

# Councillor Support and Reimbursement of Expenses Policy



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## 1 Document Information

The electronic version of this document is the controlled version. Printed copies are considered uncontrolled. Before using a printed copy, verify that it is the current version.

RESPONSIBLE GENERAL MANAGER	General Manager Customer and Corporate Support
RESPONSIBLE MANAGER (Policy Owner)	Manager Governance, Risk & Integrity
APPROVED/ADOPTED BY	Council
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## 2 Definitions

<p><i>Councillor</i> – <i>Role of</i></p>	<p>Section 28 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The role of every Councillor in representing their municipal community includes the following— <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) to participate in the decision making of the Council;</li> <li>b) to represent the interests of the municipal community in that decision making; and</li> <li>c) to contribute to the strategic direction of the Council through the development and review of key strategic documents of the Council, including the Council Plan.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. In performing the role of a Councillor, a Councillor must— <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) consider the diversity of interests and needs of the municipal community; and</li> <li>b) support the role of the Council; and</li> <li>c) acknowledge and support the role of the Mayor; and</li> <li>d) act lawfully and in accordance with the oath or affirmation of office; and</li> <li>e) act in accordance with the Model Councillor Code of Conduct; and</li> <li>f) comply with Council procedures required for good governance.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. The role of a Councillor does not include the performance of any responsibilities or functions of the Chief Executive Officer</li> </ol>
<p><i>Councillor duties</i></p>	<p>Means duties performed by a Councillor that are necessary or appropriate for the purposes of achieving the objectives of a Council having regard to any relevant Act, regulations, Ministerial guidelines or Council policies. Such duties include attendance at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meetings of Council;</li> <li>• briefing sessions, workshops, civic or ceremonial functions convened by the Mayor or Council;</li> <li>• approved conferences, workshops, or training programs related to the role of Councillor, Mayor or Deputy Mayor;</li> <li>• meetings arising as a result of a Councillor being appointed by the Council to an external body; or</li> <li>• functions or events where the Councillor has been invited to perform a formal role as a representative of the Mayor or Council.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Carer</i></p>	<p>Means in a care relationship within the meaning of section 4 of the <i>Carers Recognition Act 2012</i>. Meaning of a care relationship:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. For the purposes of this Act, a person is in a care relationship if they provide another person, or receive from another person, care because one of the persons in the relationship: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) has a disability; or</li> <li>b) is older; or</li> <li>c) has a mental illness; or</li> <li>d) has an ongoing medical condition (including a terminal or chronic illness or dementia).</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

	<p>2. Despite subsection (1), the following relationships are also care relationships for the purposes of this Act:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) a relationship where an individual has custody and guardianship of a child under a permanent care order made under Part 4.10 of the <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005</i>; and</li> <li>b) a relationship where a child is placed with an individual who provides care to that child under a child care agreement made under Part 3.5 of the <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005</i>; and</li> <li>c) a relationship where a child is placed with an individual who provides care to that child under a protection order made under Part 4.9 of the <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005</i>.</li> </ul> <p>3. For the purposes of this Act, a person is not in a care relationship with another person merely because they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) are the spouse, or the domestic partner within the meaning of the <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005</i>, of the other person; or</li> <li>b) are the parent, child or other relative of the other person; or</li> <li>c) live with the other person.</li> </ul> <p>4. Despite anything to the contrary in this section, a person is not in a care relationship for the purposes of this Act if they provide care to another person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) under a contract of service or a contract for the provision of services; or</li> <li>b) under an employment contract; or</li> <li>c) in the course of doing voluntary work for a community organisation; or</li> <li>d) as part of the requirements of an education course or training.</li> </ul> <p>A person described in subsection (1) or (2) may be in a care relationship even if the person receives funding from either the Commonwealth or State Government in relation to carrying out the role of a carer.</p>
<i>Civic functions</i>	Functions that Councillors attend to fulfil their legislated role and responsibilities, that directly benefit Council and/or the Kingston community.
<i>Expenses</i>	Payments made by Council, either directly or by reimbursement to Councillors, for reasonable costs or charges as outlined in this policy and incurred in the performance of their civic duties.
<i>Facilities</i>	Equipment and services provided to Councillors to enable the performance of their civic functions with relative ease and at a standard appropriate to their role.
<i>This policy</i>	The Councillor Support and Reimbursement of Expenses Policy

### 3 Overview

#### 3.1 Purpose

Section 41(1) of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) requires Council to adopt and maintain an expenses policy in relation to the reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses for Councillors. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Ensure Councillors are provided with the necessary resources to enable performance of their role
- Specify the out-of-pocket expenses for which Councillors are eligible to seek reimbursement
- Outline the procedure to be followed by Councillors in applying for reimbursement of expenses
- Describe how Council will comply with any requirements prescribed by the Act and associated regulations in relation to the reimbursement of expenses
- Outline reporting obligations and requirements

#### 3.2 Objectives

- Enable the reasonable and appropriate reimbursement of expenses incurred by Councillors while undertaking their official duties
- Enable facilities of a reasonable and appropriate standard to be provided to Councillors to support them in undertaking their role
- Ensure accountability and transparency in the use of public monies for the 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

#### 3.3 Scope

This policy applies to all Councillors at the City of Kingston. For the purposes of this policy, the term 'Councillors' includes the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, all other Councillors and members of delegated committees of Council unless otherwise specified.

### 4 Governance Principles and Council Plan Alignment

#### 4.1 Governance Principles

Principle (i) - the transparency of Council decisions, actions and information is to be ensured.

#### 4.2 Council Plan Alignment

Strategic Direction: Well-governed - Council will be collaborative, accountable, transparent, responsive, well-informed, and efficient.

Strategy: Hold ourselves to the highest standard of governance and integrity.

### 5 Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillor Allowances

A Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Councillor is entitled to receive from the Council an allowance in accordance with the annual *Allowance payable to Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Councillors (Victoria) Annual Adjustment Determination* made by the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal. A Councillor may choose to forego part or all of their allowance.

Tax is not deducted from allowances, but allowances must be included in tax returns. Any taxation implications from the receipt of allowances are the Councillor's individual responsibility. Councillors are encouraged to seek professional advice regarding their personal tax affairs.

If an elected Councillor fails to complete and declare in writing the completion of prescribed Councillor professional development training, their allowance will be withheld until the training has been completed and a written declaration is made.

## **6 Resources, Facilities and Support**

To ensure all necessary resources are provided to fulfil a Councillor's role from the commencement of their term, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or delegate may provide Council resources prior to the oath or affirmation of office being taken. All other resources will be provided within seven days of the oath or affirmation of office being taken.

Any equipment or resources remain the property of Council. Equipment and resources must be return to Council:

- Within 30 days of the expiration of a Councillor's term in office, retirement or effective date of resignation
- At the beginning of any term of suspension that will exceed two months' duration
- At the beginning of leave taken as a requirement of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004* that will exceed two months' duration

### **6.1 IT and Communications Equipment**

Councillors will be provided with the following equipment and requisite SIM cards:

- Laptop or notebook
- Tablet or e-reader
- Mobile phone, or Council-issued SIM to use in personal device

Council supplied communications equipment is intended for Council business use; however, nominal personal use is acceptable provided that it does not interfere with Council business, does not breach any Council policy and is legal. Charges incurred in excess of a monthly plan as a result of significant personal use will be subject to reimbursement by the respective Councillor. All data captured through Council supplied devices is and remains the property of Council, and may be subject to access.

Should equipment be lost or stolen, Councillors must immediately report the loss or theft to the Manager Governance, Risk and Integrity (MGRI).

### **6.2 cNet**

cNet is a dedicated Councillor resource and information hub. This is the primary portal to receive relevant and necessary information and will provide access to:

- Meeting and briefing business papers
- News and updates regarding Council operations, projects and achievements
- Correspondence directed to multiple Councillors or to Council
- Policies, strategies and plans
- Community demographic and event information
- Reports
- Forms relevant to Councillors
- Reference and resource materials

## **6.3 Administrative Support and Facilities**

### **6.3.1 Administrative support and facilities – Mayor**

Additional support is provided to the Mayor in recognition of the greater responsibility associated with the role.

#### Administrative support

Administrative support will be provided for work directly related to the duties of office. The level of support will be determined by the CEO in consultation with the Mayor.

Council employees remain under the management and instruction of the CEO in accordance with section 46 of the Act.

#### Office space

A separate office is provided at the Cheltenham Municipal Office, including associated equipment required for the Mayor to carry out Council business.

#### Mayoral robes and chains

The Mayor will be provided with robe and chains for use at official functions.

#### Mayoral gift

The Mayoral gift is a gesture of goodwill from the Council on behalf of the community. The gift shall not exceed a maximum of \$500.00 per year for each 12-month Mayoral term served and will be provided within six months of the end of the Mayor's term. Money, items used in a similar way to money (such as gift cards), or items easily converted to money will not be gifted.

The Mayoral gift will be noted in a report to Council.

#### Mayoral vehicle

The Mayor will be provided with a fully maintained vehicle, e-tag and fuel card. These are associated with the office of the Mayor and must be returned to Council within a week of the end of the Mayoral term.

### **6.3.2 Administrative support and facilities – Councillors**

#### Administrative support

Limited administrative support is available to Councillors for work directly related to their duties of the office.

Support will be provided during normal office hours and broadly includes:

- Appointment assistance
- Constituent/community contact activities
- Bookings on behalf of Councillors for meeting rooms, civic events and conferences
- Responding to invitations
- Resource requests in accordance with this policy
- Processing requests for reimbursement of expenditure

### Councillors' Lounge

Councillors have access to the Councillors' Lounge on level 5 of the Cheltenham Municipal Office for use while carrying out duties of office.

The Councillors' Lounge is equipped with separate work areas with access to computer equipment, meeting space and a multi-function device. Councillor in-trays are provided for incoming correspondence.

The multifunction device is provided for Councillors to undertake small amounts of printing/photocopying directly related to Council business, for the use of the individual Councillor only. Printing or copying on behalf of external groups or organisations, or for any personal, business, political or election-related material is not permitted. Photocopying is a reportable Councillor expense.

Visitors, escorted and attended by a Councillor, may be invited to the Councillors' Lounge for the purposes of conducting Council business or during specified civic events and functions.

### Meeting rooms at Council-managed venues

Subject to availability, Councillors may book meeting rooms at Council managed venues, where the primary purpose is for the Councillor to carry out their duties. The Councillor must be in attendance at the meeting.

Where booking fees are applicable, these will be a reportable Councillor expense.

Where free use of meeting rooms is available for use by Councillors, this does not extend to community or other groups who ordinarily need to pay for the use of Council facilities, including community and other organisations where Councillors are nominated as the Council representative or delegate.

### **6.3.3 Support for a Councillor with a disability**

In accordance with section 42(2)(a) of the Act, Council will provide reasonable additional civic support, facilities and equipment for any Councillor with a disability or additional needs.

The CEO or delegate will assess and approve reasonable additional support to allow a Councillor with a disability to freely perform their duties.

## **6.4 Stationery**

Councillors are entitled to the following for use while undertaking Council business:

- Name badges
- Council email address
- Business cards (available upon request)

Communication in electronic formats is encouraged. Councillors should exercise care to ensure that any correspondence via Council channels does not represent a personal view as being a position adopted by Council and is used only in their role as a Councillor.

The Mayor will be provided with personalised letterhead in electronic template, and this is also available to other Councillors upon request.

## **6.5 Meals**

The part-time and voluntary nature of the role of a Councillor necessitates a Councillor attending meetings outside normal business hours. In many instances the timing of meetings renders it impracticable for Councillors to make their own meal arrangements prior to attending such meetings.

In recognition of these situations and to facilitate timely attendance at meetings, it is considered appropriate to provide Councillors attending Council meetings and Councillor Briefing sessions with a meal.

## **6.6 Building Access and Parking**

Each Councillor will be provided with an access card to the Cheltenham Municipal Office. The access card will allow 24-hour, seven day a week access to the Council Chamber, Councillors' Lounge, Oakleigh Room and secure basement car park while undertaking Council business.

Councillors will also receive a Civic Parking Permit allowing parking at all Kingston foreshore car parks and green zoned parking bays while undertaking Council business.

Requests for any further access to Council's facilities must be approved by the CEO.

The Executive Assistant to the Mayor and Councillors (EAMC) will arrange passes for guests requiring access to the Cheltenham Municipal Office upon request.

## **6.7 Online Presence**

A section on Council's website containing the following will be provided:

- Councillor photo
- Contact details
- Ward map
- Council committee membership details
- A short biography

Engagement with the community via online channels must be in accordance with Council's Media and External Communications Policy. Guidance and advice upon the use of online and social media channels is available upon request.

## **6.8 Health and Wellbeing**

Councillors may access the Employee Assistance Program and receive an annual free influenza vaccination.

## **6.9 Insurance**

Councillors are covered by WorkCover, under the *Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013* and by Public Liability and Professional Indemnity insurance, under section 43 of the Act (criminal or wilful acts are excluded from coverage).

Other policies are purchased by Council to protect its core business operations and are subject to an excess payment following lodgement of a claim. Applicable excess payable will depend on the details of the relevant insurance policy with all claim decisions made by the insurer.

Councillors are to exercise due care for their personal safety and the safety of others in accordance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*, and protect Council-owned equipment provided for the performance of their duties from damage or theft.

# **7 Professional Development and Training**

## **7.1 Mandatory Councillor Induction and Professional Development**

The CEO will provide a professional development program for all Councillors in compliance with relevant legislation. The professional development will include:

- an induction program with additional training for Mayors, Deputy Mayors and Acting Mayors, and
- an ongoing component to be conducted annually.



Ongoing professional development will cover the following topics:

- Working together in a Council
- Decision making, integrity and accountability
- Community representation
- Strategic planning and financial management
- Conduct
- Land use planning
- Any other matter relating to the role of a Councillor which the CEO has determined should be addressed

Training may be facilitated by Council officers or delivered by external service providers. The cost of mandatory training and development is covered by Council and is not a reportable Councillor expense.

## **7.2 Non-Mandatory Training and Development**

Any additional expenditure for professional development provided outside of what is required to be undertaken in accordance with applicable legislation or regulations must be tested against the following criteria to determine approval or otherwise:

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

The cost of any additional Council-funded training and development is a reportable Councillor expense and will be published quarterly on Council's website and in Council's Annual Report.

Councillors are required to present a report at a subsequent Council meeting outlining their learnings from the conference/training.

### **7.2.1 Industry peak body provided professional development and membership**

Councillors may request to attend professional development including training, conferences or seminars provided by the following industry peak bodies:

- Australian Local Government Association
- Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALGWA)
- Victorian State Government
- Municipal Association of Victoria, including Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) Program
- Victorian Local Governance Association

Council may cover the cost of individual memberships to peak bodies where:

- The membership provides public benefit, and a Council membership is not available; or
- Additional public benefit not conferred by Council membership is demonstrated to exist

Councillors must apply for peak-body provided professional development and membership to the CEO or delegate in writing, for approval by the CEO in consultation with the Mayor. Where approved, the Council-covered cost of individual peak body memberships and attendance to training, conferences and seminars is a reportable Councillor expense.

### **7.2.2 Other professional development**

Requests for professional development facilitated by other providers are subject to a different approval process, as approval is subject to the demonstration of a clear association between the activity and the Local Government sector.

Council-funded attendance at any professional development activity provided by non-industry peak bodies requires prior approval by a resolution of Council Meeting. Requests may be made by completing an *Application for Non-Peak Body Provided Professional Development* on cNet with the following information:

- The requested professional development activity to be undertaken
- The total cost of attendance
- How the activity meets the criteria at section 7.2

Applications will be presented for Council consideration in a report to a subsequent Council Meeting.

### **7.2.3 Courses nearing end of Council term**

Any professional development undertaken by a Councillor should provide a demonstrable benefit to the Kingston community. To reflect this commitment, all courses that incur a cost greater than \$500 must be completed at least three months prior to the commencement of the election period for a Local Government General Election.

To ensure benefit to the community, courses that incur a cost greater than \$5,000 such as the AICD program may only be undertaken during the first three years of each Council term.

## **8 Councillor Support Expenses**

Councillor support expenses are those costs necessarily incurred by Councillors in conducting Council business. Costs incurred by a Councillor which are not specifically covered within this policy will not be reimbursed unless the Councillor has received prior authorisation from Council or, if delegated to do so, the CEO.

Councillors will act in accordance with the Model Councillor Code of Conduct and this policy when seeking reimbursement for expenses, exercising appropriate prudence and ensuring the use of Council resources is solely in the public interest. This includes:

- Maintaining appropriate security over Council property, facilities and resources provided to assist them in performing their role; and adhering to any guidelines or policies that have been established for the use of Councillor resources and facilities
- Not using public funds or resources in a manner that is improper or unauthorised
- Not using Council resources, including staff, equipment and/or intellectual property for electoral or other purposes
- Ensuring that all expense claims are accurate, supported by the relevant documentation and strictly relate to Council business.

### **8.1 Carer Expenses**

Under section 41(c) of the Act, Council will reimburse costs where the provision of care is reasonably required for a Councillor to perform their role.

Expenses approved by the CEO or delegate will be reimbursed for the primary care of a dependent whilst the Councillor is undertaking their Councillor duties in accordance with the definition of Councillor duties at Clause 2 of this policy.

Primary care includes the caring of children up to 16 years of age and other dependents as defined in the *Carers Recognition Act 2012*. Council recognises the broader requirement of support that may arise for children with special needs and related expenses claims will be considered for further support.

Carer costs are not eligible for reimbursement if paid to a person who:

- Normally or regularly resides with the Councillor, except where a live-in (professional) helper such as a nanny is required to work extra time at additional expense because of the Councillor's duties
- Has any financial or pecuniary interest with the Councillor
- Is a family member of the Councillor as defined by section 126(1) of the Act

Reimbursement of carer costs is conditional upon a reasonable hourly rate being charged.

## **8.2 Civic Representation and Engagement**

### **8.2.1 Civic events and functions**

Attendance at local events and functions is a key part of a Councillor's role. Councillors will carefully consider how their attendance at an event or function relates to the duties of office and whether community resources should be used to pay for their attendance.

The cost of attendance at a community event or function relevant to Local Government may be paid by Council or reimbursed, provided that the event or function is:

- Council-organised, Council-sponsored, or held by groups or organisations in the Kingston municipality,
- Providing public benefit as distinguished from personal benefit,
- Directly relevant to the Councillor's role, or the Councillor has been requested to perform a formal role representing Council at the event, as distinct from simply attendance,
- At reasonable cost.

Where Council covers the cost of Councillor attendance at these events, this will be reported as a Councillor expense, noting that these expenses will generally be higher for the current Mayor given the increased obligations of this role. Council will not cover the cost of attendance of family members, partners or guests.

Where a community event or function is determined by the CEO or delegate to not meet the above criteria, a Councillor may attend at their own cost.

#### Invitations to events

Any invitations to events or functions offered to a Councillor at no expense must be dealt with in accordance with the Councillor Gift, Hospitality and Political Donations Policy. Councillors will avoid actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may arise as a result of attendance at events and functions.

Hospitality is classified as a gift where a Councillor attends an event or function:

- From complimentary tickets received, with no official duties to perform
- With complimentary membership
- Where the hospitality is generous

### **8.2.2 Attendance at events by spouse/partner**

Spouses/partners may attend events at Council expense where it is considered necessary or appropriate by the CEO. Exemptions may be applied by the CEO for any Councillors with additional guest invitation requests to accommodate for special circumstances.

Council will meet reasonable expenses, i.e., the cost of the ticket and meal, of the Mayor's partner when accompanying the Mayor to invited functions.

The ticket of a Councillor's spouse or partner may constitute a disclosable gift under the Act for the Councillor if accepted free of charge.

### **8.3 Conferences and seminars**

Councillors attending a conference or seminar relevant to Local Government, or the role of a Councillor are entitled to have the cost of registration, meals, parking, travel (economy class) and accommodation paid by Council or reimbursed.

International travel is only to be arranged as a result of Council resolution and expenses relating to travel, accommodation and meals will be reimbursed.

### **8.4 Private motor vehicle usage**

Councillors using their private motor vehicle to travel to Council related business including attendance at meetings outside of Council Meetings, conferences, functions and on-site inspections may be reimbursed motor vehicle kilometre costs at the rates as determined by the Australian Tax Office.

If it is more cost efficient or practicable for a Councillor to use a pool vehicle than to claim reimbursement of transport costs, dependant on availability, a pool vehicle may be made available to a Councillor

### **8.5 Use of rideshare and taxi services**

Councillors using rideshare and taxi services for travel undertaken for the purposes defined in section 8.4 may be reimbursed the cost of such transport.

### **8.6 Use of public transport**

Two Myki cards are available for use by Councillors for travel undertaken for the purposes defined in section 8.4 upon request to the EAMC.

### **8.7 Travel**

Councillors should avoid interstate, international and long-distance<sup>1</sup> intrastate travel unless direct and tangible benefits can be established for Council and the local community. Council may cover the cost of travel to:

- Investigate issues, projects or activities of relevance to actions contained in the Council Plan and other policies and programs
- Attend conferences, workshops and forums as either a presenter or a delegate on topics relating to Council's policies, aims and projects or on areas of professional development for Councillors.

#### **8.7.1 Eligible expenses for reimbursement**

Councillors may claim the reasonable costs of meals (excluding alcohol), as determined by the Australian Tax Office from time to time, for the duration of any long-distance travel in the course of undertaking Council business. This excludes the cost of meals for partners, guests or families of Councillors.

Travel and accommodation is to be booked by the EAMC and costs for partners, guests or families of Councillors will not be covered.

#### **8.7.2 Approval process**

Councillors seeking approval for any interstate and long-distance intrastate travel must obtain the approval of the CEO in consultation with the Mayor prior to travel. Councillors seeking approval for international travel must obtain prior approval by Council resolution.

Requests for travel should outline:

- Objectives to be achieved, 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 duties

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<sup>1</sup> 'Long-distance' is defined as a distance of over 90 minutes each way from a Councillor's home in accordance with 'reasonable commuting distance' as specified by *Social Security Guide 3.11.2.20: Suitable Work, version 1.326, 12 February 2025*.

- 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

In assessing a request, the following factors must be considered:

- Relevance of the topics and presenters to current Council priorities and business and the exercise of the Councillor's duties
- Cost of the conference or seminar in relation to the Council budget

### **8.7.3 Reporting**

Following intrastate, interstate or international travel in an official capacity, Councillors will present a report at a subsequent Council meeting detailing the value of the conference/visit, benefit to Council and provide recommendations for further action (if applicable). In the event that two or more Councillors travelled for the same purpose, only one written report is required which may be a joint report.

Any Councillor offered sponsorship in the form of conference registration or other costs in an official capacity, wholly or partly by any government agency, external organisation or person, shall immediately make this known to the Mayor and CEO.

## **8.8 Other Expenses**

Expenses which do not meet any of the categories specified within this policy may be reimbursed with the written approval of the CEO or delegate if the expense is relevant to the Councillor's role and is:

- Low value
- One off
- Infrequent incidental item/s

Other expenses which do not meet the above criteria will require a Council resolution for reimbursement.

## **8.9 Procedure for reimbursement**

A Councillor must submit a *Councillor Expenses Claim* form on cNet supported by receipt/s or other suitable documentation and demonstrate that the expense is a bona fide expense reasonably incurred in the performance of their duties in accordance with this policy.

Councillors should submit their claims for reimbursement within one calendar month of the expense being incurred to ensure reasonable public reporting of expenses and management within Council's financial cycle. During an election year, Councillors should endeavour to submit all expense claims prior to the election, with only regular monthly bills such as mobile phone expenses outstanding.

Reimbursements will be provided by electronic funds transfer into the Councillor's nominated bank account and a payment remittance will be provided.

## **8.10 Accountability**

Councillor expenses (whether paid directly by Council or reimbursed) will be published in the Annual Report and quarterly on Council's website, under the following categories:

- Councillor Allowance
- Carer Expenses
- Communications Expenses
- Professional Development and Training Expenses

- Intrastate Travel Expenses
- Interstate and Overseas Travel Expenses
- Other expenses as defined in section 8.8 of this policy

A quarterly report will be provided to Council's Audit and Risk Committee detailing reimbursements made to Councillors during the previous three-month period in accordance with section 40(2) of the Act.

In accordance with Council's Public Transparency Policy, travel expenses will be published on the Council website within the Travel Register.

Councillors will be provided with their expense data on a quarterly basis for review and may request the details of their expenses from the MGRI any time.

## 9 Exclusions

This section sets out the exclusions to reimbursement of expenditure by Councillors:

- Any expenses not specified in this policy
- Any claims made outside of the specified timeframe, except with the approval of the Mayor, CEO or delegate
- Any expenses arising from a breach of road, traffic, parking or other regulations or laws
- Any expenses relating to insurance excess where loss is due to wilful damage, negligence, or criminal acts
- Any expenses arising from the attendance of family members/associates/persons in the care of attending conferences, seminars, training, planning sessions, or corporate hospitality or events, except as provided for in this policy.

## 10 Internal and External Assessments

### 10.1 Risk Assessment

This policy has been reviewed by the Risk Management Coordinator and considered to have a medium risk impact on Council. The policy has been included in the Operational Risk Registers for ongoing monitoring to ensure that the risk is managed effectively and mitigated where possible.

### 10.2 Delegation and Authorisation (Compliance) Framework

<b>Legislative authority</b>	Section 46 (1) of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>
<b>Power, duty or function</b>	Function of supporting the Mayor and the Councillors in the performance of their roles
<b>Instrument of delegation</b>	S13 Instrument of Delegation of CEO powers, duties and functions
<b>Positions to which power, duty or function is delegated</b>	General Manager Customer and Corporate Support Manager Governance, Risk and Integrity Team Leader Council Governance

### 10.3 Privacy Impact Assessment

A Privacy Impact Assessment is not required for this policy.

## **10.4 Human Rights Charter**

This policy has been reviewed against and complies with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*. Details of the assessment are at Appendix A.

## **10.5 Gender Impact Assessment**

A Gender Impact Assessment is not required for this policy.

# **11 Related Documents and Resources**

## **11.1 Legislation and External Documents**

- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Local Government (Governance and Integrity) Regulations 2020*
- *Carers Recognition Act 2012*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*
- *Gender Equality Act 2020*
- *Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2024*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004*
- *Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019*

## **11.2 Internal Documents**

- Councillor Gift, Hospitality and Political Donations Policy
- Good Governance Framework
- ICT Policy
- Media and External Communications Policy
- Public Transparency Policy
- Councillors Expenses Claim Form
- Councillor Gift and Hospitality Register
- Travel Register

## Appendix A: Human Rights Compliance Assessment

<b>Policy Title</b>	Councillor Support and Reimbursement of Expenses Policy	
<b>Department</b>	Governance, Risk and Integrity	
<b>Purpose of Policy</b>	To ensure Councillors are provided with the necessary resources to enable them to perform their roles, and set standards for the reimbursement of expenses and provision of facilities to Councillors	
<b>Applicable human right impacted</b>	<p>Are human rights supported? OR</p> <p>Are human rights limited by this policy?</p> <p>If so, how?</p>	<p>Is the limitation on the right reasonable and justifiable?</p> <p>If so, how?</p>
<p><b>Right to privacy and reputation</b></p> <p><a href="#">Section 13 - Your right to privacy and reputation   Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission</a></p>	<p>The right to privacy is somewhat impacted by the publication of Councillor expense details on the Council website and in Council's Annual Report.</p> <p>The right to reputation is supported by this policy, as transparency promotes community confidence in Councillor integrity.</p>	<p>The limitation upon privacy is reasonable and justifiable.</p> <p>The right to privacy must be balanced against the requirements of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i> relating to transparency, accountability and the use of Council resources.</p>
<p><b>Right to take part in public life</b></p> <p><a href="#">Section 18 - Your right to take part in public life   Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission</a></p>	<p>The right to take part in public life is supported by this policy, which supports diversity of representation and provides Councillors with opportunities to attend public events and training in support of their roles.</p> <p>Councillors are supported to perform their duties without disadvantage and pursue learning and development goals.</p>	<p>No limitations are imposed upon this right.</p>