



COUNCILLOR EXPENSES REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

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POLICY TYPE: Statutory

Policy Responsibility: Corporate Services Director

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Document Control

Version History

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1	22 May 2020	Council resolution	New Policy - Council Resolution 11-5/20
2	15 October 2020	Council Resolution	Council Meeting 15 October 2020 Item 8.2.5

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1 BACKGROUND:

Section 250(1) of the Local Government Regulation 2012 states that a local government must adopt an Expenses Reimbursement Policy for Elected Members.

Section 249(2) of the Local Government Regulation 2012 requires that the policy is to provide 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 the councillors for that purpose.

Section 186(b) of the Local Government Regulation 2012 requires Council's annual report to contain details of "the expenses incurred by, and the facilities provided to, each Councillor during the financial year under the local government's expenses reimbursement policy."

2. OBJECTIVES:

The Councillor Expenses Reimbursement Policy is designed to:

1. Clarify the extent of expense reimbursement and facilities provided to Councillors.
2. Ensure the use of public moneys in the public interest by responsible budgeting and accounting;
3. Ensure the fair and reasonable allocation of council resources (allowances, facilities and other benefits) to enable all councillors to conduct the duties of their office;
4. Promote accountability for expenditure and use of facilities by Councillors.

3. RELEVANT LEGISLATION:

Sections 186, 249-250 Local Government Regulation 2012.

4. PROVISION OF FACILITIES:

4.1 Councillors of the Doomadgee Aboriginal Shire Council will be provided with

-] Use of Council facilities for conducting Council business;
-] A Councillor may use their own mobile phone and other communication devices be reimbursed for these costs up to the amount of \$50 per week. To receive this reimbursement Councillors will be required to provide the necessary IT equipment required to undertake their role as a Councillor. The minimum requirement is a smart phone with a publicly listed phone number and capability for a Council email account.
-] ICT support and access to Council software and Council's electronic document records management system;
-] One Council email account;
-] Name Badge;
-] Access to office space and meeting room at the Doomadgee Council Chambers during office hours, subject to availability;
-] Business cards as required;
-] One business diary, which must be returned to Council for scanning/filing purposes in line with Council's record keeping requirements;

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- J Reasonable access to photocopiers, printers, facsimile machines, telephone and internet access at Council Chambers, such use is to prior approval of the CEO;
- J Safety equipment (where required for site inspections etc.);
- J One corporate jacket for use at Official functions (one per term of Council);
- J A Councillor uniform and a tie/scarf;
- J A travel reimbursement of up to \$50 per week (excluding the Mayor) for all travel expenses for official business, within the Doomadgee and Burke Shire areas;
- J Councillors may have access to a council vehicle for official business, outside of the Doomadgee and Burke Shire areas, where such purpose has been approved by Council or the Chief Executive Officer in advance and a vehicle is available. Fuel for the council-owned vehicle used for this official council business, will be provided or paid for by council;
- J Council may by resolution, agree to cover costs incurred through any inquiry, investigation, hearing or legal proceedings into the conduct of a Councillor, or arising out of, or in connection with the Councillor's performance of his/her civic functions;
- J Councillors are to be covered under Council insurance policies while discharging civic duties. Specifically, insurance cover will be provided for public liability, professional indemnity, Councillor's liability, personal accident, and travel insurance;
- J Any other administrative necessities which Council considers necessary to meet the business of Council.

4.2 Additional Facilities for the Mayor

- J The Mayor is provided with a fully maintained vehicle while attending council approved activities and for private use. When the Mayor is away for a period of time this vehicle will be provided to the Deputy Mayor to be used for attending council approved activities. A log book must be maintained.

4.3 Maintenance costs of council owned equipment

Council will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance and reasonable wear and tear costs of Council-owned equipment that is supplied to Councillors for official business use. This includes the replacement of any facilities which fall under council's asset replacement program.

5. PAYMENT OF EXPENSES

Expenses will be paid to a Councillor through administrative processes approved by Council's Chief Executive Officer subject to the limits outlined in this policy. Council will reimburse expenses incurred for:

5.1 Professional Development

- J Mandatory professional development (requires a Council resolution determining such development as mandatory in advance); and
- J Discretionary professional development deemed essential for the councillor's role (requires a Council resolution approving such development in advance).

5.2 Travel as required to represent Council

- J Where Council resolves that Councillors are to attend conferences, workshops or training courses, Council will cover the following expenses:
 - o Registration fees;
 - o Accommodation including breakfast (where appropriate);

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- Economy airfares (any upgrades to be at the Councillor's expense);
- Reasonable meal expenditure (will only be reimbursed upon presentation of receipts/tax invoices);
- Reasonable taxi fares or public transport costs (will only be reimbursed upon presentation of receipts/tax invoices).
- Councillors are to travel via the most direct route, using the most economical and efficient mode of transport.
- Council will pay for overnight accommodation if a councillor is required to stay overnight outside of Doomadgee for the purposes of official business where it is not practical for them to return home (e.g. their property is in excess of 50km from Doomadgee and/or on unsealed roads that are not accessible due to wet weather).

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.

5.3 Travel bookings

All Councillor travel that is approved by Council will be booked and paid for by Council. Economy class is to be used.

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).

5.4 Travel transfer costs

Any travel transfer expenses associated with councillors travelling for council approved business will be reimbursed provided that tax receipts for same are submitted to Council for reimbursement. Example: trains, taxis, buses and ferry fares.

Cab charge vouchers may also be used if approved by council where councillors are required to undertake duties relating to the business of council.

5.5 Private vehicle usage

Councillor's private vehicle usage under this clause will be reimbursed by council if the:

- ⌋ Travel is to and from the councillor's private residence to attend official business of the council outside the Doomadgee and Burke Shire areas that have been endorsed by Council resolution.

Reimbursement of private vehicle usage will be subject to:

- ⌋ The claim for mileage being substantiated with signed claim form by the councillor; and
- ⌋ No council vehicle being available for use by the Councillor to attend the business being claimed for (Councillors may be required to share vehicles for travel or utilise a Council vehicle where this is more economical for Council); and
- ⌋ The total travel claim does not exceed the cost of the same travel using economy flights plus the cost of taxi transfers; and
- ⌋ The mileage rate for travel in a private vehicle being 66 cents per kilometre.

5.6 Accommodation

All Councillor accommodation for council business will be booked and paid for by Council's travel provider. Where possible, the minimum standards for Councillor's accommodation shall be three or four-star rating.

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Where particular accommodation is recommended by conference organisers, Council will take advantage of the package deal that is the most economical and convenient to the event.

Where a Councillor elects to stay with family or friends in lieu of using Council provided accommodation, an allowance will be payable in the amount of \$60 p/night.

5.7 Councillors Spouses

Spouses, partners and family members of Councillors are entitled to receive expense reimbursement and the provisions of council facilities where these benefits are offered to the Councillor and can be supplied to the spouse, partner and family member at no further cost to the Council.

Council may approve the attendance of spouses or partners at approved Council business for example the annual Local Government Association Conference or official dinners within the Shire.

5.8 Meals and Drinks

Council will reimburse costs of meals for a councillor when:

-) the councillor incurs the cost personally and
-) the meal was not provided within the registration costs of the approved activity/event; and/or during an approved flight.

Costs are to be reimbursed with reference to the following meal (including drink) allocations:

-) Breakfast \$25/day
-) Lunch \$30/day
-) Dinner \$45/day
-) Incidentals \$20/day

Council will not reimburse expenditure on alcohol, except where such expenses are incurred by the Mayor (in accordance with this policy and any other relevant policy) and where such expenses are deemed reasonable.