.

Discretionary Professional Development is the title used to describe all professional development that is not Mandatory Professional Development.

4. Policy Statement

MASC will reimburse Councillors for expenses as set out in this policy.

In addition to the expenses expressly referred to in the section of this Policy headed Expense Categories, the MASC will reimburse other expenses that are necessarily incurred to allow the participation of Councillors who experience unusual barriers to participation, such as a disability or cultural responsibilities.

5. Expense Categories

1. Professional Development

MASC will reimburse expenses incurred for:

- i) All mandatory professional development; and
- ii) Discretionary professional development up to a maximum of \$5,000 (indexed annually to CPI) during a single Local Government term.

2. Travel as required to represent Council

MASC will reimburse local, interstate and overseas travel expenses deemed necessary to achieve the business of MASC when:

- i) A Councillor is acting as an official representative of Council; and
- ii) The activity/event and travel have been endorsed by resolution of Council.

3. Travel bookings

All Councillor travel approved by Council will be booked and paid for by MASC.

Economy class is to be used where possible, although MASC may approve Business Class in certain circumstances.

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Airline tickets are not transferable and can only be procured for the Councillor's travel on MASC business. They cannot be used to offset other unapproved expenses (e.g., Cost of partner or spouse accompanying the Councillor).

4. Private vehicle usage

Payment for use of the Councillor's private vehicle on MASC business will be reimbursed to the Councillor on a kilometre rate as set out in the Australian Taxation Office 'Allowable deductions for Motor Vehicles'.

In other circumstances, Councillor's private vehicle usage will be reimbursed by MASC if the:

- i. Travel has been endorsed by Council resolution;
- ii. Total travel claim does not exceed the cost of the same travel using Economy flights plus the cost of taxi transfers.

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

5. Accommodation

All Councillor accommodation for MASC business will be booked and paid for by MASC.

Accommodation should be selected that provides:

- MASC with the best price value; and
- Convenient to the conference/meeting Councillors will be reimbursed for the actual cost of meals when:
 - (i) The Councillor incurs the cost personally.
 - (ii) The meal was not provided within the (registration) costs of the approved activity/event/travel.
 - (iii) The Councillor can produce documents sufficient to verify the actual meal cost.
 - (iv) The meal was not included as part of the accommodation booking.
- All room service expenses will not be reimbursed or paid for by MASC.

6. Hospitality Expenses

Council will reimburse costs of meals for a Councillor when:

- (i) The Councillor incurs the cost personally and did not receive Travel Allowance;
- (ii) The meal was not provided within the registration costs of the approved activity/event; and/or during an approved flight; and
- (iii) The following limits apply to the amount MASC will reimburse for meals;
 - Breakfast \$32.10/day

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- Lunch \$36.10/day
- Dinner \$61.50/day

The Mayor will be reimbursed up to \$1,000 per annum for hospitality expenses deemed necessary in the conduct of MASC business.

Note: If a Councillor cannot produce a receipt for a meal, they have purchased then a Statutory Declaration must be completed to claim the reimbursement. No alcohol will be paid for by MASC.

6. FACILITIES CATEGORIES

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

1. Administrative tools will be provided to Councillors as required to assist Councillors in their role. Administrative tools may include:

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| (i) Office space and meeting rooms | (ii) Mobile Phone (Mayor Only) |
| (iii) Computers/iPad with internet access | (iv) Access to photocopiers |
| (v) Stationery | (vi) Printers |
| (vii) Facsimile machines | (viii) Publications |
| (ix) Use of Council landline telephones and internet access in Council offices. | (x) Councillors will be reimbursed \$50.00 per month for mobile phone usage. |

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7. VARIATION

MASC reserves the right to vary, replace or terminate this policy from time to time.

8. RELEVANT LEGISLATION

The *Local Government Regulation 2012* states:

186(1) Councillors

- (b) the expenses incurred by, and the facilities provided to, each councillor during the financial year under the local government's expenses reimbursement policy; and

249 What div 2 is about

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

250 Requirement to adopt expenses reimbursement policy or amendment

- (1) A local government must adopt an expenses reimbursement policy.
- (2) A local government may, by resolution, amend its expenses reimbursement policy at any time.

9. Effective Date

On and from the date this Policy is adopted.

Thomas Smith
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER