

COUNCILLOR EXPENSES AND FACILITIES POLICY

POLICY SUMMARY.....	3
LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS.....	3
PART A - INTRODUCTION	4
1. Introduction	4
2. Policy objectives	4
3. Principles.....	5
4. Private or political benefit.....	5
PART B – EXPENSES	5
5. General expenses	5
6. Specific expenses	6
7. Accompanying person expenses.....	13
8. Insurances	14
9. Legal assistance.....	15
PART C – FACILITIES.....	16
10. General facilities for all Councillors	16
11. Provision of a Mayoral Vehicle	17
12. Additional facilities for the mayor	17
PART D – PROCESSES.....	18
13. Approval, payment, and reimbursement arrangements	18
PART E – APPENDICES	21
Appendix I: Maximum monetary limits for expenses and facilities	21
Appendix II: Payment of attendance at functions and events.....	23

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 Guidelines).

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**. All monetary amounts are exclusive of GST.

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 three months of an expense being incurred. 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 every six months and published in full on Council's website.

These reports will include expenditure summarised by individual Councillor and as a total for all Councillors.

LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS

- *Local Government Act 1993*, Sections 252 and 253
- Local Government (General) Regulation 2021, Clauses 217 and 403
- Guidelines for the payment of expenses and the provision of facilities for Mayors and Councillors in NSW, 2009
- Councillor Induction and Professional Development Guidelines, 2018
- Local Government Circular 09-36 Guidelines for Payment of Expenses and Facilities
- Local Government Circular 17-17 – Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy – Better Practice Template
- Local Government Circular 05-08 Legal Assistance for Councillors and Council Employees

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 Edward River 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.

2. Policy objectives

- 2.1. The objectives of this Policy are to:
 - a. Enable the reasonable and appropriate reimbursement of expenses incurred by Councillors while undertaking their civic duties.
 - b. Enable facilities of a reasonable and appropriate standard to be provided to Councillors to support them in undertaking their civic duties.
 - c. Ensure accountability and transparency in reimbursement of expenses and provision of facilities to Councillors.
 - d. Ensure facilities and expenses provided to Councillors meet community expectations.
 - e. Support a diversity of representation, and
 - f. Fulfil Council's statutory responsibilities.

3. Principles

3.1 Council commits to the following principles:

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

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. All travel by Councillors should be undertaken using the most direct route and the most practicable and economical mode of transport.
- 6.2. Total general travel expenses for all Councillors, excluding the mayor, will be capped at the amount specified in Appendix III. Chief Executive Officer will ensure that access to expenses relating to general travel is distributed equitably.
- 6.3. Total general travel expenses for the mayor will be capped at the amount specified in Appendix III.
- 6.4. Councillors may be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred while undertaking official business or professional development or attending approved conferences and seminars within NSW, up to the amount specified in Appendix III. This includes reimbursement:
 - a. For public transport fares
 - b. For the use of a private vehicle or hire car
 - c. For parking costs for Council and other meetings
 - d. For tolls
 - e. By Cab charge card or equivalent
 - f. For documented ride-share programs, such as Uber, where tax invoices can be issued
- 6.5. Allowances for the use of a private vehicle will be reimbursed by kilometre at the rate contained in the Local Government (State) Award.
- 6.6. Councillors seeking to be reimbursed for use of a private vehicle must keep a logbook recording the date, distance and purpose of travel being claimed. Copies of the relevant logbook contents must be provided with the claim.

Interstate, overseas and long-distance intrastate travel expenses

- 6.7. Given Council's location near an interstate border, travel to Victoria will be considered as general travel. Arrangements and expenses for this travel will be governed by Clauses 6.1-6.6 of this policy.
- 6.8. 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.
- 6.9. Total interstate, overseas and long-distance intrastate travel expenses for all Councillors will be capped at the amount specified in Appendix III. This amount will be set aside in Council's annual budget.
- 6.10. Councillors seeking approval for any interstate and long-distance intrastate travel must submit a case to, and obtain the approval of, the Chief Executive Officer prior to travel.
- 6.11. Councillors seeking approval for any overseas travel must submit a case to, and obtain the approval of, a full Council meeting prior to travel.
- 6.12. The case should include:
 - a. 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.
 - b. who is to take part in the travel.
 - c. duration and itinerary of travel.
 - d. a detailed budget including a statement of any amounts expected to be reimbursed by the participant/s.
- 6.13. For interstate and long-distance intrastate journeys by air of less than three hours, the class of air travel is to be economy class.
- 6.14. For interstate journeys by air of more than three hours, the class of air travel may be premium economy.
- 6.15. For international travel, the class of air travel is to be premium economy if available. Otherwise, the class of travel is to be economy.
- 6.16. Bookings for approved air travel are to be made through the Office of the Chief Executive Officer.

- 6.17. 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

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

Accommodation and meals

- 6.19. 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 Chief Executive Officer. This includes where a meeting finishes later than 9.00pm or starts earlier than 7.00am and the Councillor lives more than 100 kilometres from the meeting location.
- 6.20. Council will reimburse costs for accommodation and meals while Councillors are undertaking prior approved travel or professional development outside the Edward River local government area.
- 6.21. The daily limits for accommodation and meal expenses within Australia are to be consistent with those set out in Part B Monetary Rates of the NSW Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2009, as adjusted annually.
- 6.22. The daily limits for accommodation and meal expenses outside Australia are to be determined in advance by the Chief Executive Officer, being mindful of Clause 6.19.
- 6.23. Councillors will be reimbursed for the cost of a meal up to a value of \$60.

Refreshments for Council related meetings

- 6.24. Appropriate refreshments will be available for Council meetings, Council committee meetings, Councillor workshops, Councillor pre-meeting briefing sessions, approved meetings and engagements, and official Council functions as approved by the Chief Executive Officer.
- 6.25. As an indicative guide for the standard of refreshments to be provided at Council related meetings, the Chief Executive Officer 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 Council functions and events

- 6.26. Council will meet the cost of Councillor's attendance at the Council functions and events specified in Appendix IV. The extent of reimbursement is limited to the cost of attending the function or event only.

Attendance at non-Council functions and events

- 6.27. Council will meet the cost of Councillor's attendance at charitable functions within the Edward River local government area held by charities formally supported by Council. The extent of the reimbursement will be limited to the cost of attending the function or event only.
- 6.28. Council will meet the cost of Councillor's attendance at functions and events within the Edward River local government area held by service clubs, business, and industry associations, not-for-profit organisations, and schools to which the Councillor has been formally invited to represent Council. The extent of reimbursement will be limited to the cost of attending the function or event only.
- 6.29. Council will meet the cost of the mayor's attendance, or a Councillor's attendance when the Councillor is representing the mayor, at:
- a) Ceremonial events, charitable functions, and award ceremonies outside the Edward River local government area, but within New South Wales:
 - I. To which the mayor has been invited to represent Council and
 - II. Where his or her attendance has been approved prior by Council resolution and
 - b) Other non-Council functions and events outside the Edward River local government area, but within New South Wales:
 - I. To which the mayor has been invited to represent Council and
 - II. Where his or her attendance has been approved prior by Council resolution.
- 6.30. Council will meet the cost of the mayor's attendance, or a Councillor's attendance when the Councillor is representing the mayor, at Murrumbidgee Council's Sir John Monash Annual Dinner & Lecture.
- 6.31. In accordance with clause 2.3.10 of the Guidelines, Council will not pay any costs or expenses incurred by a Councillor in attending a function or fundraising venture of a political party, including entry fees or tickets. Such costs constitute political donations for the purposes of the Electoral Funding Act 2018 and will not be reimbursed by Council.

Professional development

- 6.32. In the first year of a new Council term, Council will develop an ongoing professional development program comprising individual professional development plans for the Mayor and each Councillor. The program will span the term of Council, with individual activities implemented over time according to priority.

- 6.33. Council will set aside the amount specified in Appendix III in its budget to facilitate the delivery of individual activities contained in the Mayor's and Councillor's professional development plans. Professional development may include programs, training, education courses and membership of professional bodies. The Chief Executive Officer will ensure that access to expenses relating to professional development is distributed equitably.
- 6.34. In the first year of a new Council term, Council will set aside the amount specified in Appendix III in its budget to facilitate 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.
- 6.35. 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.
- 6.36. Approval for professional development activities is subject to a prior written request to the Chief Executive Officer outlining the:
- Details of the proposed professional development and
 - Relevance to the individual Councillor's professional development plan.
- 6.37. In assessing a Councillor's request for a professional development activity, the Chief Executive Officer must consider the factors set out in Clause 6.34, as well as the cost of the Councillor's requested professional development in relation to the remaining budget.

Conferences and seminars

- 6.38. Council is committed to ensuring its Councillors remain up to date with contemporary issues facing Council and the community, and local government in NSW.
- 6.39. Council will set aside the amount specified in Appendix III in its budget to facilitate Councillor attendance at conferences and seminars. This allocation is for all Councillors. The Chief Executive Officer will ensure that access to expenses relating to conferences and seminars is distributed equitably.

- 6.40. Consistent with clause 1.6.7 of the Guidelines, approval to attend a conference or seminar should occur, where possible, at a full meeting of the Council. Where approval at a full meeting of the Council is not possible, then:
- a. Approval for a Councillor to attend a conference or seminar must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer and Mayor.
 - b. Approval for the Mayor to attend a conference or seminar must be approved jointly by the Chief Executive Officer and Mayor.
- 6.41. In assessing a Councillor request to attend a conference or seminar, the Council, or the Chief Executive Officer and Mayor, or the Chief Executive Officer and Deputy Mayor, must consider factors including the:
- a. Relevance of the topics and presenters to current Council priorities and business and the exercise of the Councillor's civic duties and
 - b. Cost of the conference or seminar in relation to the total remaining budget.
- 6.42. Council will meet the reasonable cost of registration fees, transportation and accommodation associated with attendance at conferences approved by the Chief Executive Officer. Council will also meet the reasonable cost of meals when they are not included in the conference fees. Reimbursement for accommodation and meals not included in the conference fees will be subject to clauses 6.18-6.21.

Information and communications technology (ICT) expenses

Laptops and Related Equipment

- 6.43. Council will provide to each Councillor for the duration of their term of office one mobile laptop device, with approved accessories, including data and service fees. The cost of providing the laptop and its ongoing usage and operating cost shall be limited to the amount specified in Appendix III.
- 6.44. If replacement or upgrade of the laptop is required during a Councillor's term of office, these costs are included in the total annual expense limit specified in Appendix III.
- 6.45. Laptop use is to be in accordance with Council's Code of Conduct and adopted policies.
- 6.46. Councillors are entitled to seek reimbursement up to the amount specified in Appendix III for landline and facsimile costs incurred in discharging their civic duties.

Mobile Phone and related Equipment

- 6.47. Council will provide or reimburse Councillors for expenses associated with mobile phone equipment, including reasonable accessories, repair, replacement, or maintenance, up to a limit of \$3,000 per Councillor per term.

- 6.48. Council will supply a 'standard kit' to Councillors upon request, to be included in the above maximum limit. The standard kit contains an iPhone or Samsung mobile phone and accessories. Council staff will fully support items from the standard kit. Council may vary the standard equipment from time to time in accordance with organisation technology changes.
- 6.49. Alternatively, if Councillors choose to select and purchase their own device, Councillors will be responsible for costs in excess of the maximum amount under clause 6.47. The maximum amount under clause 6.47 is to be reduced by the value of any equipment that the Council has supplied in the specific period. If Councillors choose to select and purchase their own device; they do so with the understanding that Council staff will not service or support the device.
- 6.50. All items provided by Council or for which Council has paid via reimbursement remain the property of Council.
- 6.51. Councillors may seek reimbursement for applications on their mobile electronic communication device that are directly related to their duties as a Councillor, within the maximum limit listed under Appendix III.

Special requirement and carer expenses

- 6.52. 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.
- 6.53. Transportation provisions outlined in this policy will also assist Councillors who may be unable to drive a vehicle.
- 6.54. In addition to the provisions above, the Chief Executive Officer may authorise the provision of reasonable additional facilities and expenses in order to allow a Councillor with a disability to perform their civic duties.
- 6.55. 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 of \$20 per hour up to a maximum of the amount specified in Appendix III for attendance at official business, plus reasonable travel from the principal place of residence.
- 6.56. Childcare expenses may be claimed for children up to and including the age of 16 years where the carer is not a relative.
- 6.57. In the event of caring for an adult person, Councillors will need to provide suitable evidence to the Chief Executive Officer that reimbursement is applicable. This may take the form of advice from a medical practitioner.

Home office expenses

6.58. Each Councillor may be reimbursed up to the amount specified in Appendix III for costs associated with the maintenance of a home office, such as minor items of consumable stationery and printer ink cartridges.

7. Accompanying person expenses

Allowable expenses incurred by accompanying persons

- 7.1. In accordance with clause 2.3.12 of the Guidelines, there are limited instances where certain costs incurred by a Councillor on behalf of their accompanying person are properly those of the Councillor in the performance of his or her functions. Such expenses are properly incurred by, and reimbursable to, the Councillor.
- 7.2. Consistent with clause 2.3.12 of the Guidelines, it is appropriate for Council to meet the costs of a Councillor's accompanying person at official Council events and functions within the Edward River local government area that are of a formal and ceremonial nature. As such, Council will meet the costs of a Councillor's accompanying person at:
 - a. The Council functions and events specified in **Appendix IV**; and
 - b. Charitable functions and events within the Edward River local government area held by charities formally supported by Council.
- 7.3. Consistent with clause 2.3.12 of the Guidelines, Council will meet the expenses of the mayor's accompanying person, or a Councillor's accompanying person when the Councillor is representing the mayor, at a ceremonial event, charitable function or award ceremony held outside the Edward River local government area, but within New South Wales:
 - a. To which the mayor has been invited to represent Council and
 - b. Where his or her attendance has been approved prior by Council resolution.
- 7.4. Expenses incurred by accompanying persons under clauses 7.2 and 7.3 of this policy will be limited to the ticket, meal and/or direct cost of attending the event or function. Consistent with clause 2.3.12 of the Guidelines, travel expenses, any additional accommodation expenses, and any sundry expenses incurred by the accompanying person, are the personal responsibility of the mayor or individual Council and shall not be reimbursed by Council.
- 7.5. Consistent with clause 2.3.12 of the Guidelines, Council will meet the expenses of a Councillor's accompanying person at the Local Government NSW annual conference. Such expenses will be limited to the cost of registration and official conference dinners. Travel expenses, any additional accommodation expenses, and the cost of accompanying person tours and any sundry expenses, are the

personal responsibility of the individual Councillor and shall not be reimbursed by Council.

Disallowable expenses incurred by accompanying persons.

7.6. Council will not pay any costs or expenses incurred by a Councillor's accompanying person at a function or event outside the Edward River local government area, including interstate and overseas, except as approved under clause 7.4 or 7.5 of this policy.

7.7. Council will not pay any costs or expenses incurred by a Councillor's accompanying person at a seminar, conference, or professional development. In these situations, all costs, including any additional accommodation costs, must be met by the individual Councillor or their accompanying person.

8. Insurances

8.1. 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.

8.2. 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.

8.3. Council shall pay the insurance policy excess in respect of any claim accepted by Council's insurers, whether defended or not.

8.4. Appropriate travel insurances will be provided for any Councillors travelling on approved interstate and overseas travel on Council business.

9. Legal assistance

- 9.1. Council may, if requested, indemnify, or reimburse the reasonable legal expenses of:
 - a. 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.
 - b. 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.
 - c. 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.
- 9.2. 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 Chief Executive Officer 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.
- 9.3. 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.
- 9.4. Council will not meet the legal costs:
 - a. Of legal proceedings initiated by a Councillor under any circumstances.
 - b. Of a Councillor seeking advice in respect of possible defamation, or in seeking a non-litigious remedy for possible defamation.
 - c. For legal proceedings that do not involve a Councillor performing their role as a Councillor.
- 9.5. 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

10. General facilities for all Councillors

Facilities

- 10.1. Council will provide the following facilities to Councillors to assist them to effectively discharge their civic duties:
- a. Personal protective equipment for use during site visits.
 - b. 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.
 - c. Uniform (jacket and informal vest only) in accordance with Councils Corporate Uniform Policy.
- 10.2. Councillors may book meeting rooms for official business at Council's Customer Service Centre at no cost. Rooms may be booked through the Office of the Chief Executive.
- 10.3. The provision of facilities will be of a standard deemed by the Chief Executive Officer as appropriate for the purpose.

Stationery

- 10.4. Council will provide 500 business cards to each Councillor, for the term of Council.
- 10.5. Business cards can be replaced if details change, or they require replenishing.

Administrative support

- 10.6. Council will provide administrative support to Councillors to assist them with their civic duties only. Administrative support may be provided by staff in the Office of the Chief Executive Officer arranged by the Chief Executive Officer.
- 10.7. As per Section 4, Council staff are expected to assist Councillors with civic duties only, and not assist with matters of personal or political interest, including campaigning.

11. Additional facilities for the mayor

11.1. Council will provide the mayor with a furnished office incorporating a computer configured to Council's standard operating environment, telephone, and meeting space.

11.2. In performing his or her civic duties, the mayor will be assisted by a small number of staff.

11.3. The number of exclusive staff provided to support the Mayor and Councillors will not exceed 0.5 full time equivalents.

PART D – PROCESSES

12. Approval, payment, and reimbursement arrangements

- 12.1. Expenses should only be incurred by Councillors in accordance with the provisions of this policy.
- 12.2. Approval for incurring expenses, or for the reimbursement of such expenses, should be obtained before the expense is incurred.
- 12.3. Up to the maximum limits specified in this policy, approval for the following may be sought after the expense is incurred:
 - a. Local travel relating to the conduct of official business.
 - b. Carer costs.
- 12.4. Final approval for payments made under this policy will be granted by the Chief Executive Officer or their delegate.

Direct payment

- 12.5. Council may approve and directly pay expenses. Requests for direct payment must be submitted to the Chief Financial Officer 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

- 12.6. All claims for reimbursement of expenses incurred must be made on the prescribed form, supported by appropriate receipts and/or tax invoices and be submitted to the Chief Financial Officer.

Notification

- 12.7. If a claim is approved, Council will make payment directly or reimburse the Councillor through accounts payable.
- 12.8. 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

- 12.9. 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:
- a. Council will invoice the Councillor for the expense.
 - b. The Councillor will reimburse Council for that expense within 14 days of the invoice date.
- 12.10. If the Councillor cannot reimburse Council within 14 days of the invoice date, they are to submit a written explanation to the Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer may elect to deduct the amount from the Councillor's allowance.

Timeframe for reimbursement

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

Disputes

- 12.12. If a Councillor disputes a determination under this policy, the Councillor should discuss the matter with the Chief Executive Officer.
- 12.13. If the Councillor and the Chief Executive Officer cannot resolve the dispute, the Councillor may submit a notice of motion to a Council meeting seeking to have the dispute resolved.

Return or retention of facilities

- 12.14. 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, at the beginning of the Council caretaker period.
- 12.15. Should a Councillor desire to keep any equipment allocated by Council, then this policy enables the Councillor to make application to the Chief Executive Officer to purchase any such equipment. The Chief Executive Officer will determine an agreed fair market price or written down value for the item of equipment.
- 12.16. The prices for all equipment purchased by Councillors under Clause 13.2 will be recorded in Council's Annual Report.

Publication

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

Reporting

12.18. Council will report on the provision of expenses and facilities to Councillors as required in the Act and Regulations.

Auditing

12.19. 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.

Breaches

12.20. Suspected breaches of this policy are to be reported to the Chief Executive Officer.

12.21. Alleged breaches of this policy shall be dealt with under the Procedures for the Administration of the Code of Conduct.

PART E – APPENDICES

Appendix I: Maximum monetary limits for expenses and facilities

Expense or facility	Maximum amount	Frequency
General travel expenses (See travel 6.7 – vehicle travel to Victoria is included in General travel)	\$40,000 for all Councillors \$6,000 for the mayor	Per year
Interstate, overseas and long-distance intrastate travel expenses (See Definitions – long distance intrastate travel means travel to other parts of NSW of more than three and a half (3.5) hours duration by private vehicle)	\$2,000 total for all Councillors	Per year
Accommodation and meals	As per the NSW Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2009, adjusted annually. Meals will be reimbursed up to a value of \$60	Per meal/night
Professional development	\$16,000 for all Councillors \$3,000 for the mayor	Per year
Councillor Induction Program	\$12,000 for all Councillors	First year per term of Council
Conferences and seminars	\$10,000 total for all Councillors	Per year
Mobile laptop		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Device 	\$2,500 per Councillor	First year per term of Council

• Data allowance	\$55 per Councillor	Per month
Mobile Phone (If selected)	\$3,000 per Councillor	Term of Council
Telephone allowance	\$40 per Councillor	Per month
Carer expenses	\$1,800 per Councillor	Per year
Home office expenses	\$150 per Councillor	Per year
Furnished office	Provided to the Mayor	Not relevant
Number of exclusive staff supporting Mayor and Councillors (1.0 full time equivalent)	Provided to the Mayor and Councillors	Not relevant
Corporate Uniform (Jacket and informal vest only)	\$300	Per year

Appendix II: Payment of attendance at functions and events

	Mayor (Or Councillor representing)	Councillor	Accompanying Person
Council functions and events:			
• Australia Day Award Recipient's Dinner (held January each year)	✓	✓	✓
• International Women's Day Luncheon (held March each year)	✓	✓	✓
• Councillor's Christmas Dinner (held December each year)	✓	✓	✓
• Councillor's End of Term Dinner	✓	✓	✓
• Citizenship ceremonies, civic receptions, and official openings (held as needed)	✓	✓	✓
Non-Council functions and events within the Edward River local government area:			
• Charitable functions held by for charities formally supported by Council.	✓	✓	✓
• Functions and events held by service clubs, business, and industry associations, not-for-profit organisations, and schools	✓	✓	X

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Functions and events which the Mayor or Councillor has been invited to attend in a personal capacity. 	X	X	X
Non-Council functions and events outside the Edward River local government area but within New South Wales:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Murrumbidgee Council's Sir John Monash Annual Dinner & Lecture. 	✓	X	X
Non-Council events and functions outside the Edward River local government area but within New South Wales, subject to Council resolution:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ceremonial events, charitable functions, and awards ceremonies to which the mayor is invited to represent Council. 	✓	X	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Country Mayors Conference 	✓	X	X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ALGA Annual Conference 	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LGNSW conference 	✓	✓	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other events and functions to which the mayor is invited to represent Council. 	✓	X	X
Political functions or fundraising events	X	X	X

ASSOCIATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- Code of Conduct
- Councillor Induction and Professional Development Policy
- Mobile Devices Policy
- Councillor-staff interaction Policy

DEFINITIONS

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, excluding alcohol, provided by Council to support Councillors undertaking official business. (Refer 6.23 – Councillors will be reimbursed for reasonable purchases of alcoholic beverages consumed as part of a meal).
Act	Means the <i>Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)</i> .
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.
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.
Chief Executive Officer	Means the Chief Executive of Council (also known as the General Manager under the <i>Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)</i>) 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 1.
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"> • meetings of Council and committees of the whole • meetings of committees facilitated by Council • civic receptions hosted or sponsored by Council • meetings, functions, workshops, and other events to which attendance by a Councillor has been requested or approved by Council
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 Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 (NSW).
Year	Means the financial year, which is the 12-month period commencing on 1 July each year.

POLICY VERSION CONTROL

Title	Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy			
ECM Doc Set ID	8301			
Date Adopted	19 September 19			
Council Minute No.	209/09/207			
Responsible Officer	Director Corporate Services			
Version Number	Modified By	Modifications Made	Date modified and Approved by Council	Council Minute Number
1	DCS	Post-merger first Policy based on the OLG Model Policy.	14/12/2017	267/17
2	DCS	Alignment with new Code of Conduct 2019, alignment of maximum expenditure limits with Council's adopted budget, improved clarity for payment of expenses to accompanying persons and political fundraisers and events, improved format, and appendices for reference.	N/A	N/A
3	DCS	Public exhibition version	19/09/19	2019/09/207
4	SGA	Public exhibition version with legislative updates and minor corrections	11/01/22	220111/7.11
5	Acting CFO	Revised to update terminology, provide access to part of Council uniforms, provision of a laptop and access to a council mobile phone,	21/5/24	2024/2105/12.6