

MAROONDAH CITY COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR EXPENSES/ENTITLEMENTS POLICY

27 June 2011

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE.....	1
2. OBJECTIVES.....	1
3. POLICY FRAMEWORK.....	1
3.1 Resources/Facilities.....	1
3.2 Reimbursement	2
3.3 Policy Formation	2
4. EXPENSES.....	2
4.1 Child Care/Family Care.....	2
4.2 Travel – Outside of Maroondah	3
4.3 Travel – Within Maroondah.....	4
5. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	4
5.1 As Of Right Approval	4
5.2 Council Approval.....	4
5.3 Attendance by Partner	5
5.4 Reporting Requirements	5
5.5 Accommodation/Meals/Refreshments	5
5.6 Travel.....	6
5.7 Other Expenses	6
5.8 Quarterly Report	6
6. FACILITIES/EQUIPMENT.....	7
6.1 Communication.....	7
6.2 Stationery.....	7
7. OTHER EXPENDITURE	8
7.1 Expenditure General.....	8
7.2 Major Leisure Facilities and Karralyka Centre	8
7.3 Allowance – Taxation.....	8
8. REVISION HISTORY	8

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

In accordance with

- Section 75 of the Local Government Act 1989;
- *Recognition and Support*, the Victorian Government's Policy Statement of Local Government Mayoral and Councillor Allowances and Resources, April 2008; and
- Information Guide, Mayor and Councillor Entitlements, November 2008

this policy seeks to:-

- Identify Councillor entitlements; and
- Clarify the approval process for reimbursement of expenses incurred by Councillors while undertaking their duties.

2. OBJECTIVES

To establish the entitlement for a Councillor to have expenditure incurred as a result of being a Councillor either reimbursed or paid by Council.

3. POLICY FRAMEWORK

Recognition and Support, April 2008 prescribes the following as a "minimum toolkit" for expenses, support and resources.

3.1 Resources/Facilities

- Administrative Support for the Mayor
- Office for the Mayor
 - *Nb Maroondah also provides a Councillor Lounge for Councillors to conduct business*
- Vehicle for Mayor
- Computer for Councillors – desktop or laptop
- Mobile phone and landline
- Stationery
- Access to fax/copier

3.2 Reimbursement

- Travel – including reimbursement of public transport costs
- Phone – re-imburement of relevant call costs
- Internet
- Child care/family care

3.3 Policy Formation

The *Information Guide, Mayor and Councillor Entitlements*, November 2008 outlines the framework for Council's policy document.

“In accordance with section 75B of the Local Government Act 1989 Councils must adopt and maintain a policy in relation to the reimbursement of expenses policy in relation to Councillors.

Individual Council policies should, be sufficiently flexible and tailored to allow Councils to determine what they can afford to provide for and what is acceptable to their communities.

The overriding principle to be addressed in the development of a Council expenses reimbursement policy is that the details and range of benefits provided to Councillors by the Council should be clearly stated and be fully transparent and acceptable to the local community.”

4. EXPENSES

4.1 Child Care/Family Care

Council will reimburse the cost of child care and or family care expenses necessarily incurred by Councillors for their immediate family under the following circumstances; to attend:-

- 4.1.1 Council and Special Council meetings;
- 4.1.2 Assembly of Councillors sessions and Civic & Ceremonial functions;
- 4.1.3 A meeting, function or any other official role, as either a representative of the Council or the Mayor; and
- 4.1.4 Meetings of any organisations to which the Councillor has been appointed as Council representative, or deputations to which the

Councillor has been appointed as a representative by the Council or the Mayor.

Reimbursement is however, subject to the following conditions:

- 4.1.5 The maximum amount per financial year that one Councillor will be reimbursed for child care expenses and or family care is three thousand dollars (\$3,000);
- 4.1.6 Such amount as referred to in clause 4.1.5 shall be pro-rated in the event of a term of a Councillor only coinciding with a part of a financial year, eg. date of election to the end of financial year;
- 4.1.7 Each child care and or family care expense claimed shall be substantiated by a receipt from the caregiver showing the dates and times care was provided and accompanied by a written statement from the Councillor explaining why the care was needed on each occasion;
- 4.1.8 Child care/family care costs are not eligible for reimbursement if paid for caring by a person who is immediate family (eg. partner, mother/father, sister/brother or sister in law/brother in law) or normally or regularly lives with the Councillor;
- 4.1.9 Claims for reimbursement of child care and or family care expenses must be submitted within 3 months of the date from which they are incurred; and
- 4.1.10 For the purposes of this policy, a child shall be defined as up to, but not including, 16 years of age.

4.2 Travel – Outside of Maroondah

Council will reimburse Councillors, upon request, for travel expenses incurred in representing Council as an official delegate or representative at meetings and functions outside this municipality:

- 4.2.1 For travel by car, an expense allowance be paid, based on the rate set out in the Victorian Local Authorities Award – Reimbursement of Vehicle Expenses;
- 4.2.2 For travel by Public Transport, the fare will be reimbursed upon production of receipt/ticket;
- 4.2.3 Travel must be undertaken by the shortest route possible;
- 4.2.4 Claims for reimbursement of travel must be submitted within 3 months of the date from which they are incurred.

4.3 Travel – Within Maroondah

Council will reimburse Councillors, upon request, travel expenses incurred **within** this municipality for:-

- 4.3.1 In representing Council as an official delegate or representative at meetings and functions, or attending Council functions; and
- 4.3.2 Unforeseen expenses when undertaking Councillor duties and activities, for instance car breakdown.

Payment of such expenses will be on the same basis as travel outside of Maroondah, clauses 4.2.1 to 4.2.4 inclusive

5. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This policy acknowledges the obligation on Councillors to be properly informed on all matters pertaining to Council services and the issues of importance to the community.

To assist in this education process, the policy encourages Councillors to avail themselves of opportunities to undertake appropriate professional development (conferences, seminars, workshops and training sessions) that may be of benefit to the individual Councillor and Council as a whole.

Councillors undertaking professional development shall have expenses for transport, accommodation, registration fees, meals and refreshments relating to their attendance paid by Council within the parameters of the Council Budget.

5.1 As Of Right Approval

Attendances are approved as a matter of right for professional development purposes **within Australia**, subject to the cost falling within the annual budgeted amount allocated for each Councillor.

5.2 Council Approval

Attendances for **all other professional development events ie outside of Australia**, are subject to Council approval, at an ordinary meeting of Council, based upon the following:

- 5.2.1 The Councillor wishing to attend such an event submitting a business case to Council for attendance – with such to include the benefits to be gained from attendance; total costs and Council funds required.

5.3 Attendance by Partner

Attendance by partners at professional development events is subject to the following:

- 5.3.1 Within Australia having available budget ie comes within the ambit of the amount allocated to the individual Councillor;
- 5.3.2 Beyond Australia *ie overseas* – seeking approval of Council via a separate business case for the attendance of the partner; and
- 5.3.3 Other than Council approval being granted in accordance with clauses 5.3.1 & 5.3.2, as above, the attendance of a partner will be at the total expense of the Councillor.

5.4 Reporting Requirements

Attendance at any professional development event held outside of Victoria will be subject of a report to Council. The report is to be written, tabled at a Council meeting within 3 months of the professional development event and may be a joint report if more than one Councillor attended.

Such report should include:-

- 5.4.1 Details of course topic, content, location, date and duration;
- 5.4.2 Relevance of Conference/Workshop/Training Session to Council's business and Councillor's personal development requirements;
- 5.4.3 Total costs covering course, course material, travel, accommodation and any other expenses for the Councillor: and
- 5.4.4 Benefits from attendance.

5.5 Accommodation/Meals/Refreshments

- 5.5.1 Accommodation shall be organised at the Hotel used for the Conference/Workshop/Training Session OR where a package of Hotels is provided, at any one of those Hotels having regard to cost and standard OR if both of the above are not applicable or available at a Hotel/ Motel close to the Conference venue at a similar rate and standard.
- 5.5.2 Councillors wishing to make alternative Hotel/Motel arrangements shall incur/bear all costs over and above that of accommodation referred to in clause 5.5.1
- 5.5.3 Reasonable expenses for meals and refreshments will be reimbursed for attending Conferences/Professional Development Workshops/Training Sessions where overnight accommodation is required, upon production of receipts.

5.6 Travel

- 5.6.1 Councillors wishing to make their own travel arrangements shall have the amount equivalent to the cost of the most economic, reasonable form of transport, reimbursed by Council.
- 5.6.2 For travel by car, an expense allowance be paid, based on the rate set out in the Victorian Local Authorities Award – Reimbursement of Vehicle Expenses, up to a maximum level equivalent to the cost of a normal economy class return air fare.
- 5.6.3 Councillors travelling on Council business who are required to fly or use any other means of regular public transport, will be eligible only for economy class travel.
- 5.6.4 Taxi
- Councillors are entitled to use a taxi from their home to the airport and return, and from the airport at their destination to the Conference/ Workshop/Training Session venue and return.
 - Taxi fares (other than those incurred in travelling to and from the airport) or costs associated with a hire vehicle may be reimbursed. The report to Council as required by Clause 5.4 shall include justification of such use, ie.
 - inspections relevant to the Conference
 - inspections requested by Council
 - economic advantage in hiring a vehicle
- 5.6.5 Claims for reimbursement of travel must be submitted within 3 months of the date from which they are incurred..

5.7 Other Expenses

All other expenses incurred as a result of attending Conferences/Professional Development Workshops/Training Sessions shall be met from the Councillor allowance.

5.8 Quarterly Report

The Director Corporate Services will submit a report to Council on a quarterly basis summarising Councillor attendances under the professional development framework of this policy.

6. FACILITIES/EQUIPMENT

This Policy acknowledges that the demands made upon a Councillor's time can be significant and that Council business can therefore be conducted more efficiently if access is provided to necessary facilities. In respect to the facilities/equipment provided (refer 6.1 and 6.2) -

- The facilities/equipment provided is for Councillor use and should not be used for electioneering purposes.
- Councillors must ensure the integrity and configuration of equipment provided is maintained at all times.
- Minimal non-Council use of equipment such as computers, that has no direct cost for Council, is allowable.
- Specific items of a personal nature that can be separately costed, eg long distance personal calls from a mobile phone, will be met from the Councillor Allowance.
- Councillors must ensure the protection and safe keeping of all equipment issued.
- All equipment and stationery issued shall remain the property of Council.

6.1 Communication

Councillors will be provided with a personal computer, printer (incorporating the capability to scan, copy and fax), and mobile phone:

- All connection fees will be met by Council.
- Rental Fees and all Council business call charges will be met by Council.
- The cost of consumables associated with the computer shall be met by Council.
- Councillors must meet all costs of electricity.

6.2 Stationery

Councillors will be provided with:

- Business Cards;
- Personalised Letterhead; and

- Briefcase (if required).

All other stationery requirements shall be met from the Councillor Allowance.

7. OTHER EXPENDITURE

7.1 Expenditure General

Any expenditure not specified in the policy as expenditure for which a Councillor is entitled to be reimbursed or paid, shall be the responsibility of the Councillor. **Such expenditure is to be considered expenses for which the Councillor Allowance applies.**

7.2 Major Leisure Facilities and Karralyka Centre

Councillors will have access to any of the major leisure facilities and the Karralyka Centre. Use by Councillors, their guests and immediate family is to be charged to their respective Councillor Attendance budget.

7.3 Allowance – Taxation

Given that the Councillor Allowance is treated by the Australian Taxation Office as assessable income in the individual's hands, Councillors are encouraged to consider whether this other expenditure is deductible for taxation purposes as an expense necessarily and solely incurred in the carrying out of their Council duties. Prevailing taxation laws and substantiation requirements should be recognised and considered when maintaining records for deduction purposes.

Note: Councillors should seek their own professional advice in respect to financial/taxation matters.

8. REVISION HISTORY

- Policy initially adopted 18 August 1997
- Revised 17 April 2000
- Revised 18 September 2006
- Revised 27 June 2011