

Council Policy (wcc.006)

Councillor Expenses & Allowances

Responsible Officer:

General Manager

Date of Issue:

24 January 2023

Review Date:

30 December 2024



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1 Purpose

Elected members of Council are entitled to allowances and expense reimbursement in accordance with s.340A of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

This policy allows for the formality of payment of Councillor expenses and allowances and to ensure that there is transparency in relation to the claiming and payment of expenses and allowances on behalf of Councillors.

2 Objectives

This policy is to clarify expenses and additional expenses, which Council deem appropriate for the support of Councillors in fulfilling their duties of office.

Prescribed allowance entitlements and expenses are outlined under the *Local Government Act 1993* and under s.4 of the *Local Government (General Regulations) 2015*.

3 Scope

This Policy applies to Councillors elected to the West Coast Council and addresses the following in relation to the discharge of duties relevant to the role of Councillor:

- Prescribed allowances
- Claim for expenses
- Meal allowance
- Use of vehicles and travelling expenses
- Childcare expenses
- Provision of facilities
- Home Office expenses
- Communication devices
- Conferences and seminars
- Dinners, functions and events
- Insurance
- Reporting of Councillor Expenses & Allowances.

4 Policy

4.1 Prescribed Allowances

Council shall pay allowances to elected members in accordance with Regulation 42 and Schedule 4 of the Local Government (General) Regulations 2015.

Allowances will be paid on a monthly (in arrears) basis as per Regulation 42(3) of the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2015* and Section 340A (2A) of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

Regulation 42(2A) of the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2015* states if a Deputy Mayor is appointed to act in the role of Mayor for a period of 4 consecutive weeks or more, the Deputy Mayor is entitled to receive, for that period, the allowance payable to the Mayor.

A Councillor may determine not to receive all or part of a prescribed allowance. Notification of such a decision is to be provided in writing to the General Manager as per Section 340A (3) (4) of the *Local Government Act 1993*.

4.2 Claim for Expenses

Councillors are entitled to be reimbursed for the following prescribed expenses under Section 43 of the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2015*.

43. Expenses for councillors

A councillor is entitled to be reimbursed for reasonable expenses in accordance with the policy adopted under Schedule 5 to the Act in relation to –

- (a) telephone rental and telephone calls and the use of the internet; and*
- (b) travelling; and*
- (c) care of any person who is dependent on the councillor and who requires the care while the councillor is carrying out his or her duties or functions as a councillor; and*
- (d) stationery and office supplies.*

Claims for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses incurred in accordance with this policy shall be made to the General Manager not later than three (3) months after the expense has been incurred and shall be submitted on the prescribed claim form. Claims are preferred on a monthly basis.

Where, in the opinion of the General Manager, a question arises as to whether a claim for reimbursement of expenses is eligible under this policy, or the claim appears unreasonable or does not serve the interests of Council, the General Manager shall refer the matter to Council in closed session for decision and policy guidance.

A Councillor shall not claim travel or other expenses, where the expense would otherwise have been incurred as a result of private business.

4.3 Meal Allowance

A meal allowance claim may be submitted for the following:

- Attendance at meetings of Council, Council Workshops or meetings of any committee of Council, which commences after 5pm – where a meal is not provided.
- Attendance for other business of Council, either inside or outside the municipality including out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed upon presentation of a claim for payment on the prescribed claim form.

The meal allowance payable shall be as paid as per the Australian Tax Office determination for the relevant financial year.

Should the business being attended by the Councillor include the provision of any or all meals, the meal allowance cannot be claimed, for that supplied as part of the package. This includes meals included as part of an accommodation package.

Incidental costs are paid for overnight stays, if claimed.

4.4 Travelling Expenses & Use of Vehicles

The Mayor will be provided a Council vehicle for the purpose of undertaking the duties of Mayor.

Travel to events by Councillors is to be approved by the Mayor or by Council resolution.

Councillors in the first instance should arrange to utilize the Council Pool cars where available, including the Mayor's vehicle, to attend meetings, seminars, function on behalf of the Council. Arrangements for the use of the Mayor's vehicle are to be made with the Mayor, with requests for the Council pool car directed to the General Manager.

All policies adopted by Council (including corporate policies) in relation to use of Council vehicles, apply to Councillors when driving Council vehicles.

Where private use of a vehicle has occurred (on approval of the Mayor), Council will reimburse Councillors for necessary out-of-pocket expenses incurred in travelling to discharge their functions as Councillors in respect of the following:

- a) To and from a registered West Coast address, formal meetings of Council, Council Workshops or a meeting of any committee the Councillor has been appointed to, as a representative of the West Coast Council, or for any other meeting where the Councillor has been delegated or authorised by Council to attend; and
- b) Upon business of Council, outside the municipal area, in compliance with a resolution of Council where appropriate;
- c) To and from the Annual Conference of the Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) or to and from any meeting of the Cradle Coast Authority to which Council has appointed representatives; and
- d) To and from any seminar/conference in compliance with a resolution or Policy of Council.

The travel allowance payable will be at the Australian Tax Office travel allowance rate (per kilometer) for the relevant financial year.

Travel expenses shall not be paid for travel, either inside or outside of the municipal area, where alternative arrangements are made for travel by Council.

The purpose of seeking a claim, the below are determined as standard West Coast travel distances:

West Coast Travel Allowance Claim Distances (Return)					
	Queenstown	Rosebery	Zeehan	Strahan	Tullah
Rosebery	110		58	142	30
Zeehan	78	58		96	86
Strahan	82	142	96		182
Tullah	112	30	86	182	
Burnie	326	222	266	374	192
Wynyard	362	258	314	410	228
Launceston	526	416	474	570	386
Hobart	532	642	604	614	644
For distance to/from Granville Harbour add 70km to Zeehan column.					
For distance to/from Trial Harbour add 34km to Zeehan column.					

4.5 Childcare Expenses

Council will reimburse a Councillor for necessary, reasonable expenses incurred in relation to care of any child, while carrying out the duties of office of the Councillor.

These include:

- Formal meetings of Council, Council Workshops or a meeting of any committee the Councillor has been appointed to as a representative of West Coast Council, or for any other meeting where the Councillor has been delegated or authorised by Council to attend;
- Business of the Council, outside the municipal area, in compliance with a resolution of Council, except where the body or committee members reimburses relevant childcare expenses incurred by the Councillor;
- Attendance at any seminar/conference in compliance with this policy or a resolution of Council;
- Attendance at inspections or business as arranged by the General Manager.

Where a licensed childcare provider is used, reimbursements made will be net of any entitlement to government subsidies.

At the General Manager's discretion, childcare may be paid at an hourly rate of up to \$20/hour when no licensed provider is available (evenings for example).

Childcare costs are not eligible for reimbursement if paid for childcaring by a person who normally or regularly lives with the Councillor or is a member of the Councillor's family.

All claims must detail the date and time care was provided, the business of Council that it related to, and attach a receipt or invoice from the provider (whether licensed or unlicensed).

Childcare expenses will, unless there are exceptional circumstances, be paid in arrears.

4.6 Provision of Facilities

The Mayor will be provided with an office for the carrying out of his/her duties as Mayor.

Councillors are permitted to use an office and telephone for calls and appointments in discharging the function of a Councillor.

Council will provide Councillors with administrative support in relation to discharging the function of a Councillor.

Council will provide Councillors with business cards and magnetic name tags of the same quality and design provided to Council staff.

4.7 Home Office Expenses

Council will provide Councillors upon request postage, journals, diaries, stationery etc to assist in discharging the function of a Councillor.

4.8 Communication Devices

The Mayor if requested, will be provided with a mobile phone or smart phone for the purpose of discharging the functions of Mayor. If travelling overseas the Mayor is requested to put appropriate measures in place to avoid excessive phone costs. The Mayor should discuss this matter with the General Manager. The phone provided to the Mayor is to be returned to Council at the conclusion of his/her term of office. Reasonable personal use of the phone is allowable on the phone plan.

Councillors will be provided with a laptop with internet access. The laptop and internet are to be used for the purpose of discharging the functions of a Councillor and are to be used in accordance with Council's Media Communications & Devices Policy and other relevant Council policies. The laptop and associated accessories are to be returned to Council at the conclusion of a Councillors term of office.

4.9 Provision of Gym Access

Councillors will be provided with free access to West Coast gyms in support of Councils strategic focus on healthy lifestyles.

Councillors are required to complete the relevant gym membership registration and submit the completed form to the General Manager for approval and processing.

Councillors who obtain a membership under this offer will have the details recorded on Councils Gifts & Donations Register, which is available to the public for viewing.

4.10 Conferences & Seminars

The Council encourages Councillors to attend conferences, seminars and training relevant to Local Government. When held within Tasmania, Councillors should attend at least one relevant training session or forum, which is hosted by an approved organisation, annually. Attendance at such training or forums must be approved by the Mayor and are subject to budget availability.

The Council supports the practice of the Mayor and General Manager attending the LGAT Annual Conference annually.

Attendance at any other conference, seminar or training within Tasmania and all conferences, seminars and training outside of Tasmania requires a resolution of Council.

The Council will pay on behalf of Councillors, registration and out-of-pocket expenses, in respect of attendance at any seminar or conference, in compliance with a resolution or policy of Council.

4.11 Dinners, Functions & Events

Council may cover the costs of dinners, function or events to which either:

- a) The Mayor is invited to represent Council; or
- b) One or more Councillors are appointed by the Mayor to attend on behalf of Council; or
- c) All Councillors are invited to attend in an official capacity, subject to the discretion of the Mayor.

4.12 Partners Costs

Where additional costs are incurred for the Mayor and/or Councillor's partners to attend functions, dinners, events or similar, these costs will be at the personal expense of the Councillor and their partner.

For practicality in booking arrangements, this may be undertaken by deduction from the Councillor's allowance.

4.13 Insurance

Council will provide the following insurance cover for all Councillors, for liability arising out of or in the course of carrying out the function of a Councillor:

- Personal Accident Insurance;
- Directors and Officers Insurance;
- Fidelity Guarantee Insurance
- Business Travel Insurance (conditions apply);
- Motor Vehicle Insurance on Council fleet cars.

4.14 Reporting of Councillor Expenses & Allowances

The total annual expenses claimed by Councillors will be published in the Annual Report of Council. The total expense figure will include expenses claimed in accordance with this Policy.

This Policy serves as a public document to provide an open and fair framework of expense and allowance entitlements within which Councillors are entitled to claim.

5 Policy Review

Council is encouraged to regularly revise this Policy in line with Council's Policy Framework Policy, prior to the scheduled review date.

It is incumbent upon the General Manager and Councillors themselves, to provide Council with this opportunity, by referring claims, even historically accepted claims, to Council for Policy consideration.

The General Manager should endeavour to refer the matter without disclosing the identity of the individual who submitted the claim.

6 Legislation and Related Documents

Local Government Act 1993

Local Government (General) Regulations 2015

WCC Policy – Light Vehicle

WCC Policy – Media & Communications

WCC Policy – Policy Framework

Australian Tax Office (Tax Determination Fact Sheet)

West Coast Council Councillor Claim FormAppendix 1.

Appendix 1.

Councillor Expenses Claim Form 2022-2023

Name: Cr. _____

Date Expense Incurred	Purpose/Details	Kilometres Travelled (from table)	Flat Rate (ATO) 0.78 per km	Amount

Purpose/Details 2022-2023	Number	Allowance	Amount
Breakfast		\$29.90	
Lunch		\$33.65	
Dinner		\$57.30	
Date of Council Business: ____ / ____ / ____ to ____ / ____ / ____			

I declare that the expenses claimed on this form have been incurred by me whilst fulfilling my role as Councillor for the West Coast Municipal Area and have been made in accordance with Council's adopted policy. All claims for which receipts are available are hereby attached.

Signed Councillor

**Authorised for payment
General Manager**

Office use only:

Cents per kilometre

0.78 cents per kilometre (regardless of engine size)
The travel allowance payable will be at the Australian Tax Office rate for travel allowances

Vendor Code:	EFT No:
Date Issued:	Issued By:
Batch No:	Entered By:

Standard Travel Distances:

West Coast Travel Allowance Claim Distances (Return)					
	Queenstown	Rosebery	Zeehan	Strahan	Tullah
Rosebery	110		58	142	30
Zeehan	78	58		96	86
Strahan	82	142	96		182
Tullah	112	30	86	182	
Burnie	326	222	266	374	192
Wynyard	362	258	314	410	228
Launceston	526	416	474	570	386
Hobart	532	642	604	614	644

For distance to/from Granville Harbour add 70km to Zeehan column.
For distance to/from Trial Harbour add 34km to Zeehan column.