
COUNCILLOR SUPPORT (EXPENSES REIMBURSEMENT) POLICY

APPROVALS

POLICY NUMBER	STAT-POL-057	DOC.ID	3676776
CATEGORY	Statutory		
POLICY OWNER	Chief Executive Officer		
APPROVAL DATE	28 October 2020	RESOLUTION NUMBER	6916

OBJECTIVE

Under the Local Government Regulation 2012, section 250, Council must adopt, by resolution, an Expenses Reimbursement policy or an amendment of the Expenses Reimbursement policy providing for the payment of reasonable expenses incurred, or to be incurred, by Councillors for discharging their duties and responsibilities as Councillors; and provision of facilities to the Councillors for that purpose.

This policy sets out the eligibility criteria and value for expenses incurred by the Mayor and Councillors in the performance of their official duties which are to be paid and/or reimbursed.

It also outlines support (including professional development, travel, equipment and facilities) that is to be provided by Council to the Mayor and Councillors to assist them in the effective performance of their civic (statutory and administrative) duties.

SCOPE

- The policy applies to the Mayor and all Councillors and relates to the conduct of their duties as an elected member under the *Local Government Act 2012*.
- The policy does not apply to members of Council Committees, employees, volunteers, or contractors.
- This Policy does not provide for salaries or other forms of Councillor remuneration as this is determined independently by the Local Government Remuneration Commission.

DEFINITIONS

TERM / ACRONYM	MEANING
CEO	Chief Executive Officer of Isaac Regional Council
Conference	Conference or seminar conducted by a peak body relevant to local government and does not include commercially conducted conferences.
Commercially conducted conference	Conference or seminar speculatively conducted by a commercial operator.
Council	Isaac Regional Council
Councillors	Councillors of Isaac Regional Council during their term of office.
Council Business	Business conducted on behalf of Council where a Councillor is required to undertake certain tasks to satisfy legislative requirements, perform ceremonial activities or achieve business objectives for the Council. Council business should result in a benefit being achieved either for Council, the local government area or the community. Council business includes functions that are a

statutory requirement of the Councillor's role or are officially recorded in minutes or other public records. These might also include attending an event or function to perform duties or as a Council representative such as:

- ceremonial openings of buildings and facilities;
- community fetes and carnivals;
- annual or presentation dinners;
- public meetings;
- private meetings arranged through Council administrative channels (i.e. documented in official records or diary) for the purpose of conducting discussions regarding the business of Council; or
- other meetings, events or functions, such as: meetings of the local government or of its committees that the Councillor is entitled or asked to attend, or at which the Councillor has business for a resident in their Division of the local government's area;
- inspections, deputations, conferences and meetings at which the Councillor's attendance is permitted by the local government;
- official functions organised for the local government; or

meeting with residents of their Division area for the purpose of local government business.

Discretionary training

Where a Councillor attends a commercially conducted conference, a workshop or a training activity to improve skills relevant to their role as a Councillor.

Expenses

Expenses are payments made by Council for Councillors reasonable expenses incurred or to be incurred when discharging their duties as Councillors. These expenses may be either reimbursed to Councillors or paid direct by Council.

Facilities

Facilities provided by Council to Councillors are the "tools of trade" required to enable them to perform

their duties with relative ease and at a standard appropriate to fulfil their professional role for the community.

Hospitality

Has the meaning as defined in the Local Government Regulations 2012 as follows:

- a. A service provided by local government for entertaining members of the public for promoting an initiative or project of the local government.
- b. The provision of food or beverages by local government:
 - To a person visiting the local government in an official capacity.
 - For a conference or meeting held by the local government for its Councillors, employees or other persons.
 - For a seminar, course workshop or another forum provided by local government for its Councillors, employees or other persons.
- c. Attendance by a Councillor or employee of local government at a function:
 - As part of the Councillor's or employee's official duties or obligations as a Councillor or employee of the local government.
 - For which an amount is charged to the local government attending the function.

Mandatory training

Where determined by written direction of the Mayor or by Council resolution that the Mayor and/or one or more Councillors are required to attend a conference, training course or workshop for knowledge or skills development related to a Councillors role.

Mayor

Mayor of Isaac Regional Council during her/his term of office but does not apply to an Acting Mayor unless explicitly determined by the Mayor by written delegation or by Council resolution.

Per annum

For the purposes of this policy, per annum refers to the financial year.

POLICY STATEMENT

A. GENERAL

1. Expenses shall be reimbursed to Councillors through administrative processes approved by the CEO subject to:
 - a. the limits outlined in this policy; or
 - b. processes outlined in the Councillor Support Procedure, or
 - c. by Council resolution.
2. Councillors are responsible for ensuring that all claims for reimbursement are strictly in accordance with this policy.
3. It is acknowledged that the Mayor and Councillors each have a diverse set of needs (eg geographical area, number of communities, number of representative roles etc) resulting in differing expenses and as such will adopt budget each year to provide an adequate capacity to meet each costs of conducting Council Business (excepting those amounts standardised in this policy).
4. All Councillor travel, accommodation and conference or other registration fees shall be arranged by an officer in the Office of the Mayor and CEO.
5. Requests for travel, accommodation and conference or other registration should be made as early as possible to allow Council to secure the best value for money.
6. Councillors shall be provided with a quarterly report detailing expenses in each category which have been reimbursed. This is in addition to the legislatively required reporting in Council's Annual Report.
7. Based on the principle that no private benefit is to be gained, the facilities provided to Councillors by Council are to be used only for Council business unless prior approval has been granted by resolution of Council.
8. Expenses associated with the following will not be paid or reimbursed:
 - a. alcoholic mini bar purchases;
 - b. toiletries;
 - c. traffic infringements incurred in either a Council vehicle, private vehicle or hire car;
 - d. laundering or dry cleaning;
 - e. airline lounge membership;
 - f. in-flight and in-house movies;
 - g. raffles or donations to groups; and
 - h. expenses incurred by or on behalf of others such as partners, family members and associates except as per Section K.

B. TRAVEL

1. Council shall pay for local, interstate and overseas travel expenses deemed necessary where:
 - a. the Mayor or Councillor is undertaking Council Business, or
 - b. the Mayor or a Councillor is considered by the CEO to be acting as an official representative of Council;
or
 - c. the Mayor or a Councillor is undertaking approved professional development; or
 - d. the event and travel has been endorsed by resolution of Council.
2. All overseas travel by the Mayor or Councillors must be approved by a Council resolution.
3. Where the Mayor or a Councillor has been appointed by Council resolution as the Council's delegate or representative, all travel required for that role is deemed approved without the need for specific approval excepting overseas travel.
4. Travel should be via the most practical and direct route using the most economical and efficient mode of transport.
5. Economy air travel shall be used where reasonably possible except where flight time for that flight is in excess of four (4) hours in which case business class travel may be approved by the Mayor.
6. Any travel transfer expenses associated with official travel will be paid for by Council, for example car hire, train, bus, taxi and ferry fares.
7. Airline tickets are not transferable and can only be procured for the Mayor or Councillor's travel on Council business and cannot be used to offset other unapproved expenses (e.g. cost of partner or spouse accompanying the councillor).
8. Where the Mayor or a Councillor is approved to travel overseas as a representative of Council, Council shall pay for associated costs including (but not limited to) the following;
 - a. an appropriate pre-paid international mobile telephony roaming package,
 - b. visa or other customs expenses,
 - c. language translation support,
 - d. travel insurance,
 - e. relevant travel information.
9. Council shall reimburse costs of meals and parking for the Mayor or a Councillor when travelling where:
 - a. the Mayor or Councillor incurs the cost personally, and
 - b. the meal or parking was not provided within the registration costs of the approved event or during an approved flight, and
 - c. the Mayor or Councillor submits a receipt or tax invoice with the reimbursement claim.

10. If a Mayor or Councillor is unable to submit a receipt or tax invoice and seeks reimbursement for meals, she/he shall be reimbursed in accordance with the ATO's Taxation Determination TD2016/13 or successor Determination upon the submission of a Statutory Declaration.
11. The Mayor and Councillors are entitled to claim and redeem loyalty rewards for airlines and hotel chains provided it is strictly in accordance with the Frequent Flyer and Other Loyalty Reward Schemes Policy (CAP-007) (except for inconsistencies explicitly defined by this policy).

C. ACCOMMODATION

1. Accommodation shall be the package deal recommended by the event organiser or if this is not possible or offered, suitable accommodation shall be provided that is in convenient proximity to the event.
2. Accommodation shall be provided for one night prior to and/or after a function only when travel to or from the event on the day of the event is impractical or necessary for fatigue management.
3. Council will pay for reasonable expenses incurred for overnight accommodation when it is impractical or unsafe for a Mayor or a Councillor to return to their normal place of abode.

D. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. The Mayor and Councillors are encouraged to undertake relevant professional development to improve their skills.
2. Council shall ensure that the Mayor and Councillors each have opportunity to attend professional development events.
3. Professional development is characterised as either Mandatory professional development or Discretionary professional development.
4. Mandatory professional development shall be approved by written direction of the Mayor or by Council resolution.
5. In determining the number of representatives attending Mandatory professional development, the Mayor or Council shall commit to expenses within available budget limits and shall be cognisant of the value for money of doing so.
6. Council shall pay for all expenses associated with Mandatory professional development.
7. Discretionary professional development must be approved by the CEO or by Council resolution.
8. Discretionary professional development fees (not including travel and accommodation) for each Mayor or Councillor shall be limited to an average of \$1,250.00 per annum for the term of office,
9. The total amount for Discretionary professional development for the term may be accrued and expended in any one year, however the Mayor or Councillor shall submit the proposal to the CEO prior to that year's budget development.
10. Otherwise, the Mayor or Councillor shall submit the Discretionary professional development proposal to the CEO as early as possible prior to the event.

11. The Mayor or Councillor who undertakes discretionary professional development shall present a written report to Council on the particular event/course and its benefit to Council within three (3) months of the event.

E. HOSPITALITY

1. Council recognises that the Mayor and Councillors may have occasion to incur hospitality expenses while conducting Council business, apart from civic receptions organised by Council.
2. All hospitality expenses shall be paid for only where such expenses are in accordance with Council's Entertainment and Hospitality Policy (except for inconsistencies explicitly defined by this policy).
3. Council shall pay for up to \$2,000.00 per annum for hospitality expenses deemed necessary by the Mayor for her/his conduct of Council Business (including reasonable alcohol expenditure as determined by the CEO).
4. Council shall pay for up to \$250.00 per annum for hospitality expenses deemed necessary by each Councillor for her/his conduct of Council Business (including reasonable alcohol expenditure as determined by the CEO).
5. In order to be reimbursed, the Mayor and Councillors must provide receipts and a written statement of whom they entertained and the benefit to Council as well as any further documentation required for Fringe Benefit Tax reporting.
6. If a Mayor or Councillor is unable to submit a receipt or tax invoice and seeks reimbursement for meals, she/he shall be reimbursed in accordance with the ATO's Taxation Determination TD2016/13 or successor Determination upon the submission of a Statutory Declaration.

F. USE OF CORPORATE CARDS

1. The Mayor shall be provided with a Council purchasing card for Council business use in accordance with the Purchasing Cards Policy. The Mayor will be required to perform a monthly reconciliation and submit tax invoices for expenses to the CEO.
2. Providing it is in accordance with the Purchasing Card Policy, the CEO may authorise the provision of a purchasing card to a Councillor to enable her/him to pay for incidental expenses. The Councillor will be required to perform a monthly reconciliation and submit tax invoices for expenses to the CEO.
3. If a Mayor or Councillor is unable to submit a receipt or tax invoice and seeks reimbursement for meals, she/he shall be reimbursed in accordance with the ATO's Taxation Determination TD2016/13 or successor Determination upon the submission of a Statutory Declaration.
4. Inappropriate use of the purchasing card by the Mayor or a Councillor will result in the withdrawal of that card by the CEO.

G. USE OF COUNCIL VEHICLES

1. Council shall provide a fully maintained executive level motor vehicle for the exclusive business use and full private use (as defined in the Motor Vehicle Policy (POL-034) by the Mayor.
2. Councillors shall be given usage over a dedicated pool vehicle (fitted with two-way radio and mobile phone boost aerial) at each of the Council administration centres of Middlemount and Clermont and pool vehicles will be located at other locations as approved by the CEO from time to time, to be used for Council business.
3. Use of vehicles by the Mayor and Councillors shall be in accordance with the Motor Vehicle Policy (except for inconsistencies explicitly defined by this policy).
4. All fuel and operational costs of the vehicles shall be paid by Council.
5. Councillors making use of a pool vehicle on Council business may deviate from their Council business, (for example to attend a shopping centre to purchase food, or to drop family members off at a destination en-route). For clarity, such route deviation is only permitted when attending Council business and is not meant to provide use for private matters.
6. Use of two-way radio shall be for purpose of travel safety only.

H. USE OF PRIVATE VEHICLES

1. Council shall pay for reasonable costs associated with the use of a Councillor's private vehicle by a Councillor for the purpose of conducting Council Business.
2. It is preferred that Councillors (excluding the Mayor) use allocated Council pool vehicles when travel is required for Council business.
3. The reimbursement of private vehicle use shall only occur if
 - a. an appropriate Council vehicle is not reasonably and practicably available; and
 - b. the vehicle is used for Council Business, and
 - c. the Councillor travels via a reasonably direct route, and
 - d. the total travel claim does not exceed the cost of the same travel using a combination of private vehicle, economy flights and the cost of taxi transfers, and
 - e. the Councillor's vehicle is registered, appropriately insured and fit for purpose.
4. The amount reimbursed shall be based on the published ATO business use of motor vehicle cents per kilometre method and the kilometre rate applicable at the time of travel.
5. To claim reimbursement for vehicle expenses, Councillors shall submit a claim for Council business undertaken including detailed substantiation of the relevance of the travel to Council.
6. To expel any doubt, councillors who reside outside of the town in which an ordinary or special meeting of council is held shall be eligible for reimbursement of private vehicle usage to travel from their place of residence to the meeting place or to the point of departure of council owned transport.

7. A claim for mileage for identical repeated travel (e.g. from a Councillors place of residence to an airport) need only be substantiated by log book once.

I. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

1. Council shall provide facilities for the use by the Mayor and Councillors for Council Business. Council shall be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of facilities and equipment which are supplied to Councillors.
2. All facilities and equipment provided to the Mayor and Councillors remain the property of Council and must be returned to Council when their term of office ends.
3. The Mayor shall be provided with the following to assist her/him in her/his role:
 - a. fully furnished dedicated office
 - b. access to meeting rooms; and
 - c. laptop and/or tablet (with keypad attachment) and an adequate data plan for the device; and
 - d. smart mobile phone (device only ie without an active voice or data account); and
 - e. stationery; and
 - f. access to photocopiers, printers and facsimile machines; and
 - g. publications; and
 - h. use of Council landline telephones and internet access in Council offices.
4. Councillors shall each be provided with the following to assist them in their roles:
 - a. access to occasional office space and meeting rooms; and
 - b. laptop and/or tablet (with keypad attachment) and an adequate data plan for the device; and
 - c. smart mobile phone (device only ie without an active voice or data account); and
 - d. stationery; and
 - e. access to photocopiers, printers and facsimile machines; and
 - f. publications; and
 - g. use of Council landline telephones and internet access in Council offices.
5. The Mayor will be provided with comprehensive and dedicated office support through the Office of the Mayor and CEO.
6. Essential office support shall be provided for the Councillors through the Office of the Mayor and CEO in conjunction with Customer Service officers in all locations.
7. The Mayor and Councillors will have direct access to the Councillor Helpdesk to create and manage workflow requests.
8. The Mayor and Councillors will be provided with access to corporate business systems and the intranet.

9. Council shall also provide the Mayor and Councillors with:
- a name badge;
 - business cards;
 - personalised letterhead and with compliments paper;
 - the necessary safety equipment for use on business (i.e. safety helmets, boots); and
 - a corporate uniform allowance equivalent to that provided for employees in accordance with the Supply of Corporate Uniforms Policy.

J. HOME OFFICE

- Council recognises that it is necessary to provide home office facilities for Councillors to enable them to undertake their role. Council also recognises that Councillors may have different use needs or use different service providers.
- The Mayor and Councillors will be provided with the following for the establishment and operation of a home office;
 - Filing cabinet
 - Stationery
 - Desk
 - Chair
 - Additional Monitor/s, keyboard, mouse and other necessary devices to establish a workstation as per their needs (eg laptop stand)
 - Modem / SIM Card
 - Printers (including ink/cartridge) or supply of ink/cartridges for personal printer/s
- The Mayor and each Councillors shall be paid a telecommunications allowance equal to \$1200.00 annually and paid fortnightly towards their telecommunications needs.
- Councillors will be provided a dedicated container for confidential or unwanted printed material that may need to be shredded. This container can be dropped off at the Office of the CEO where staff will facilitate the appropriate disposal.
- Councillors are to ensure that all equipment and documents/material is securely stored at all times.

K. PARTNERS

- Council shall not reimburse the Mayor and Councillors for expenses incurred by a partner or family member unless accompanying a Mayor or Councillor to a Federal Government, State Government or Council event at which the partner of the Mayor or Councillor is specifically invited and which takes place within the Local Government Area. For clarity, the partners of the Mayor and Councillors are encouraged to attend such

official events with the Mayor and Councillors within the region, at Council's cost, recognising the intrinsic link between the 24/7 duties of an elected member and maintaining family harmony.

2. Council may book and pay for the travel costs of a partner or spouse accompanying the Mayor or Councillor provided that such costs are reimbursed within 14 days of the later of booking or payment.

L. CARETAKER PERIOD

1. Once the caretaker period commences, the Mayor and Councillors shall only be eligible to claim expense reimbursement for costs relating to routine Council Business or as otherwise approved by Council resolution.

M. LEGAL AND INSURANCE

1. Council will cover the legal costs of any inquiry, investigation, hearing or legal proceeding into the conduct of the Mayor or a Councillor arising out of or in connection with the Mayor or Councillor's honest and diligent performance of his/her civic duties.
2. Council shall cover the Mayor and all Councillors for workers compensation insurance to the same extent afforded to employees of Council.
3. The Mayor and Councillors are to ensure that in the use of computing and mobile devices, that the confidentiality of information is maintained in accordance with the Confidential Information Policy. The Mayor and Councillors should also not store Council information on any device that is not Council owned nor store any council information on any private online storage service.

LEGISLATIONS AND RELATED GUIDELINES

- *Local Government Act 2009*
- *Local Government Regulation 2012*

REFERENCES

ID	NAME
CAP-007	Frequent Flyer and Other Loyalty Reward Schemes Policy
CGFS-029	Entertainment and Hospitality Policy
CORP-POL-067	Purchasing Cards Policy
CORP-POL-034	Motor Vehicle Policy
CORP-POL-082	Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Workwear Policy
CGDS-003	Confidential Information Policy
CEO-FRM-306	Councillor Facilities and Equipment Requirements
CEO-014	Councillor Claim Form Meeting Expenses Incurred