



Mildura Rural City Council

Council Expenses Policy

Policy – CP012

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1. The purpose of this policy is

To support Councillors and members of delegated committees to perform their role, as defined under the *Local Government Act 2020* by ensuring that expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their role are reimbursed. This policy also provides guidance on:

- entitlements;
- processes for reimbursement; and
- reporting requirements.

2. Policy Statement

Section 39 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act) outlines allowance entitlements for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors, and Section 41 requires Council to adopt and maintain an expenses policy in relation to the reimbursement of out of pocket expenses to Councillors and members of delegated committees performing duties in their official capacity.

Councillors and members of delegated committees are entitled under section 40 of the Act, to reimbursement of expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their duties.

In recognition of the special role of Mayor, this policy provides for the provision of some additional facilities and expenditure specific to the Mayoral office.

This policy ensures that the reimbursement of these expenses is in accordance with the Act and meets the Act's principles of public transparency; achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community; and ensuring the ongoing financial viability of the Council.

3. Principles

This policy applies to:

- Councillors of the Mildura Rural City Council; and
- Members of delegated committees of the Mildura Rural City Council.

Councillor duties are those performed by a Councillor as a necessary part of their role, in achieving the objectives of Council.

These duties may include (but are not limited to):

- attendance at meetings of Council and its committees;
- attendance at briefing sessions, workshops, civic events or functions convened by Council;
- attendance at conferences, workshops and training programs related to the role of Councillor, Mayor or Deputy Mayor;
- attendance at meetings, events or functions representing Council; or
- duties in relation to constituents concerning Council business.

Members of delegated committees exercise powers of Councillors, under delegation. This policy also applies to those members in the course of undertaking their role as delegated committee members.

The fundamental test to be applied in determining whether or not a Councillor or delegated committee member expense is appropriately incurred is whether the expenditure is necessary because it is supplemental or incidental to, or consequent on the exercise of their official duties.

Expenses incurred by Councillors and delegated committee members when acting in a private capacity will not be reimbursed or paid.

Councillors and delegated committees members will only be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses that are:

- bona fide expenses; and
- have been reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of Councillor or delegated committee member ; and
- are reasonably necessary for the Councillor and delegated committee member to perform their role.

Any costs incurred by a Councillor or delegated committee member which are not covered specifically within this policy will not be met, unless the prior written authorisation has been provided from the Chief Executive Officer.

Reimbursement claims will not be processed without appropriate supporting evidence.

Expenses must be claimed no later than the month following the occurrence of the expense. Claims outside of this timeframe will not be considered.

4. **Councillor and Mayoral Allowances**

Section 39 of the Act entitles a Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Councillor to receive an allowance in accordance with a determination of the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal.

Allowances are paid monthly and for the month at hand.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are not entitled to receive an allowance as a Councillor if they receive an allowance as a Mayor or Deputy Mayor.

General

Section 39(5) of the Act states that a Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Councillor may elect –

- (a) to receive their entire allowance to which they are entitled; or
- (b) to receive a specified part of the allowance to which they are entitled; or
- (c) to receive no allowance.

Any personal taxation implications from the receipt of allowances are the responsibility of individual Councillors.

Remote Area Travel Allowance

A remote area travel allowance provides compensation for the time spent on long distances by Councillors in remote areas. This allowance is only available to Councillors who normally reside more than 50 kilometers by the shortest possible practicable road distance from the location or locations specified for the conduct of ordinary, special or committee meetings of the Council or any municipal or community functions which have been authorised by Council resolution for the Councillor to attend.

This allowance provides for a maximum limit of \$5,500 per annum for each Councillor (at a daily rate of \$44) and will be adjusted as advised by the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal.

Remote Councillors – Accommodation

Council will pay for overnight accommodation and meals at venues approved by the Chief Executive Officer where Councillors who normally reside at locations greater than 50 kilometers from Mildura decide, for reasons of fatigue and driver safety, to defer their return journey to the day following a Council meeting or function. This arrangement will apply to meetings commencing very early or finishing very late or where a number of consecutive meetings are planned to occur over two or more days/nights.

Superannuation Guarantee Equivalent

The value of the allowance payable to the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillor is inclusive of any Superannuation Guarantee Contribution amount, or equivalent, that may be payable under Commonwealth law to the Council member with respect to their service in that office. .

5. Civic Support, Facilities and Equipment

Home/Workplace Facilities

Each Councillor is entitled to the following home/workplace facilities:

- A tablet or computer and specified accessories;
- A lockable filing cabinet;
- Access to Internet, Email, Council Forum and Meeting minutes and agendas from the tablet or computer;

Access to a photocopier is available at Council's Madden and Deakin Avenue offices and the Ouyen Service Centre.

The quality and type of facilities will be at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer and Manager Information Systems.

Equipment will generally be replaced (refreshed) at the completion of the Council term or earlier at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer. Councillors are responsible for the care of devices. In the event that a device is damaged, it will be at the CEO's discretion as to the replacement of that device at the Council's or Councillors' expense.

The above facilities remain the property of the Council and must be returned within seven days of the cessation of a Councillors' term of office.

Councillor telephone accounts are monitored by the Chief Executive Officer who is also responsible for account payment and authorisation.

Insurance

Councillors are covered under the following Council insurance policies on a 24-hour basis in respect of any act or thing done or omitted to be done in good faith, while discharging the duties of civic office including attendance at meetings of external bodies as Council's representative:

- Public Liability;
- Professional Indemnity;
- Councillors and Officers Liability;
- Personal Accident; and
- Comprehensive Motor Vehicle (Mayoral vehicle only).

Council will pay any applicable policy excess in respect of claims made against a Councillor, where the claim arises from Council business and is accepted by Council's insurers. This provision will apply whether the claim is defended or not.

Councillors will not be covered for any deliberately fraudulent act or omission, or any willful violation or breach of any law. Councillors must promptly advise the Chief Executive Officer of any matter which may give cause to a potential claim on Council.

Facilities for the Mayor

As the leader and chief spokesperson for the City, the mayoral position requires a range of additional support services and facilities to those supplied to Councillors. Consequently, the Mayor will be provided with the following.

Mayoral Vehicle

- A fully maintained vehicle to the standard prescribed within Council's Fleet Policy, will be provided to assist the Mayor to carry out their duties and for private use during the mayoral term.
- The mayoral vehicle will be traded in accordance with Council's normal vehicle replacement policy, unless otherwise authorised by the Chief Executive Officer.

Corporate Credit Card

- The mayoral credit card will be subject to a credit limit of \$2,500 per month;
- Credit card usage will be limited to bona fide expenses associated with the Office of Mayor. No private purchases are to be made using this credit card;
- All purchase documents/receipts must be retained and provided to Executive Services who will enter all credit card transactions into the Online Purchasing Card module, which is to be approved by the Chief Executive Officer on a monthly basis; and
- Expenses incurred on the credit card are to be approved by the Chief Executive Officer on a monthly basis.

Administrative Support

- An appropriate level of administrative support will be made available to assist the Mayor in performing their role;
- Administrative support may include but not be limited to preparation of correspondence, responding to invitations, press releases, issue research, and constituent/community contact activities; and
- The level of administrative support shall be determined by the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Mayor.

Mayoral Regalia

- Council does not provide either a Mayoral robe or chains for the Mayor to wear on ceremonial occasions. If however, it is deemed that mayoral regalia are required for a specific occasion, the Council will utilise the regalia of the previous Mildura City Council which is housed in the Carnegie Resource Centre. It should be noted however, that in most circumstances it would be considered inappropriate to use regalia from another Council.

Office Accommodation

- Appropriate office accommodation will be provided at the main administration building to assist the Mayor perform their role. The nature of office accommodation shall be determined by the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Mayor.

Civic Entertainment/Hospitality

Meeting/Function Rooms

Subject to availability, meeting/function rooms owned and controlled by Council can be booked by Councillors, free of charge for meetings, interviews and other functions provided they are associated with Council business.

Civic Hospitality

The Council provides internal hospitality services (morning/afternoon teas, light lunches etc) which Councillors may utilise when conducting Council business on Council premises.

All formal civic entertainment functions will be coordinated by Executive Services, and must have prior approval of the Chief Executive Officer.

External Hospitality

It is recognised that Councillors may need to use external hospitality services when conducting Council business outside Council offices.

Councillors will be reimbursed reasonable expenses incurred while entertaining visiting dignitaries or Council business guests on behalf of Council, including the reasonable costs of drinks accompanying a meal. The Chief Executive Officer must give prior approval to any such entertainment.

Councillors' Sustenance

The following internal sustenance arrangements shall be available to all Councillors:

- Reasonable refreshments during meetings on Council business. The nature of refreshments shall depend on the nature of the meeting, the timing and attendees, and shall be at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer; and
- Reasonable meals served after meetings when such meetings are to be held over extended periods or are likely to have a late conclusion time at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer.

Mail

Each Councillor will be entitled to post, through the Council mailing system and utilising Council supplied stationery, standard mail items, which relate to Council business and do not include election related material. Executive Services staff will assist Councillors in the provision of mail services.

Stationery

Council shall, upon request, supply Councillors with standard stationery held or obtained generally for the organisation's requirements. Stationery may include but not necessarily be limited to paper, writing implements, electronic storage devices, computer paper, envelopes, writing pads/books, business cards and diaries.

Councillors will be supplied with personalised business cards and a personal diary. Standard Council letterhead and other Council inscribed stationery will also be provided to Councillors as required.

The supply of stationery will be coordinated by Executive Services.

Council inscribed stationery is not to be converted in any way and may only be used for Council business matters i.e. not election purposes.

Business Access

Each Councillor will be provided with a proximity card allowing 24-hour access to the Councillors' area at the Madden Avenue office and Council meeting facilities at Deakin Avenue.

Councillors with Disabilities

Council may resolve to provide reasonable additional civic support, facilities, and equipment for any Councillor with a disability to enable that Councillor to freely perform their civic duties.

Council Elections and Exclusions

Councillors must not use Council provided materials and/or facilities for election purposes. This applies to their own candidature or in assisting the candidature of others.

6. Care and dependent-related expenses

Council will provide reimbursement of costs where the provision of childcare is reasonably required for a Councillor or member of a delegated committee to perform their role, this is in accordance with section 41(2)(c) of the Act.

This applies to the care of a dependent, while the Councillor or delegated committee member is undertaking their official duties; and may include expenses such as hourly fees and booking fees, if applicable.

Council will provide reimbursement of costs where the provision of carer services is reasonably required when a Councillor or delegated committee members who is a carer (see definitions) incurs reasonable expenses in the performance of their duties.

Payments for carer and childcare services will not be made to a person who resides with the Councillor or delegated committee member; has any financial or pecuniary interest with the Councillor or delegated committee members; or has a relationship with the Councillor, delegated committee member or their partner.

Child care expense payment or reimbursement claims should be submitted to Executive Services and must be accompanied by a receipt from the care

provider showing the date and time care was provided and nominating the reason child care was necessary.

7. Communication Expenses

Communication costs may necessarily be incurred by Councillors in the performance of their civic duties. Allowable communication expenses may relate to Councillor accessibility and communication with other Councillors, Council officers, constituents, community members, Council business partners and, on occasion, family members. This section deals with costs associated with use of mobile phones and home/office communication equipment. Communication costs whilst on Council business trips are outlined in Section 8.

Mobile telephone and Landlines

Council will pay a maximum monthly amount of \$75 inclusive of usage (voice and internet data) and service provision charges from a recognised telecommunications provider

Internet Access

Each Councillor will be provided with internet access from their Council provided tablet or computer. Council will pay all associated connection fees and rental charges.

Councillors are required to ensure that they have read, understood and comply with Council's Corporate Policies in respect to the use of any telecommunications and information technology equipment and resources and Equal Employment Opportunity having particular regard to what is "appropriate material" that is sent, received or spoken.

Data usage (Internet Access) and information technology support requests will be monitored by the Manager Information Systems with any concerns reported to the Chief Executive Officer for discussion as appropriate.

8. Travel Expenses and Arrangements

Councillors may on occasion be given the opportunity of attending conferences, conventions, study tours, seminars, training courses and other events as a participant, presenter, delegate or official Council representative, either interstate or internationally. The following section details the policy in relation to associated travel expenses and arrangements.

Reimbursement/Direct Payment

Councillors may choose to receive reimbursement and/or have direct payment made on their behalf for allowable expenses for domestic and interstate travel.

Domestic and Country Travel – Private Vehicle Usage

Councillors using their private vehicles may claim expense reimbursement where such travel is in the course of conducting Council business.

The allowance payable to Councillors for use of their own private vehicle on Council business shall be in accordance with the Australia Taxation Office Business rate as reviewed each financial year.

The allowance for use of a private vehicle will be payable for:

- Attendance at Ordinary or Special Meetings of Council;
- Attendance at Council Committee meetings;
- Attendance at Ordinary, Committee or Sub-Committee meetings of State or Regional Organisations where the Councillor has, by Council resolution, been elected as a Council delegate or been requested by said delegate to attend on their behalf as proxy;
- Attendance at conferences and seminars where such attendance and usage of a private vehicle by a Councillor has been approved by Council, the Chief Executive Officer or such other authorised Committee designated by Council;
- Attendance at inspections and meetings within or outside the municipal area relative to the duties of a Councillor;
- Connections to and from the airport, rail or bus station, or other point from where travel to conferences and seminars commence; and
- Attendance at official Council functions.

To be reimbursed for use of their private vehicle, Councillors must provide adequate details of:

- The purpose of the trip;
- Date and location;
- Kilometers travelled;
- Where appropriate, receipts for tolls, parking;
- Private vehicle expense reimbursements for Mayor and Councillors must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer. Payments will be monitored and processed by Executive Services; and
- Reimbursement claims should be lodged no later than the month following the occurrence of the expense. Claims outside of this time period will not be considered.

Cabcharge

Each Councillor will be provided with vouchers for use in the payment of necessary taxi services associated with the following events:

Transfer from air, bus or train terminals to attend:

- Ordinary, Committee or Sub-Committee meetings of State or Regional Organisations where the Councillor has, by Council resolution, been elected as a Council delegate or been requested by said delegate to attend on their behalf as proxy;
- Conferences and seminars where such attendance has been approved by Council, the Chief Executive Officer or such other authorised Committee designated by Council; and
- Inspections and meetings outside the municipality relative to the duties of a Councillor.

Council Vehicles

For extended trips inside and outside the municipality, Councillors will be provided with a Council vehicle. Councillors are to advise Executive Services staff of this requirement at least 48 hours prior to travelling.

Interstate and International Travel

Generally such interstate or international travel will be associated with opportunities for enhancing Council reputation; for developing new and existing contacts with other cities and areas; for advancing Councillors municipal business knowledge base and; in creating stronger investment, cultural, education, tourism, environmental and immigration ties.

All interstate or international travel undertaken by Councillors must be in accordance with the achievement of Council's corporate objectives and goals and be in accordance with this policy.

All applications for international travel must be assessed and approved by Council, at an Ordinary meeting of the Council and must be open to the public. The authorisation process will include notification to Council of all business related itinerary details with reimbursement of costs limited to the predetermined itinerary. Approval must be in the form of a specific Council resolution and Councillors should remain cognisant of their Conflict of Interest obligations, pursuant to the Act at such times.

All applications for interstate travel by the Mayor or Councillors must be in writing and assessed and approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

Partner Travel

The costs of a partner accompanying a Councillor on a business trip (local, interstate or international) must be borne by the Councillor unless there is a bona fide business purpose or necessity for the presence of a partner.

Travel at Council expense by a partner must be approved in writing by the Chief Executive Officer, prior to departure, for all travel destinations.

Where it can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Chief Executive Officer that the presence of a partner is necessary to support the business or representational needs of Council, costs associated with the travel, accommodation and incidentals for the partner will be paid or reimbursed by Council.

Non-Council Funded Travel

Council and/or individual Councillors, may from time to time receive offers of sponsored travel from industry bodies, educational institutions, other governments and interstate or international organisations.

All such offers should be initially referred to the Chief Executive Officer who will consider the appropriateness, dependent on:

- The offer of travel is not made in exchange for, or with an expectation of, the granting of favorable treatment;
- Acceptance of the offer would not give rise to an actual or perceived conflict of interest; and
- Acceptance of the offer would provide opportunity for enhancement of Council's reputation or in creating stronger investment, cultural, education, tourism, environmental and professional development opportunities for Council and the Mildura community.

Additionally, care must be taken to ensure that there is no conflict of interest in such situations with Councillors being seen to use the status of their civic office to advance the interests of other private organisations or interest groups.

Travel conditions at the expense of other parties should be in accordance with the standards of Council.

Communication Expenses

It is acknowledged that legitimate communication costs may be incurred by Councillors when travelling interstate or internationally on sanctioned Council business.

This may include costs incurred in using mobile phones, facsimile and telephone services (including internet) at places of accommodation or access points while interstate or overseas on Council business.

All such costs will be subject to scrutiny and approval of the Chief Executive Officer. Where deemed appropriate the Chief Executive Officer may refer such matters to Council for ratification.

Private Travel in conjunction with Council Travel

Councillors undertaking private interstate or international travel arrangements in conjunction with Council authorised travel must ensure that all costs incurred with private travel are clearly delineated from Council funded travel arrangements.

Pre-departure itineraries should include specific detail of any private travel arrangements, and under no circumstances should private travel and accommodation costs be funded by Council.

Where any private travel and associated costs are included in a package ticket arrangement, the Councillor must reimburse Council for the private proportion prior to departure.

Private travel to be taken in conjunction with Council travel must be disclosed to Chief Executive Officer as appropriate within the parameters of normal authorisation procedures articulated in this policy.

Interstate and International Travel

Bookings and Confirmation

Travel and accommodation arrangements should only be made after the appropriate approval is granted by the Chief Executive Officer.

However, it is acknowledged that for practicality reasons, in some circumstances, tentative arrangements may need to be pursued in anticipation of formal approval. Tentative arrangements can be made following written authorisation of the Chief Executive Officer, if the following conditions exist:

- Where the need for travel was not known by a Councillor in a time frame which would allow for consideration and approval by the Chief Executive Officer in a reasonable period; and
- Where issues of ticket availability or material cost savings are dependent on the timing of the travel booking.

Arrangements for travel and associated accommodation, car hire etc, should be booked, confirmed and paid for prior to departure through Executive Services.

Class of Travel

Air Travel

Unless otherwise approved by Council, all domestic travel is to be by the most economical means and by the most direct route.

Air travel class upgrades are permitted, if at the Councillors expense, and if itemised and paid by the Councillor prior to departure.

All international travel will be economy class unless there are extenuating circumstances when Council may approve an upgrade.

Rail Travel

Councillors may use first class rail travel at Council's expense, when available.

Duration of Travel

The duration of any Council related business travel should be kept to a minimum in order to minimise Council cost.

Insurance Arrangements

Council's personal accident insurance policy provides specific worldwide accident coverage for Councillors and their partners/spouses while engaged in or on an activity directly or indirectly connected with Council business. Consequently separate travel insurance may not be required. However, personal item luggage insurance may be required.

Passports/Visas

Councillors travelling overseas are responsible for ensuring they have a current passport and any required visas.

Where passports and/or visas have to be procured because of Council travel, costs will be paid or reimbursed by Council.

Out-of-Pocket Expenses

If required, cash advances are available to Councillors travelling on official Council business to cover any anticipated daily out-of-pocket expenses.

Requests for cash advances are to be coordinated through Executive Services. In determining the amount to be provided, consideration shall be given to the duration of travel, exchange rates and costs and standards of destination areas. The Chief Executive Officer is to authorise all cash advance requests.

Any unused cash advance must be returned to Executive Services within seven days after a Councillors return.

Travel Expenses Reconciliation, Documentation and Reporting

Councillors travelling overseas shall be issued with a corporate credit card for the duration of the travel only. This credit card must not be used for personal expenses.

Councillors must reconcile any purchases on the credit card or cash advances within seven days of return and submit the reconciliation to Executive Services.

All reconciliations must include appropriate supporting documentation, e.g. receipts, credit card vouchers (with receipts) etc.

Where receipts cannot be obtained a statutory declaration will be required in support of any unsubstantiated reimbursement claims.

The exchange rate to be applied by Councillors when returning unspent money shall be the exchange rate on return.

Where additional travel costs are incurred due to an unforeseen extension of the duration of a Council business trip, Councillors should detail the reason for the variance and provide supporting documentation to the Chief Executive Officer for the reimbursement of additional expenses.

Travel Reporting and Councillor Travel Register

In accordance with Councils Public Transparency Policy, Council will maintain a public register which is available for inspection upon request, of details and costs relating to all interstate and overseas travel undertaken by Councillors in the previous 12 month period.

Councillors must ensure that any reconciliation of travel expenses occurs within seven days of return to ensure travel details are registered promptly.

After returning from a Council related trip, Councillors are required to prepare a report regarding the trip. The report should cover details of cities/countries visited and the outcomes associated with the objectives of the trip. A copy of the report should be submitted to the Mayor and Chief Executive Officer and then distributed to all Councillors. This report should be presented to the first available Ordinary Council meeting.

Other Travel Expenses/Issues

Accommodation Standard

Accommodation associated with interstate or international travel should, where possible, be pre-booked, the details should be included in the trip itinerary.

Reasonable accommodation, where possible equivalent to four star standard, will be provided for Councillors. Standard rooms will normally be booked, except in special circumstances where due to official entertainment/business meeting requirements, a suite may be required. In such circumstances, prior approval from the Chief Executive Officer will be required. Councillors may accept room upgrades if there is no additional cost to Council, or if the Councillor pays for the upgrade.

Rental Cars/Taxis

Hire of rental cars should only be used where the cost of rental cars will be more economic than alternative taxi fares. The cost should always be compared with the use of taxis with the emphasis on using the least expensive, practical means of transport.

Taxis can be used for commuting from airports to places of accommodation or business.

Car Parking Fees

Council will meet the costs of the following car parking fees:

- Hotel/Motel parking – additional car parking fees not included in accommodation costs;
- Airport parking – costs included in the parking of a Councillors private vehicle or Council vehicle at an airport for the duration of the travel; and
- Other fees for parking a Councillors private vehicle or Council vehicle in respect to attendance at official/approved Council business.

Gifts

In some circumstances the exchange of corporate or business related gifts between a host and visitor is customary and polite. Where possible, gift exchange needs should be anticipated prior to departure and arrangements made through Executive Services.

Where gifts were required to be purchased, such costs must be reasonable and reimbursement must be approved by the Chief Executive Officer on production of prescribed documentation and receipts.

Gifts received by Councillors remain the property of the Council and should be given to the Chief Executive Officer for recording and display. All gifts received by Councillors will be in accordance with any gift policies adopted by Council from time to time.

Sustenance and Hospitality

Councillors travelling on Council related business are entitled to payment or reimbursement of costs associated with the provision of daily sustenance meals including breakfast, lunch, dinner and refreshments. These may be acquired at a place of accommodation or an alternative venue.

Councillors will also be able to claim reimbursement for, or Council payment of, reasonable hospitality expenses incurred in entertaining individuals and officials while conducting Council business.

Incidental Expenses

Incidental expenses such as dry cleaning and laundry will be reimbursed or paid in relation to Council resolved overseas travel only. Reimbursement will not be provided for any travel within Australia.

9. Conferences, Training and Professional Development

Conferences, seminars and training courses which impact on the role of Councillors generally and their ability to make informed decisions are common both locally and interstate. Councillors are encouraged to attend conferences which enhance their role and development as a Councillor, particularly those which focus on an individual Councillors portfolio responsibilities.

Councillors wishing to attend overseas conferences require authorisation by way of a Council resolution. Attendances at conferences within Australia requires the Chief Executive Officer's approval.

Approval is dependent upon the cost being within budget and being consistent with Councils goals and strategies.

External Conferences/Seminars

The annual budget per Councillor for training is determined each year as part of the budget process.

Applications by a Councillor for conference attendance held by external providers in Australia but outside the Mildura area will be subject to prior approval by the Chief Executive Officer.

Attendance at a conference outside Australia requires Council approval.

Registration Fees

Payment of registration fees for external conferences/seminars or similar will normally be made through Councils purchasing system. Registration applications should be processed through Executive Services.

Registration payments for approved conferences paid privately by Councillors will be reimbursed after lodgment of an expense reimbursement claim form.

Accompanying Partners

Where a Councillor chooses for their partner to attend a conference with them, all associated costs must be borne by the Councillor.

Partners may on occasion, accompany Councillors to conferences where the presence of a partner is necessary to support the business or representational needs of Council. This must be on the approval of the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Mayor, prior to attendance at the conference. In these instances, where the partner is attending in an official capacity, Council will cover the cost of the partner's registration/entrance fee, but other costs will be borne by the Councillor.

Councillors as Presenters

Councillors may receive invitations to speak at Local Government conferences and seminars in their capacity as Councillors.

It is common practice for organisation to pay all expenses of Councillors invited to be presenters.

Any such invitations should be discussed with the Chief Executive Officer prior to agreeing to contribute as a presenter. Support may be provided by

Executive Services in the preparation of material to assist a Councillors presentation.

If a Councillor is paid a presentation fee by a professional conference organiser the fee should be paid into the general revenue of Council through Executive Services.

Payment of Associated Expenses

Often when attending conferences and seminars the registration fee will include the cost of meals and sometimes accommodation.

Where this is not the case the provision relating to travel, accommodation and meal expenses in other sections of this policy will apply.

10. Support for Mayor's Partner

The spouse/partner of the incumbent Mayor will on occasion be required to support the Mayor as an official representative of Council.

The Mayor's partner may receive individual invitations and attend functions and events on behalf of Council. Similarly the Mayor's partner may become involved in charity events and committees as a representative of Council. It is acknowledged that the Mayor's partner may require some assistance and support from Executive Services.

11. Procedure and Accountability

The following procedure and mechanisms will apply to the claiming and payment of expense reimbursements as articulated in this policy.

Claims Procedure

When a Councillor or delegated committee member requires reimbursement of monies expended whilst conducting Council business, the following procedures should be followed:

- Obtain a relevant receipt or supporting documentation for expenditure (where receipts cannot be obtained a statutory declaration will be required);
- Complete a Councillor expenses reimbursement form;
- For reimbursement of private vehicle travel costs complete a Councillors travelling allowance claim form;
- Claims must be lodged with Executive Services by the 10th day of each month;
- Approved claims with a value less than \$50 can be paid from Councils petty cash system;
- Approved claims exceeding \$50 will be processed by Financial Services through Councils accounts payable system. Processing will normally occur within seven days.

Exclusions

Any expense arising from a breach of road, traffic, parking or other regulations or laws, including Council local laws, will not be reimbursed or funded in any way by Council.

If a Councillor or delegated committee member chooses not to claim a particular expense, this cannot be offset against a claim for any additional amount associated with another expense.

Claims for expenses other than those included in this policy will not be reimbursed, except in exceptional circumstances after approval by the Chief Executive Officer.

Reporting Mechanisms

A report detailing all expenses attributable to Councillors and delegated committee members in undertaking their roles and responsibilities will be presented to an Ordinary Council Meeting on a quarterly basis. A copy of the report will also be presented to the Audit and Risk Committee. This report will include all claimed and subsequently reimbursed expenses.

This report will include:

- expenses incurred by Councillors and delegated committee members during the previous quarter;
- reimbursement claims made by Councillors and delegated committee members during the previous quarter; and
- reimbursements made by Councillors and delegated committee members during the previous quarter.

Council commits to monitoring processes and decision making to understand the overall success of the policy's implementation.

A period review of the policy will be undertaken to ensure any changes required to strengthen or update the policy are made in a timely manner.

A full register of expenses will be recorded and updated quarterly by the Executive Support Officer. Details of Councillors expenses will be made available on Council's website and also updated quarterly.

Approval and Administrative Processes

All expense payments and reimbursements in relation to the Mayor and Councillors will be subject to endorsement and approval by the Chief Executive Officer where prescribed in this policy.

All expense payments and reimbursement claims will be administered by Executive Services.

12. Who is responsible for implementing this policy?

Manager Corporate Administration

13. Definitions (categories of expense for reporting purposes)

Allowances

Mildura Rural City Council is a Category Two Council and must set allowances in line with the Local Government Act 2020.
An adjustment is made annually and gazetted by the Minister or the Victorian Independent

	Remuneration Tribunal as appropriate. Allowances are inclusive of superannuation.
Catering	Any catering costs borne by or associated with undertaking the responsibilities of Councillor including meal reimbursements
Communication	These Include expenses include costs associated with provision of equipment (I-pad, fax, phone), phone reimbursements and monthly telecommunications charges
Delegated Committee	A delegated committee established by Council under section 63 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>
International Travel	The travel costs associated with Councillors travelling and fulfilling Council duties overseas
Joint Delegated Committee	A joint delegated committee established by 2 or more Councils under section 64 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>
Miscellaneous expenses	Any other reimbursed expense to Councillors in undertaking their civic responsibilities. This could include carer expenses, printing, and other general expenditure / reimbursements.
Training, Conferences and Education	These include registration fees, educational / training costs and meeting expenses
Travel and Accommodation costs	Travel Costs include cost of flights, taxis, public transport fees, accommodation costs and vehicle reimbursements etc associated with undertaking duties of a Councillor

14. Legislation and other references

14.1 Legislation

For further information related to this policy see:

- *Carers Recognition Act 2012;*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006;*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1982;*
- *Local Government Act 2020;*
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*
- *Gender Equity Bill 2020*

14.2 Documents

This Policy is implemented in conjunction with the following documents:

- Governance Rules
- Public Transparency Policy
- Good Governance Framework
- Privacy and Data Protection Policy
- Councillor Expenses Claim Form

14.3 Risk Assessment Reference

Please tick the corporate risk(s) that this policy is addressing.

Risk Category	✓	Risk Category	✓
Asset Management		Financial Sustainability	✓
Committees		Human Resource Management	
Compliance – Legal & Regulatory	✓	Leadership & Organisational Culture	✓
Contract Management		Occupational Health & Safety	
Contract Tendering & Procurement		Organisational Risk Management	
Corporate Governance	✓	Project Management	
Environmental Sustainability		Public Image and Reputation	✓