

## Policy History

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## Policy Summary

This policy enables the reasonable and appropriate reimbursement of expenses and provision of facilities to Councillors to help them undertake their civic duties.

It ensures accountability and transparency, and seeks to align Councillor expenses and facilities with community expectations. Councillors must not obtain private or political benefit from any expense or facility provided under this policy.

The policy has been prepared in accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993* (the Act) and *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021* (the Regulation), and complies with the Office of Local Government's Guidelines for the payment of expenses and provision of facilities to Mayors and Councillors in NSW.

The policy sets out the maximum amounts Council will pay for specific expenses and facilities. Expenses not explicitly addressed in this policy will not be paid or reimbursed.

The main expenses and facilities are summarised in Appendix III and IV. Additional costs incurred by a Councillor in excess of these limits are considered a personal expense that is the responsibility of the Councillor.

Councillors must provide claims for reimbursement within 60 days of an expense being incurred unless otherwise stipulated. Claims made after this time cannot be approved.

Detailed reports on the provision of expenses and facilities to Councillors will be publicly tabled at a Council meeting as part of the quarterly review and published in full on Council's website. These reports will include expenditure summarised by individual Councillor and as a total for all Councillors.

## Part A Introduction

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1. The provision of expenses and facilities enables Councillors to fulfil their civic duties as the elected representatives of Griffith City Council.
- 1.2. The community is entitled to know the extent of expenses paid to Councillors, as well as the facilities provided.
- 1.3. The purpose of this policy is to clearly state the facilities and support that are available to Councillors to assist them in fulfilling their civic duties.
- 1.4. Council staff are empowered to question or refuse a request for payment from a Councillor when it does not accord with this policy.
- 1.5. Expenses and facilities provided by this policy are in addition to fees paid to Councillors. The minimum and maximum fees a Council may pay each Councillor are set by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal as per Section 241 of the Act and reviewed annually. Council must adopt its annual fees within this set range. Refer to Part E.

### 2. Policy objectives

- 2.1. The objectives of this policy are to:
  - enable the reasonable and appropriate reimbursement of expenses incurred by Councillors while undertaking their civic duties
  - enable facilities of a reasonable and appropriate standard to be provided to Councillors to support them in undertaking their civic duties
  - ensure accountability and transparency in reimbursement of expenses and provision of facilities to Councillors

- ensure facilities and expenses provided to Councillors meet community expectations
- support a diversity of representation
- fulfil the Council's statutory responsibilities.

### 3. Principles

#### 3.1. Council commits to the following principles:

- **Proper conduct:** Councillors and staff acting lawfully and honestly, exercising care and diligence in carrying out their functions
- **Reasonable expenses:** providing for Councillors to be reimbursed for expenses reasonably incurred as part of their role as Councillor
- **Participation and access:** enabling people from diverse backgrounds, underrepresented groups, those in carer roles and those with special needs to serve as a Councillor
- **Equity:** there must be equitable access to expenses and facilities for all Councillors
- **Appropriate use of resources:** providing clear direction on the appropriate use of Council resources in accordance with legal requirements and community expectations
- **Accountability and transparency:** clearly stating and reporting on the expenses and facilities provided to Councillors.

### 4. Private or political benefit

- 4.1. Councillors must not obtain private or political benefit from any expense or facility provided under this policy, nor from travel bonuses such as frequent flyer schemes or any other such loyalty programs while on Council business.
- 4.2. Private use of Council equipment and facilities by Councillors may occur from time to time. For example, telephoning home to advise that a Council meeting will run later than expected.
- 4.3. Such incidental private use does not require a compensatory payment back to Council.
- 4.4. Councillors should avoid obtaining any greater private benefit from Council than an incidental benefit. Where there are unavoidable circumstances and more substantial private use of Council facilities does occur, Councillors must reimburse the Council.
- 4.5. Campaigns for re-election are considered to be a political benefit. The following are examples of what is considered to be a political interest during a re-election campaign:
  - production of election material
  - use of Council resources and equipment for campaigning
  - use of official Council letterhead, publications, websites or services for political benefit
  - fundraising activities of political parties or individuals, including political fundraising events.

## Part B Expenses

### 5. General expenses

- 5.1. All expenses provided under this policy will be for a purpose specific to the functions of holding civic office. Allowances for general expenses are not permitted under this policy.
- 5.2. Expenses not explicitly addressed in this policy will not be paid or reimbursed.

## 6. Specific expenses

### General travel arrangements and expenses

- 6.1. Council will maintain overall budget line items for travel expenses incurred by Councillors - Refer Appendix III.
- 6.2. All travel by Councillors should be undertaken using the most direct route and the most practicable and economical mode of transport.
- 6.3. Each Councillor may be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred while undertaking official business, professional development or attending approved conferences and seminars within NSW. This includes reimbursement:
  - for public transport fares
  - for the use of a private vehicle or hire car
  - for parking costs for Council and other meetings
  - for tolls
  - by Cabcharge card or equivalent
  - for documented ride-share programs, such as Uber, where tax invoices can be issued.
- 6.4. A Councillor's registered and insured private vehicle may be used for official travel, but such usage must be approved jointly by the Mayor and General Manager prior to the journey. Where a private vehicle is used with appropriate approval, the Mayor's or Councillor's claim is to be as follows:
  - 6.4.1. If no Council vehicle was available to be utilised by the Mayor or Councillor, allowances for the use of a private vehicle for official business, will be reimbursed by kilometre at the rate contained in the Local Government (State) Award 2020 – Part B Monetary Rates Clause 17A(i) Vehicle Allowances (cents per km). The travel must be via the most direct route between the Councillors' place of residence and the destination.
  - 6.4.2. Councillors seeking to be reimbursed for use of a private vehicle (if Council vehicle not available) must submit a Travel Claim Form within 60 days of travel.
- 6.5. If a Council vehicle is available and Councillors elect to utilise their own vehicle, reimbursement will be by way of "actual" fuel receipts and not the set rate per kilometre method.
- 6.6. Totals for each individual Councillor will be disclosed as part of the Quarterly Financial Review of Council operations.
- 6.7. Participation in the Meals on Wheels program is deemed as a community service and travel expenses are not claimable.
- 6.8. Cab Charge – If approved jointly by the Mayor and General Manager, a Councillor may be issued with a cab charge card for use when on Council business, provided that at least one of the following conditions apply:
  - A Council vehicle is not reasonably available to provide such transport;
  - The provision of a vehicle would not be economical in the circumstances;
  - The Councillor does not own a registered vehicle; or
  - The Councillor is not a licensed driver.

Refer to Appendix III & IV for maximum amounts/rates for travel expenses.

## **Interstate, overseas and long distance intrastate travel expenses – additional requirements**

- 6.9. In accordance with Section 4, Council will scrutinise the value and need for Councillors to undertake overseas travel. Councils should avoid interstate, overseas and long distance intrastate trips unless direct and tangible benefits can be established for the Council and the local community. This includes travel to sister and friendship cities.
- 6.10. Approval for travel, accommodation and expense reimbursement outside the Local Government Area must be granted prior to the travel and shall be given jointly by the Mayor and the General Manager.
- 6.11. Where travel is by motor vehicle, it should be undertaken by a Council vehicle. Refer to 6.2-6.6.
- 6.12. Councillors seeking approval for any overseas travel must submit a case to, and obtain the approval of, a full Council meeting prior to travel.
- 6.13. The case should include:
  - objectives to be achieved in travel, including an explanation of how the travel aligns with current Council priorities and business, the community benefits which will accrue as a result, and its relevance to the exercise of the Councillor's civic duties
  - who is to take part in the travel
  - duration and itinerary of travel
  - a detailed budget including a statement of any amounts expected to be reimbursed by the participant/s.
  - determinations on validity of overseas trips are to be based on the International Relations Positioning Statement (Griffith City Council) and the application of the Guidelines for Payment of Expenses for Mayors and Councillors published by the Office of Local Government.
  - nomination of any Councillor to undertake overseas travel should be based on the Councillor demonstrating an ability to achieve direct and tangible outcomes for the community during the trip (expenses to be covered include economy class airfare, standard hotel rooms, meals and incidentals).
- 6.14. After returning from overseas, Councillors will provide a detailed written report to Council on the aspects of the trip relevant to Council business and/or the local community. Councillors are also required to report back on their overseas travel to a full meeting of Council.
- 6.15. For interstate, intrastate and international travel by air, the class of air travel is to be economy class.
- 6.16. Bookings for approved air travel are to be made through the General Manager
- 6.17. 's office.
- 6.18. For air travel that is reimbursed as Council business, Councillors will not accrue points from the airline's frequent flyer program. This is considered a private benefit.

## **Travel expenses not paid by Council**

- 6.19. Council will not pay any traffic or parking fines or administrative charges for road toll accounts.

## **Accommodation and meals**

- 6.20. In circumstances where it would introduce undue risk for a Councillor to travel to or from official business in the late evening or early morning, reimbursement of costs for accommodation and meals on the night before or after the meeting may be approved by the General Manager. This includes where a meeting finishes later than 9.00pm or starts earlier than 7.00am and the Councillor lives more than 50 kilometres from the meeting location.

- 6.21. Council will reimburse costs for accommodation and meals while Councillors are undertaking prior approved travel or professional development outside the Griffith City Council area.
- 6.22. The daily limits for accommodation and meal expenses within Australia are to be consistent with those set out in Appendix IV Travel, Accommodation and Meal Rates in accordance with Part B Monetary Rates of the NSW Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2009, as adjusted annually.
- 6.23. The General Manager may approve an increase or variation to daily limits for accommodation and meal expenses where he or she is satisfied that this is reasonable and in the interests of Council.
- 6.24. Councillors will not be reimbursed for alcoholic beverages unless consumed with a meal.

### **Refreshments for Council related meetings**

- 6.25. Appropriate refreshments will be available for Council meetings, Councillor Workshops, approved meetings and engagements, and official Council functions as approved by the General Manager.
- 6.26. As an indicative guide for the standard of refreshments to be provided at Council related meetings, the General Manager must be mindful of Part B Monetary Rates of the NSW Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2009, as adjusted annually.

### **Attendance at Dinners, Functions and Events**

- 6.26 Council will meet the cost of Councillors' attendance at Council dinners, functions and events. The extent of the reimbursement in this section is limited to the cost of the function only. Refer to Appendix V.
- 6.27 Council will only meet the cost of Councillors' attendance at non-Council dinners, functions and events as detailed in Appendix V. The extent of the reimbursement in this section is limited to the cost of the function only.
- 6.28 Council will not pay expenses or provide facilities to Councillors in relation to supporting and/or attending fundraising activities of political parties including political fundraising events as such events are considered to be personal interests.

### **Allowable Expenses for Accompanying Persons**

- 6.29 Council shall meet the costs of registration and any official conference dinners of the Mayor's or Councillors' accompanying person in attending the following annual conferences:
- Local Government NSW
  - Australian Local Government Association
  - National General Assembly of Local Government.
  - Murray Darling Basin Authority
  - Australian National Roads and Transport Congress
  - Regional Capitals Australia.
- 6.30 All travel expenses, additional accommodation expenses, accompanying person tours and other sundry expenses incurred by the accompanying person shall be the personal responsibility of the individual Councillor.

## **Allowable Expenses for Person Accompanying the Mayor (or Councillor representing the Mayor)**

- 6.31 Attendance at Council and non-Council dinners, functions and events within the Local Government Area: Costs incurred by a person accompanying the Mayor (or Councillor representing the Mayor) will be reimbursed for attending official Council and non-Council dinners, functions and events within the Griffith Local Government area. The extent of the reimbursement in this section is limited to the cost of the function only. Refer Appendix V
- 6.32 Attendance at dinners, functions and events outside the Local Government Area: Costs incurred by a person accompanying the Mayor (or Councillor representing the Mayor) will only be reimbursed when that person is invited to accompany the Mayor (or Councillor representing the Mayor) when the Mayor is called to attend an official function or perform a ceremonial duty on Council's behalf outside the Council area, but within the State. The extent of the reimbursement in this section is limited to the cost of the function only. Examples could include charitable functions and other functions or award ceremonies to which the Mayor has been invited to represent the Council. Expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with the policy.

## **Disallowed Expenses for Accompanying Persons**

- 6.33 Council will not meet expenses associated with the attendance of an accompanying person at:
- Attendance at any conference or event not noted in section 6.31-6.32 - Allowable Expenses for Person Accompanying the Mayor (or Councillor representing the Mayor) above.
  - Any event or function outside the Council area, including interstate and overseas (with the exception of attendance at annual conferences of those bodies noted in 6.29 above).

## **Professional development (Workshops/training)**

- 6.34. Council will maintain overall budget line items for professional development expenses incurred by Councillors (workshops, training education courses and membership of professional bodies) - Refer Appendix III.
- 6.35. In the first year of a new Council term, Council will provide a comprehensive induction program for all Councillors which considers any guidelines issued by the Office of Local Government (OLG). The cost of the induction program will be in addition to the ongoing professional development funding.
- 6.36. Annual membership of professional bodies will only be covered where the membership is relevant to the exercise of the Councillor's civic duties, the Councillor actively participates in the body and the cost of membership is likely to be fully offset by savings from attending events as a member.
- 6.37. Approval for professional development activities is subject to a prior written request to the General Manager outlining the:
- details of the proposed professional development
  - relevance to Council priorities and business
  - relevance to the exercise of the Councillor's civic duties.
- 6.38. In assessing a Councillor request for a professional development activity, the General Manager must consider the factors set out in Clause 6.37, as well as the cost of the professional development in relation to the Councillor's remaining budget.
- 6.39. Professional development expenses incurred by individual Councillors will be tracked against the overall budget line item. Totals for each individual Councillor will be disclosed as part of the Quarterly Financial Review of Council operations.

## Conferences and seminars

- 6.40. Council is committed to ensuring its Councillors are up to date with contemporary issues facing Council and the community, and local government in NSW.
- 6.41. Council will maintain overall budget line items to facilitate Councillor attendance at conferences and seminars. This allocation is for all Councillors. The General Manager will ensure that access to expenses relating to conferences and seminars is distributed equitably. Refer Appendix III.
- 6.42. The Mayor and Councillors will be nominated and authorised to attend conferences and seminars by Council through resolution passed in open session at a Council Meeting. Council must consider factors including the:
- relevance of the topics and presenters to current Council priorities and business and the exercise of the Councillor's civic duties,
  - cost of the conference or seminar in relation to the total remaining budget.
- 6.43. A resolution of Council is not required for Councillors to attend conferences or seminars in the following circumstances:
- during Council recess;
  - where a conference is for one day or less or does not involve an overnight stay; or
  - where there is insufficient time for consideration by the full Council.
- In the event of any of the above circumstances, the Mayor, jointly with the General Manager are to approve Councillors' attendance at conferences or seminars. If the Mayor requires approval to attend conferences, seminars and similar functions where the event is for a single day only, it should be given jointly by the Deputy Mayor or another Councillor and the General Manager. In addition, the Mayor may nominate a substitute attendee in his or her stead for functions within the Council area or the general regional area on those occasions where the Mayor is unable to be in attendance.
- 6.44. Council will meet the reasonable cost of registration fees, transportation and accommodation associated with attendance at conferences and seminars approved by Council. Council will also meet the reasonable cost of meals when they are not included in the conference and seminar fees. Reimbursement for accommodation and meals not included in the conference fees will be subject to Clauses 6.19-6.23.
- 6.45. The conferences to which this policy applies shall generally be confined to:
- Annual conferences and special one-off conferences called or sponsored by any of the following Associations:
    - Local Government NSW
    - Australian Local Government Women's Association
    - Australian Local Government Association
    - National General Assembly of Local Government
    - Murray Darling Basin Authority
    - Australian National Roads and Transport Congress
    - Regional Capitals Australia
  - Annual conferences of the major professions in Local Government.
  - Conferences which further training and development efforts of the Council and of Councillors or which relate to or impact upon the Council's functions.
  - Conferences or meetings of organisations or bodies to which a Councillor has been elected, or appointed as a delegate or member of the Council, or LGNSW, ALGWA, or ALGA.
  - Attendance at any other type of conference or seminar would require the prior approval of the full Council.

## **Expression of Council's Viewpoint at Conferences**

6.46 Where a viewpoint of Council may be sought at a Conference, the conduct of delegates representing Council shall be governed as follows:

- Where possible, delegates should express only Council's viewpoint when representing Council.
- Where Council has not determined a viewpoint on any issue being raised at a Conference, or new information is provided, then the delegate shall represent the best interests of Council.

## **Registration, Travel and Accommodation Bookings**

6.47 Delegates must, within 3 business days of the Council resolution authorising them as a delegate, contact Council to arrange for the relevant bookings to be made.

6.48 Any special requirements which the delegate may have in relation to the conference, travel or accommodation are to be advised to Council at this time.

6.49 Registration, travel, accommodation bookings and confirmation of bookings for conferences and workshops will be coordinated through the Personal Assistant to the Mayor and GM.

## **Conference Costs**

6.51 The Council shall pay or reimburse the Mayor or a Councillor:

- Registration: All normal registration costs, including costs relating to official luncheons, dinners and tours/inspections which are relevant to the interests of the Council.
- Accommodation: Reasonable accommodation costs including the night before and/or after the conference where that is necessary due to travel and/or conference timetables in accordance with this policy. Council should take advantage of any "corporate rates" at accommodation venues as secured by Conference organisers
- Travel: All reasonable travel costs to and from the conference location and venue in accordance with the requirements for travel as outlined in this policy.
- Incidental Expenses: Incidental expenses associated with attendance at conferences, seminars may be reimbursed upon presentation of a claim form and appropriate receipts, in accordance with this policy.
- Incidental expenses may include:
  - Hotel/motel charges associated with the Conference, other than accommodation;
  - Telephone or calls or internet charges related to Council business;
  - Reasonable lunches, dinners and other meals incurred whilst travelling to or from the Conference and other meals occurring during the Conference but not included in the conference registration fee;
  - Expenses such as parking, motorway or bridge tolls, laundry and refreshments;
  - Any optional activity in a conference program, but excluding any pre or post conference activities.
  - Items from minibar (excluding alcohol).

## **Report to Council**

6.52 Attendance at any conference or seminar shall be the subject of a report to Council outlining the major issues raised at the event and its relevance to the Griffith City Council with recommendations for further areas of investigation. This section does not apply to a Councillor's attendance at the annual conferences of the following associations:

- Local Government NSW
- Australian Local Government Women's Association

- Australian Local Government Association
- National General Assembly of Local Government
- Murray Darling Basin Authority
- Australian National Roads and Transport Congress
- Regional Capitals Australia.

6.53 Where a group of Councillors attend the same event, the report to Council may be submitted by the group, but must be signed by all Councillors.

6.54 The delegate(s) must submit this report to Council within one calendar month of the conference.

6.55 The report to Council should be in writing and include the following sections:

- The purpose / subject matter of the conference, including the reason for the attendance of the delegate
- The agenda of the conference
- Any items of interest to Council discussed at the conference
- Recommendations for further areas of action or investigation.

### **Information and communications technology (ICT) expenses**

- 6.56. Council will maintain an overall budget line item for Information and Communication expenses. Expenses incurred by individual Councillors will be tracked against the overall budget line item. Totals for each individual Councillor will be disclosed as part of the Quarterly Financial Review of Council operations. Refer to Appendix III.
- 6.57. Council will reimburse reasonable telephone calls (landline and mobile) associated with the execution of Councillors' civic duties. Expense claims for reimbursement are to be accompanied by an itemised bill, with usage relating to Council business highlighted.
- 6.58. Councillors will be supplied with an iPad and data pack set up to enable internet access, emailing and processing of correspondence and access to Council business papers, minutes, policies and other Council records. All requisite software will be installed on the device.
- 6.59. Councillors will be supplied with a printer upon request.

### **Special requirements and carer expenses**

- 6.60. Council encourages wide participation and interest in civic office. It will seek to ensure Council premises and associated facilities are accessible, including provision for sight or hearing impaired Councillors and those with other disabilities.
- 6.61. Council will maintain an overall budget line item for Care Expenses – Refer Appendix III. Expenses incurred by individual Councillors will be tracked against the overall budget line item. Totals for each individual Councillor will be disclosed as part of the Quarterly Financial Review of Council operations.
- 6.62. Transportation provisions outlined in this policy will also assist Councillors who may be unable to drive a vehicle.
- 6.63. In addition to the provisions above, the General Manager may authorise the provision of reasonable additional facilities and expenses in order to allow a Councillor with a disability to perform their civic duties.
- 6.64. Councillors who are the principal carer of a child or other elderly, disabled and/or sick immediate family member will be entitled to reimbursement of carer's expenses for attendance at official business, plus reasonable travel from the principal place of residence – Refer to Appendix III.

- 6.65. Child care expenses may be claimed for children up to and including the age of 16 years where the carer is not a relative.
- 6.66. In the event of caring for an adult person, Councillors will need to provide suitable evidence to the General Manager that reimbursement is applicable. This may take the form of advice from a medical practitioner.
- 6.67. Expense claims for reimbursement are to be accompanied by an itemised receipt.

## 7. Insurances

- 7.1. In accordance with Section 382 of the Local Government Act, Council is insured against public liability and professional indemnity claims. Councillors are included as a named insured on this Policy.
- 7.2. Insurance protection is only provided if a claim arises out of or in connection with the Councillor's performance of his or her civic duties, or exercise of his or her functions as a Councillor. All insurances are subject to any limitations or conditions set out in the policies of insurance.
- 7.3. Council shall pay the insurance policy excess in respect of any claim accepted by Council's insurers, whether defended or not.
- 7.4. Appropriate travel insurances will be provided for any Councillors travelling on approved interstate and overseas travel on Council business.

## 8. Legal assistance

- 8.1. Council may, if requested, indemnify or reimburse the reasonable legal expenses of:
  - a Councillor defending an action arising from the performance in good faith of a function under the Local Government Act provided that the outcome of the legal proceedings is favourable to the Councillor
  - a Councillor defending an action in defamation, provided the statements complained of were made in good faith in the course of exercising a function under the Act and the outcome of the legal proceedings is favourable to the Councillor
  - a Councillor for proceedings before an appropriate investigative or review body, provided the subject of the proceedings arises from the performance in good faith of a function under the Act and the matter has proceeded past any initial assessment phase to a formal investigation or review and the investigative or review body makes a finding substantially favourable to the Councillor.
- 8.2. In the case of a code of conduct complaint made against a Councillor, legal costs will only be made available where the matter has been referred by the General Manager to a conduct reviewer and the conduct reviewer has commenced a formal investigation of the matter and makes a finding substantially favourable to the Councillor.
- 8.3. Legal expenses incurred in relation to proceedings arising out of the performance by a Councillor of his or her functions under the Act are distinguished from expenses incurred in relation to proceedings arising merely from something that a Councillor has done during his or her term in office. For example, expenses arising from an investigation as to whether a Councillor acted corruptly would not be covered by this section.
- 8.4. Council will not meet the legal costs:
  - of legal proceedings initiated by a Councillor under any circumstances
  - of a Councillor seeking advice in respect of possible defamation, or in seeking a non-litigious remedy for possible defamation
  - for legal proceedings that do not involve a Councillor performing their role as a Councillor.

- 8.5. Reimbursement of expenses for reasonable legal expenses must have Council approval by way of a resolution at a Council meeting prior to costs being incurred.

## Part C Facilities

### 9. General facilities for all Councillors

#### Facilities

- 9.1. Council will provide the following facilities to Councillors to assist them to effectively discharge their civic duties:
- Councillors have access to shared car parking spaces while attending Council offices on official business. A Parking Permit is required to be displayed in the Councillor's vehicle.
  - Councillors may have access to personal protective equipment for use during site visits.
  - Councillors will be issued with a name badge which may be worn at official functions, indicating that the wearer holds the office of a Councillor and/or Mayor or Deputy Mayor.
- 9.2. Councillors may book meeting rooms (Mayor's Office, Murray Room, Dal Broi Room, Keenan Room) for official business at no cost. Rooms may be booked through the Personal Assistant to the GM and Mayor.
- 9.3. The provision of facilities will be of a standard deemed by the General Manager as appropriate for the purpose.

#### Stationery and home office

- 9.4. Council will provide the following stationery to Councillors each year:
- Mayoral letterhead, to be used only for correspondence associated with civic duties
  - Business cards
  - Envelopes
  - Writing pads and pens
  - Paper
  - Ink.

Refer to Appendix III.

#### Administrative support

- 9.5. Council will provide administrative support to Councillors to assist them with their civic duties only. Administrative support may be provided by staff in the Mayor's office or by a member of Council's administrative staff as arranged by the General Manager or their delegate.
- 9.6. Council staff are expected to assist Councillors with civic duties only, and not assist with matters of personal or political interest, including campaigning.

## Corporate Dress

- 9.7 Each Councillor will be supplied with two Griffith City Council neckties or scarves, and if requested, a corporate blazer embroidered with Council logo or crest. In addition, the Mayor will be supplied with a vest or sportscoat if requested. Refer to Appendix III.

## 10. Additional facilities for the Mayor

- 10.1. Council will provide to the Mayor a maintained vehicle to a similar standard of the General Manager, with a fuel card. The vehicle will be supplied for use on Council business, professional development and attendance at the Mayor's office, accounting for some private use.
- 10.2. The Mayor must keep a log book for a 12 week period recording all private usage and submit to Council within 12 months of his/her election.
- 10.3. If private usage is greater than 25% of the vehicle use, the kilometres greater than 25% will be reimbursed to Council as considered significant private use. The Mayoral allowance will be reduced to cover the cost of any private travel above the 25% private use (significant private use), calculated by the rate set by the Local Government (State) Award.
- 10.4. A parking space at Council's offices will be reserved for the Mayor's Council-issued vehicle for use on official business, professional development and attendance at the Mayor's office.
- 10.5. Council will provide the Mayor with a furnished office incorporating a telephone and meeting space.
- 10.6. The Mayor will be provided with an appropriate mobile telephone in addition to a Councillor Ipad.
- 10.7. The Mayor will be provided with a Corporate Credit Card for Council related business pursuant to the provision of this policy to a maximum monthly amount. Refer to Appendix III.
- 10.8. In performing his or her civic duties, the Mayor will be assisted by a small number of staff providing administrative and secretarial support, as determined by the General Manager.
- 10.9. The number of exclusive staff provided to support the Mayor and Councillors will not exceed 0.5 full time equivalents.
- 10.10. As per Section 4, staff in the Mayor's office are expected to work on official business only, and not for matters of personal or political interest, including campaigning.

## Part D Processes

## 11. Approval, payment and reimbursement arrangements

- 11.1. Expenses should only be incurred by Councillors in accordance with the provisions of this policy.
- 11.2. Approval for incurring expenses, or for the reimbursement of such expenses, should be obtained before the expense is incurred.
- 11.3. Up to the maximum limits specified in this policy, approval for the following may be sought after the expense is incurred:
- local travel relating to the conduct of official business
  - carer costs.
- 11.4. Final approval for payments made under this policy will be granted by the General Manager or their delegate.
- 11.5. No complimentary tickets will be provided to Councillors for attendance at any Council operated facility other than for official functions as detailed in Appendix V.

## **Direct payment**

- 11.6. Council may approve and directly pay expenses. Requests for direct payment must be submitted to the General Manager for assessment against this policy using the prescribed form, with sufficient information and time to allow for the claim to be assessed and processed.

## **Reimbursement**

- 11.7. All claims for reimbursement of expenses incurred must be made on the prescribed form, supported by appropriate documentation including receipts and/or tax invoices and be submitted to the General Manager within the required timeframe.

## **Advance payment**

- 11.8. Council does not offer a cash advance payment.

## **Notification**

- 11.9. If a claim is approved, Council will make payment directly or reimburse the Councillor through accounts payable.
- 11.10. If a claim is refused, Council will inform the Councillor in writing that the claim has been refused and the reason for the refusal.

## **Reimbursement to Council**

- 11.11. If Council has incurred an expense on behalf of a Councillor that exceeds a maximum limit, exceeds reasonable incidental private use or is not provided for in this policy:
- Council will invoice the Councillor for the expense or authorisation will be sought to deduct the amount from the Councillors' monthly allowance
  - the Councillor will reimburse Council for that expense within 14 days of the invoice date.
- 11.12. If the Councillor cannot reimburse Council within 14 days of the invoice date, they are to submit a written explanation to the General Manager. The General Manager may elect to deduct the amount from the Councillor's allowance.

## **Timeframe for reimbursement**

- 11.13. Unless otherwise specified in this policy, Councillors must provide all claims for reimbursement within 60 days of an expense being incurred. Claims made after this time cannot be approved.

## **12. Disputes**

- 12.1. If a Councillor disputes a determination under this policy, the Councillor should discuss the matter with the General Manager.
- 12.2. If the Councillor and the General Manager cannot resolve the dispute, the Councillor may submit a Notice of motion to a Council Meeting seeking to have the dispute resolved.

## **13. Return or retention of facilities**

- 13.1. All unexpended facilities or equipment supplied under this policy are to be relinquished immediately upon a Councillor or Mayor ceasing to hold office or at the cessation of their civic duties.

- 13.2. Failure to return Information Technology items within the required timeframe will result in the items being remotely disabled.
- 13.3. Should a Councillor desire to keep any equipment allocated by Council, then this policy enables the Councillor to make application to the General Manager to purchase any such equipment. The General Manager will determine an agreed fair market price or written down value for the item of equipment.
- 13.4. The prices for all equipment purchased by Councillors under Clause 13.3 will be recorded in Council's Annual Report.

## 14. Publication

- 14.1. This policy will be published on Council's website.

## 15. Reporting

- 15.1. Council will report on the provision of expenses and facilities to Councillors as required in the Act and Regulations.
- 15.2. Detailed reports on the provision of expenses and facilities to Councillors will be publicly tabled at a Council meeting at each quarterly review and published on Council's website. These reports will include expenditure summarised by individual Councillors and as a total for all Councillors.

## 16. Auditing

- 16.1. The operation of this policy, including claims made under the policy, will be included in Council's audit program and an audit undertaken at least every two years.

## 17. Breaches

- 17.1. Suspected breaches of this policy are to be reported to the General Manager.
- 17.2. Alleged breaches of this policy shall be dealt with by following the processes outlined for breaches of the Code of Conduct, as detailed in the Code and in the Procedures for the Administration of the Code.

## Part E Fees for Mayor and Councillors

### 18. Annual Fees Payable to Mayor and Councillors

- 18.1. The Council shall, prior to 30th June each year, set by resolution the annual fees to be paid, monthly in arrears, to a Councillor for the following year commencing 1st July, provided that such fee shall be within the range for the Council determined annually by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal. Such payment shall be subject to Section 254A of the Regulations and any specific resolution of the Council under Section 254A.
- 18.2. The Council shall, prior to 30th June each year, set by resolution, the annual fee to be paid to the Mayor for the following year commencing 1st July provided that such fee shall be within the range for the Council determined annually by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal. Council may only pay the Deputy Mayor part of the annual Mayoral fee where a Deputy Mayor demonstrably acts in the role of Mayor (section 249 of the Act). Such payment must only be done at the direction of Council and any amount paid to the Deputy Mayor must be deducted from the Mayor's Annual fee.

- 18.3. Unless otherwise provided, (that is an agreement signed and approved by the individual Councillor), the payment of, or reimbursement of expenses and the facilities which may be provided under this policy, shall be provided without reduction from the annual fees payable to the Mayor and Councillors, as determined by the Council, under this section.

## 19. Superannuation Payable to Councillors

- 19.1 Commencing 1 July 2022, the Mayor and Councillors will be paid superannuation contribution payments equal to the Superannuation Guarantee Contribution percentage set by the Commonwealth Government. As per the Act, the amount of superannuation contribution payment is the amount that Council would be required to contribute under the Commonwealth superannuation legislation as if the Councillor were an employee of the Council.

## Part F Appendices

Appendix I: Related legislation, guidance and policies

Appendix II: Definitions

Appendix III: Summary of Maximum Amounts

Appendix IV: Travel, Accommodation and Meal Rates

Appendix V: At A Glance Guide to Permissible Functions and Events

## Appendix I: Related legislation, guidance and policies

### **Relevant legislation and guidance:**

- Local Government Act 1993
- Local Government (General) Regulation 2021
- OLG Guidelines for the Payment of Expenses and the Provision of Facilities for Mayors and Councillors in NSW
- OLG Circulars

### **Related Council policies:**

- Code of Conduct

## Appendix II: Definitions

The following definitions apply throughout this policy.

Term	Definition
Accompanying person	Means a spouse, partner or de facto or other person who has a close personal relationship with or provides carer support to a Councillor
Appropriate refreshments	Means food and beverages, provided by Council to support Councillors undertaking official business
Act	Means the <i>Local Government Act 1993</i> (NSW)
Clause	Unless stated otherwise, a reference to a clause is a reference to a clause of this policy
Code of Conduct	Means the Code of Conduct adopted by Council or the Model Code if none is adopted
Conference or seminar	Meeting with program spanning more than one day requiring overnight stay (generally outside of the LGA)
Councillor	Means a person elected or appointed to civic office as a member of the governing body of Council who is not suspended, including the Mayor
General Manager	Means the General Manager of Council and includes their delegate or authorised representative
Incidental personal use	Means use that is infrequent and brief and use that does not breach this policy or the Code of Conduct
Long distance intrastate travel	Means travel to other parts of NSW of more than three hours duration by private vehicle
Maximum limit	Means the maximum limit for an expense or facility provided in the text and summarised in Appendix III
NSW	New South Wales
Official business	Means functions that the Mayor or Councillors are required or invited to attend to fulfil their legislated role and responsibilities for Council or result in a direct benefit for Council and/or for the local government area, and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>meetings of Council and committees of the whole</li> <li>meetings of committees facilitated by Council</li> <li>civic receptions hosted or sponsored by Council</li> <li>meetings, functions, workshops and other events to which attendance by a Councillor has been requested or approved by Council</li> </ul>
Professional development	Means a seminar, conference, training course or other development opportunity relevant to the role of a Councillor or the Mayor
Regulation	Means the <i>Local Government (General) Regulation 2005</i> (NSW)
Workshops and training	Generally span a single day and are non-residential in nature
year	Means the financial year, that is the 12 month period commencing on 1 July each year

## Appendix III: Summary of Maximum Amounts

The following summarises the main expenses and facilities provided under this policy. All monetary amounts are exclusive of GST. Monetary amounts listed against job numbers to be adjusted in accordance with Operational Plan (Budget) annually. Over expenditure in budget items will need to be accounted for in the quarterly review process.

Expense or facility	Maximum amount	Job No.	Frequency
Council Meeting Expenses	\$10,000 total for all Councillors	12129.0092	Per year
Civic Receptions	\$6,000 total for all Councillors	12130.0092	Per year
*Councillor travelling expenses within LGA	\$10,000 total for all Councillors	12127.0092	Per year
*Councillor Training/Workshop – NSW Travel & Accommodation	\$3,500 total for all Councillors	14112.0012	Per year
*Councillor Training/Workshop – Interstate Travel & Accommodation	\$1,000 total for all Councillors	14112.0101	Per year
*Conferences and seminars – NSW Travel & Accommodation	\$11,000 total for all Councillors	12188.012	Per year
*Conference – Interstate Travel & Accommodation	\$2,000 total for all Councillors	12188.0101	Per year
*Conferences - Registration	\$6,000 total for all Councillors	12188.0028	Per year
*Training - Registration	\$30,000 total for all Councillors	14112.0026	Per year
Memberships, subscriptions, licence fees	\$18,000 total for all Councillors	12166.0181	Per year
Telephone Expenses	\$3,000 per year - total for all Councillors Actual – up to monthly limit: \$30 per month – mobiles \$10 per month - landline	12166.0071	Per year
*ICT expenses – phone and data pack running costs	\$3000 13 data packs	12166.0071	
*ICT expenses - Hardware	\$6,000/year GCC IT Department to approve model, compatibility and price of ipads/printers. Mayor to receive iphone and ipad. Councillors to receive ipad. Printer available on request.	14178.0230	Per term
Carer expenses	\$2,000 per Councillor Actual up to annual limit	12166.0101	Per year
Printing & Stationery including business cards, envelopes, paper, ink	\$2,750 total for all Councillors	12166.0108	Per year

Expense or facility	Maximum amount	Job No.	Frequency
Access to facilities in a Councillor common room	Council meeting rooms may be booked through PA.		Not relevant
Council vehicle, fuel card and E-tag	Provided to the Mayor		Not relevant
Reserved parking space at Council offices	Provided to the Mayor Parking permits for Council car park to be issued to all Councillors.		Not relevant
Furnished office	Provided to the Mayor		Not relevant
Number of exclusive staff supporting Mayor and Councillors	Provided to the Mayor and Councillors		Not relevant
Council Blazer embroidered with Council logo or crest	\$250.00 Each Councillor supplied with 1 Blazer Additional for Mayor – 1 Vest or 1 Sportscoat (optional)		Per term
Drycleaning of Council Blazer Sportscoat (Mayor) / Vest (Mayor)	Maximum of 4 per year – reimbursed on provision of receipt		Annually
Corporate Dress - Council Ties/Scarves	Each Councillor supplied with 2 GCC ties or scarves		Per term
Legal Assistance for Mayor and Councillors	Cost of service - As determined by Council Resolution		Actual
Mayor Spouse & Partner Expenses	Actual		Actual
Mayoral Vehicle	Actual - Same level as General Manager		Actual
Mayoral Corporate Credit Card	\$5,000 - Actual		Per month
Use of Private Motor Vehicle	Claim as per km allowance as set by LG State Award at date of travel. Note: Only if Council vehicle not otherwise available otherwise actual receipt.		Per kilometre

\*Expenses marked with an \* are allocated against each Councillor through work orders and reported on at quarterly review

## Appendix IV: Travel, Accommodation and Meal Rates

Note that in accordance with this policy, the General Manager may approve an increase or variation to daily limits for accommodation and meal expenses where he or she is satisfied that this is reasonable and in the interests of Council.

<b>Meals Expenses – one day journeys</b> As per Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2009 Table 1 Allowances of Part B – Monetary Rates	Reasonable lunches, dinners and other meals incurred whilst travelling to or from a Conference. Other meals during a Conference but not included in registration fees. Meals incurred during travel outside the LGA.  Breakfast \$28.70 Lunch \$32.30 Dinner \$55.05		Actual cost - per day
<b>Accommodation including meals and incidental expenses</b> As per Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2009 Table 1 Allowances of Part B – Monetary Rates	Adelaide - \$293.45 Brisbane - \$311.45 Canberra - \$304.45 Darwin - \$356.45 Hobart - \$283.45 Melbourne - \$309.45 Perth - \$316.45 Sydney - \$324.45  *refer to Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2009 Table 1 Allowances of Part B – Monetary Rates for rates for country centres		Actual up to daily limit - Per day
<b>Incidental and/or Out of Pocket Expenses incurred during Conferences and Seminars and for travel outside the LGA</b>	Actual up to daily limit of \$100 Expenses in this category may include: Reasonable telephone, internet usage related to Council business, Parking, Tolls, Laundry, Refreshments.  Any optional activity in a conference program (but excluding any pre or post conference activities).  Expenses not reimbursed in this category include: Alcohol not consumed as part of a meal.		Per day
<b>Travel</b>	Air – Economy - Actual Rail, Taxi, Uber, Bus – Actual		Actual

## Appendix V: At a Glance Guide to Permissible Functions & Events

	Mayor	Councillors	Councillors attendance at non-Council functions to be determined on an individual basis by the <b>Mayor and General Manager</b>
Council organised dinners, functions and events (includes Council Committee events)	✓	✓	
Events which have been part-funded or part-sponsored by Council <i>*where official invitation has been extended to Mayor/Councillors</i>	✓	✓	
Annual events organised by local service clubs, not-for-profit organisations, schools, charities <i>*where official invitation has been extended to Mayor/Councillors</i>	✓		✓
Other events organised by local service clubs, not-for-profit organisations, schools, charities <i>*where official invitation has been extended to Mayor/Councillors</i>	✓		✓
Events Councillors are officially invited to outside of the Griffith LGA	✓		✓
Official openings of local landmarks and facilities <i>*where official invitation has been extended to Mayor/Councillors</i>	✓	✓	
Political party fundraising events			