



STATUTORY POLICY

Expenses Reimbursement



JANUARY 2017

MAPOON ABORIGINAL SHIRE COUNCIL
Main Street, Mapoon Qld 4874

POLICY

EXPENSES REIMBURSEMENT FOR COUNCILLORS

1. Authority

- Local Government Act 2009
- Local Government Regulation 2012 - Section 249 - 252

2. Policy Statement

To provide the Mayor and Councillors with reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred in the performance of their roles.

3. Principles

This Councillor Expenses Reimbursement Policy is based on the following principles:

- *No private benefit to be derived*

Facilities provided to Councillors are for the sole use of Councillors in undertaking their duties and must be used responsibly and appropriately.

- *Reasonable Expenses Reimbursement*

Councillors should not be financially disadvantaged when carrying out their roles, and should be fairly and reasonably compensated in accordance with community expectations.

- *Public accountability and transparency*

The use of the provided facilities will be open for review to the extent appropriate to the proper performance of a Councillor's responsibilities.

- *Public perceptions and community expectations*

The Council will provide only those facilities reasonably necessary for the efficient performance of a Councillor's responsibilities.

- *Equity and Participation*

To maximize equity and the participation of Councillors from diverse backgrounds and circumstances, this Councillor Expenses Reimbursement Policy expressly permits the reimbursement of expenses that are necessarily incurred to allow the participation of Councillors who experience unusual barriers to participation, such as a disability or cultural responsibilities.

4. Scope

This policy applies to the Mayor and Councillors for the reimbursement of expenses incurred by them in undertaking their roles.

5. Responsibility

The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for ensuring this policy is understood and adhered to by the Mayor and Councillors.

6. Definitions

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

- Attendance at Council, Portfolio and Briefing meetings;
- Attendance at prescribed Local Government training activities/workshops, seminars and conferences;
- Attendance at civic ceremonies and community events where a formal invitation has been received inviting Councillors in their capacity to undertake official duty;
- Attendance at public meetings, annual meetings or presentation dinners where invited as a Councillor;
- Attendance at meetings of community groups where appointed as a Council delegate to the group or invited to speak about Council programs and activities;
- Attendance at private meetings with constituents, where arranged through official Council channels and details of discussions are documented in official records or diaries;
- Attendance at civic functions on behalf of the Mayor;
- Attendance at organized meetings/deputations/inspections/community consultations on a one-off basis; and
- Attendance at organized meetings pertaining to a meeting of a community organization where a delegate of the Council 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.

Expenses - Council will reimburse Councillors for their reasonable and necessary expenses incurred or to be incurred when discharging their duties as Councillors.

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 Council 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.

7. Policy

The Council 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 Council 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.

Expense Categories

1. Professional Development

The Council will reimburse expenses incurred for:

- All mandatory professional development; and
- 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

The Council will reimburse local, interstate and overseas travel expenses (e.g. Flights, car hire, accommodation, meals and associated registration fees) deemed necessary to achieve the business of Council when:

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

Councillors must travel via the most direct route, using the most economical and efficient mode of transport. The amount of the reimbursement will be the actual amount expended by the Councillor, or where an actual amount cannot be directly substantiated, an equivalent mileage allowance.

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

2.1 Travel bookings

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

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

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

2.2 Travel transfer costs

Any travel transfer expenses associated with Councillors travelling for Council approved business will be reimbursed, e.g. Trains, buses, taxi and ferry fares.

Receipts must be provided with all claims for reimbursement.

2.3 Private vehicle usage

Payment for use of the Councillor's private vehicle on Council 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 Council if the:

- Travel has been endorsed by Council resolution;
- Claim for mileage is substantiated with log book details; and
- Total travel claim does not exceed the cost of the same travel using Economy flights plus the cost of taxi transfers.

2.4 Accommodation

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

Accommodation should be selected that provides:

- Council with the best price value; and
- Convenient to the conference/meeting Councillors will be reimbursed for the actual cost of meals when:
 - The Councillor incurs the cost personally;
 - The meal was not provided within the (registration) costs of the approved activity/event/travel; and
 - The Councillor can produce documents sufficient to verify the actual meal cost.

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 Council.

2.5 Hospitality Expenses

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

3. Facilities Categories - 'Administrative tools' Administrative tools will be provided to Councillors as required to assist Councillors in their role. Administrative tools include:

- Office space and meeting rooms
- Computers/iPad with internet access
- Mobile Phone (Mayor Only)
- Stationery
- Access to photocopiers
- Printers
- Facsimile machines
- Publications
- Use of Council landline telephones and internet access in Council offices.

Date of Review: January 2019

Resolution Number: 02. 17/01/17

Policy Review: 3 years, or as determined by Council or the Chief Executive Officer