



<b>Councillor Support and Expense Reimbursement Policy</b>	TRIM folder:	18/08/04
	Approval date:	28/6/16
	Approved by:	Council
	Review Date	22/2/17
Responsible Officer: Murray Chick <b>Coordinator Governance</b>	Expiry Date	N/A
	Version No	1
Authorising Officer: Rowena McLean	<b>Manager Governance</b>	

## 1. PURPOSE

The Purpose of this policy is to outline:

- the provision by Council of a range of facilities, resources and support to the Mayor and Councillors to assist them in the performance of their duties;
- the payment by Council of reasonable expenses to enable Councillors to perform their duties; and
- the reimbursement by Council of reasonable bona fide Councillor and committee member out of pocket expenses incurred while performing their duties.

## 2. SCOPE

The policy and procedures relate to the Councillors of the City of Port Phillip and is linked to the Councillor Code of Conduct adopted by Council. Reimbursement of expenses may also include those incurred by members of Council committees in attending meetings or performing committee duties.

## 3. POLICY STATEMENT

Section 75B(1) of the Local Government Act 1989 (the Act) states that a Council must adopt and maintain a policy in relation to the reimbursement of expenses for Councillors and members of committees.



Section 75(1) of the Act states that a Council must reimburse a Councillor for expenses if the Councillor

- Applies in writing to the Council for reimbursement of expenses: and
- The Councillor establishes in the application that the expenses were reasonable bona fide Councillor out of pocket expenses incurred while performing their duties as a Councillor.

Section 75(2) of the Act defines 'duties as a Councillor' as duties performed by a Councillor 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.

Section 75A of the Act states that a Council may reimburse members of Council committees for necessary out of pocket expenses incurred while performing duties as a committee member.

## 4. COUNCIL POLICY

### 4.1 COUNCILLOR SUPPORT

#### **Administrative support**

The Mayor and Councillors office has staff dedicated to supporting the Mayor and Councillors in a wide range of tasks, administrative activities, diary management, civic events, external and internal requests for service and complaints management and response.

#### **Mayoral Office**

A Mayoral office will be provided at the St Kilda Town Hall for use by the Mayor in the performance of their duties. This includes a dedicated Executive Assistant.

#### **Councillors Office**

A Councillors office is provided at the St Kilda Town Hall for use by Councillors in the performance of their duties. This includes a number of shared work stations each with access to computer equipment and telephone.

#### **Building access and parking**



Each Councillor will be provided with an access card which will give them 24 hour 7 days a week access to the St Kilda, South Melbourne and Port Melbourne Town Halls.

Councillors will have access to shared parking spaces at the St Kilda Town Hall.

### **Communications equipment**

As a minimum and subject to change due to technology enhancements, each Councillor is entitled to the following:

- Mobile telephone (iPhone).
- Internet allowance paid monthly as determined by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
- iPad.
- Multi-Functional Printer (optional).
- Laptop (optional).

Council will meet the purchase, maintenance, service connection, and reasonable usage costs associated with the provision of this communications equipment. This standard equipment will be supplied through Council's preferred contractor.

Council provided communications equipment is to be used for Council related activities. It is acknowledged that incidental private use of communications equipment may be made. Council recognises that the level of individual usage of mobile telephones will vary. The onus is on the Councillor to determine what is a reasonable level of private usage according to their individual circumstances. There will be an opportunity each quarter for Councillors to reimburse Council for private usage.

Use of communications equipment must be in accordance with Council's Communications Equipment Policy and Internet Use Policy as amended from time to time.

All equipment remains the property of the Council and must be returned immediately a person ceases to be a Councillor.

### **Stationery**

Each Councillor will be provided with a name badge, business cards and access to stationery for Council business.



### **Photocopying**

Councillors will have access to a photocopier in the Mayor and Councillors office for small amounts of photocopying directly related to Council business.

### **Courier service**

On limited occasions Council will provide an optional courier service for the delivery of hard copy Council business papers and mail at their nominated place of residence/business. An electronic copy will also be uploaded onto the portal for all Councillors to access.

### **Meals and refreshments**

Where Council / Statutory Planning Committee meetings or Councillor Briefings are held at times which extend through normal meal times, Council will provide suitable meals and refreshments taking into account special dietary requirements.

### **Insurance**

Council will take out necessary insurance as required by the Local Government Act to cover Councillors.

### **Memberships**

Council will pay for collective Council memberships for peak bodies such as the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), the Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA), the Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA) and the Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA).

### **Travel**

#### Mayoral vehicle

A fully maintained vehicle (including Fringe Benefits Tax) will be provided to the Mayor to assist carrying out their duties during their term of office. This vehicle will be provided in accordance with Council's Fleet Policy and includes full private use. The vehicle will contain an e-TAG. The Mayoral vehicle will be provided with an "All areas" parking permit. The Mayor may choose not to receive a vehicle.



#### Car Pool vehicle

Each Councillor has access to a car pool vehicle subject to availability. Booking of a pool vehicle will be done through the Mayor and Councillors office on request.

#### Private vehicle

Councillors using their private vehicles to carry out official Council duties will be reimbursed reasonable expenses as per the Industrial Award for Council officers (this Award is subject to change).

Each Councillor's private vehicle (other than the Mayor who has been provided with a Mayoral vehicle), will be provided with an "All areas" parking permit to assist Councillors in the discharge of their duties.

#### Bicycle

Each Councillor has access to a pool bicycle subject to availability. Booking of a pool bicycle will be done through the Mayor and Councillors office on request.

A Councillor may also use their own bicycle for Council related activities and receive reimbursement by way of an annual maintenance allowance adjusted annually for CPI.

#### Taxi

Each Councillor will be provided with a cabcharge card for travel by taxi for business related events. Alternatively Councillors can pay for their taxi fare and claim reimbursement.

#### Public transport

Councillors are encouraged to use public transport for Council related business. Each Councillor can use their own personal Myki card for use on public transport to attend Council related activities and claim reimbursement for that travel.

#### Air or rail



Where travel is required by air or rail for professional development or to undertake Council related activities, the standard form of travel will be economy class, unless otherwise agreed to by the Chief Executive Officer. All overseas travel is to be authorised by a Council resolution. Domestic air and rail travel must be authorised by either a Council resolution or by the Chief Executive Officer (or delegate).

### **Professional development and training**

The City of Port Phillip is committed to helping Councillors fulfil their role as a Councillor and meet their individual and group training and professional development needs.

Subject to budget funding and limits as prescribed in this policy, each Councillor individually and as a group will be given the opportunity of attending training and professional development courses and programs, meetings, site visits, study tours, conferences and functions based on it being in the interests of the Port Phillip community and it is relevant to their role as a Councillor.

## **4.2 REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES OR EXPENSES PAID ON BEHALF OF COUNCILLORS**

### **Child care / family care**

Subject to budget funding each Councillor is entitled to be reimbursed for all reasonable costs associated with necessary child care or family care for the elderly or infirm residing with the Councillor, to allow a Councillor to fulfil their duties.

Council will reimburse all reasonable costs associated with necessary child care or family care incurred to attend:

- Council and Special Council meetings, and meetings of committees of Council;
- Councillor briefings and meetings with Council staff;
- Council civic and ceremonial functions;
- meetings arising as a result of a Councillor being appointed by the Council to an external body;
- meetings, events or occasions attended in the capacity as a Councillor; and
- any other event as agreed by the Chief Executive Officer or resolution of Council.



Claims for reimbursement will be processed if:

- The hourly rate is reasonable not exceeding the maximum hourly rate determined by market price.
- The claim for reimbursement is substantiated by a receipt from the caregiver showing the name of the provider, dates and times that the care was provided, the hourly rate and the reason why the care was required.
- Child / family care costs are not eligible for reimbursement if paid to a person who normally or regularly resides with the Councillor.

Any expenditure outside of the allocated budget requires prior approval from the CEO.

### **Travel**

Council will reimburse all reasonable Councillor travel costs associated with attendance at:

- Council, Special Council, Special Committee and Community Reference (Advisory) Committee meetings.
- Councillor briefings, site visits and meetings with Council staff.
- Council civic and ceremonial functions.
- Meetings arising out of the Councillor being appointed by Council to an external body or where a councillor is representing Council.
- Meetings, events or occasions attended in the capacity as a Councillor.
- Conferences, seminars, professional development courses and training.
- Any other event agreed to by the Chief Executive Officer or by resolution of Council.

Travel reimbursed by Council will be for

- Air or rail at economy class unless otherwise agreed to by the Chief Executive Officer.
- Public transport using personal Myki card.
- Taxi fare where a Councillor does not use a Council cabcharge card.
- Private vehicle use reimbursement shall be by cents per kilometre as per the Industrial Award for Council employees.

### **Conferences, professional development and training**



Councillors attending relevant conferences, seminars, professional development courses and training shall have all reasonable expenses for travelling, accommodation, registration, meals and other out of pocket expenses reimbursed or paid on their behalf up to a maximum of \$10,000 per annum for the Mayor and \$6,000 per annum for Councillors.

Professional development expenditure should always be tested against the following criteria:

- Is in the interest of the Port Phillip community;
- Meets the budget determined by Council;
- Clearly offers and promotes public benefit, as distinguished from private benefit;
- Is directly relevant to the Councillor's role; and
- Takes place and is able to be utilised during the Councillor's term of office.

Any expenditure outside of the allocated budget requires prior approval from the CEO.

#### **4.3 REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES FOR MEMBERS OF COMMITTEES**

At the discretion of the CEO (or delegate) and in accordance with the committee's adopted terms of reference and / or charter, Council may reimburse members of committees for reasonable costs associated with their attendance at committee meetings.

#### **4.4 CLAIMS FOR REIMBURSEMENT**

In accordance with section 75(1)(a) of the Local Government Act 1989, every claim for reimbursement must be lodged in writing. To comply with this requirement, Councillors or members of committees, for every reimbursement claim, are to complete an Expense Reimbursement Form and submit it to the Chief Executive Officer or delegate for approval.

Councillors or members of committees are to provide originals of receipts and/or tax invoices for any expenses incurred. Receipts and/or tax invoices are to be submitted with the Expense Reimbursement Form. If receipts cannot be produced, a Statutory Declaration should be provided.





In accordance with section 75(1)(b) of the Local Government Act 1989, Councillors should establish that the expenses were reasonable, bona fide, out of pocket expenses incurred while performing duties as a Councillor.

It is not appropriate for a Councillor to request payment or reimbursement for expenses relating to their:

- Personal business or interests.
- Private business.
- Own employment.
- Election campaign.

#### **4.5 PUBLICATION OF EXPENSES PAID OR REIMBURSED**

In the interests of transparency and accountability, the following Councillor expenses paid by Council or reimbursed to Councillors will be reported on Council's website on a quarterly basis.

The expenses categories that will be reported to the community include for each Councillor the amount spent on:

- Councillor allowances
- Conferences, professional development and training.
- Travel (includes Mayoral vehicle allowance; use of private vehicle; bicycle allowance; taxi / cabcharge; Myki card; air or rail).
- Communication (includes mobile telephone / Internet).
- Child / family care.

## **5. COUNCIL POLICY**

This policy will be reviewed within four months of a general election. This timing is in line with recent amendments to the Local Government Act which require Council to review its Councillor Code of Conduct within four months of a general election. The Councillor Code of Conduct and the Councillor Support and Expense Reimbursement Policies are complementary documents.