

THE CITY OF
GREATER GEELONG

COUNCIL EXPENSES POLICY

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& Performance

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Introduction

PURPOSE

In accordance with section 40(1) of the Act, the City must reimburse a Councillor or a member of a delegated committee for out-of-pocket expenses where the City is satisfied those expenses:

- (a) are bona fide; and
- (b) have been reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of Councillor or member of a delegated committee; and
- (c) are reasonably necessary for the Councillor or member of a delegated committee to perform that role.

This policy provides Councillors and, where relevant, members of delegated committees guidance as to:

- (1) the out-of-pocket expenses that can be the subject of funding or reimbursement by the City; and
- (2) the out-of-pocket expenses the City will not meet; and
- (3) the process to be followed in applying for reimbursement and in reimbursing out-of-pocket expenses as required under section 41 of the Act; and
- (4) the resources and facilities the City will make available to the Mayor and Councillors to enable them to effectively perform their role as required under section 42 of the Act.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- Councillors; and
- Members of delegated committees.

Definitions

Terms used in this policy	Meaning
Act	Local Government Act 2020
Carer	S41(2)(d) of the Act – a Councillor or delegated committee member who is a carer in a care relationship within the meaning of section 4 of the Carers Recognition Act 2012
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
City	The City of Greater Geelong, led by the CEO
Council	The City of Greater Geelong comprised of elected Councillors, led by the Mayor
Councillor	A person who holds the office of member of Council; for the purposes of this policy, it includes the Mayor, unless indicated to the contrary
Councillor Portal	The City's internal intranet facility for Councillors
MCSU	Mayor and Councillor Support Unit
Officer	An employee of the City
Relationship	Family member, as defined in section 126 of the Act, or partner

Policy

1. OUT-OF-POCKET EXPENSES MET BY THE CITY

The City will either:

- 1.1 fund (by paying a third party provider, for example); or
- 1.2 reimburse a Councillor or member of a delegated committee the out-of-pocket expenses to the extent and limits outlined in **Appendix 1**, provided the City is satisfied that the out-of-pocket expenses:
 - 1.2.1 are bona fide; and
 - 1.2.2 have been declared in writing by the Councillor or the member of the delegated committee as being:
 - 1.2.2.1 reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of Councillor or member of a delegated committee; and
 - 1.2.2.2 reasonably necessary for the Councillor or member of a delegated committee to perform that role; and
 - 1.2.3 are charged to the financial year in which they occurred (expenses cannot be carried forwarded into the next financial year).

2. OUT-OF-POCKET EXPENSES TO BE MET BY COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF A DELEGATED COMMITTEE

The following out-of-pocket expenses are the responsibility of Councillors or members of delegated committees and cannot be the subject of a claim for funding or reimbursement:

- 2.1 The cost of any road, traffic, parking or public transport infringements or penalties incurred by Councillors or members of Delegated Committees, whether or not in the course of performing their role.
- 2.2 Any private travel, regardless of whether it is conjoined with approved interstate or overseas travel in the course of performing their role.
- 2.3 Other than by specific Council resolution, or in accordance with a Council policy, any legal expenses incurred by a Councillor or member of a delegated committee;
- 2.4 Expenses or other support for an attendance at political party events; or
- 2.5 Any other expenses that are not eligible expenses outlined in **Appendix 1**.

3. PROCESS FOR COUNCILLORS TO CLAIM AN EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

- 3.1 All claims must be made online using the approved expense reimbursement form available on the Councillor portal.
- 3.2 A Councillor must submit a properly completed form and declare the claim is in accordance with section 40 of the Act and this policy.
- 3.3 Original tax invoice receipts must be obtained and provided to the MCSU or attached electronically to the online claim for all relevant claims – credit card receipts will not be accepted.
- 3.4 Claims incurred in a financial year must be submitted to the City by 7 July annually. The City encourages claims to be submitted monthly.
- 3.5 The claim will be assessed for compliance with relevant policy by the MCSU team and:
 - 3.5.1 If the claim is approved, reimbursement will be made to the Councillor's nominated bank account by electronic funds transfer; or
 - 3.5.2 If the claim is denied, the Co-ordinator MCSU will advise the Councillor in writing of the reasons.

4. PROCESS FOR MEMBERS OF A DELEGATED COMMITTEE TO CLAIM AN EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

- 4.1 All expense claims for members of delegated committees must be requested through the relevant committee secretariat.
- 4.2 Committee secretariats must follow the City's internal process for reimbursement.
- 4.3 A member of a delegated committee must submit a properly completed form authorised for such use by the City, and declare the claim is in accordance with section 40 of the Act and this policy.
- 4.4 Original tax invoice receipts must be obtained and provided to the relevant committee secretariat or attached electronically to the online claim for all relevant claims – credit card receipts will not be accepted.
- 4.5 Claims incurred in a financial year must be submitted to the City by 7 July annually. The City encourages claims to be submitted monthly.
- 4.6 The claim will be assessed against this Policy by the committee secretariat.
- 4.7 If the claim is approved, reimbursement will be made to the member of the delegated committee's nominated bank account by electronic funds transfer.
- 4.8 If the claim is denied, the committee secretariat will advise the delegated committee member in writing of the reasons.

5. RESOURCES AND FACILITIES AVAILABLE TO COUNCILLORS

- 5.1 The resources and facilities available to the Mayor and the Councillors which are reasonably necessary to enable them to effectively perform their role are listed in **Appendix 2**.
- 5.2 If Councillors choose to purchase the equivalent of any resources or facilities made available to them as outlined in **Appendix 2**, Councillors will not be entitled to claim reimbursement for their own purchase of those same resources and facilities.

Implementation of this Policy

MONITORING AND REPORTING

The City will report details of all reimbursement to the Audit and Risk Committee in compliance with its obligations under section 40(2) at least quarterly.

The report will include:

- expenses incurred by Councillors and delegated committee members for the relevant quarter; and
- reimbursement claims submitted by Councillors and delegated committee members approved by the City for the relevant quarter.

Quarterly expense reports for Councillors will be published on the City's website.

Councillors and delegated committee members expenses will be published by the City in its Annual Report in accordance with section 98(2)(f).

ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE

The Responsible Officer for this policy manages the provision of advice to the organisation regarding this policy.

RECORDS

The City must retain records associated with this policy and its implementation for at least the period shown below.

Record	Retention / Disposal Authority	Retention Period	Location
Council Expense Policy	Director Governance, Strategy and Performance	Retention period – contact Document Management for assistance with the retention periods for different document types	Where will the record be stored – e.g. ReX location

REVIEW

The City will review this policy every four years, prior to Council elections, or as needed from time to time.

References

- 1 Councillor Code of Conduct
- 2 Gifts and Hospitality Policy
- 3 Child Safe Standards Management policy
- 4 *Carers Recognition Act 2012*
- 5 *Local Government Act 2020*
- 6 *Workplace Injury Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2013*

Appendix 1: Eligible Out-of-Pocket Expenses

The following out-of-pocket expenses are eligible for reimbursement pursuant to the requirements of section 40(1)(a), (b) and (c) of the Act.

1. **Professional development – conferences, workshops and training programs** (Councillors only) – this includes the cost of registration or enrolment fees, travel expenses to attend those conferences, workshops and training programs and any other expenses reasonably associated with that attendance, subject to:
 - 1.1. approval by the CEO upon application by the Councillor through the MSCU, or, where the limit in paragraph 1.2 has been exceeded, by the Council at a Council meeting;
 - 1.2. the aggregate expenditure to attend such conferences, workshops and training programs does not exceed \$3,000 per annum. For the purposes of this limit, only the cost of registration or enrolment of the conference, workshop or training program is taken into account; and
 - 1.3. in the case where a Councillor wishes to attend a conference, workshop or training program held either interstate or overseas:
 - 1.3.1. the Councillor has submitted to the Council, for determination at a meeting of the Council, an application for approval accompanied by a suitable business case which sets out:
 - 1.3.1.1. the estimated cost, including all expenses reasonably related to the attendance; and
 - 1.3.1.2. the benefits to the Council, the City and the community of the attendance; and
 - 1.3.2. the Councillor undertakes to table a report at a Council meeting within two months of the attendance that includes:
 - 1.3.2.1. details of the learnings from the conference, workshop or training program and the benefits that the attendance will bring to the municipality; and
 - 1.3.2.2. a summary of the costs of the attendance (including all related expenses).
 - 1.4. From time to time, the CEO may extend opportunities to Councillors to attend professional development opportunities, funded in accordance with the City's working budget. Such opportunities shall not be counted towards a Councillor's \$3,000 annual expenditure limit.
2. **Professional development – Study Support** (Councillors only) – Councillors may be eligible for reimbursement of up to 50% of study fees provided those fees are to attain recognised formal qualifications from a recognised tertiary institution and are specifically related to the role of Councillor. Application is made to the CEO in the agreed form who will determine the Councillor's eligibility for reimbursement for study support and the degree of contribution that the City will make. A Councillor's access to study support will be capped at \$2,000 per annum.
3. **Councillor attendance at meetings, events or functions representing their community or the Council**
 - 3.1. Out-of-pocket expenses for Councillors' attendance at meetings, events or functions where they are representing their community or the Council will be reimbursed by the City:
 - 3.1.1. subject to paragraph 3.2, the aggregate expenditure to attend such meetings, events or functions does not exceed \$3,000 per annum; and
 - 3.1.2. provided that the primary purpose of attendance by a Councillor at the meeting, event or function must be:
 - 3.1.2.1. to officially represent the Council or to perform their role as Councillor; and
 - 3.1.2.2. in compliance with sections 40(1)(b) and (c) of the Act; and
 - 3.1.3. where hospitality is incidental to the attendance, event or function and not the primary purpose for the attendance. Council recognises that the role of Mayor carries the expectation that the incumbent will represent Council at events. Therefore, the \$3000 limit set out above does not

apply to attendances at any activities specific to the role of the Mayor, or any Councillor attending on behalf of the Mayor.

3.2 The aggregate expenditure limit in paragraph 3.1.1 does not apply:

3.2.1 to any activities that are specific to the role of Mayor, including to Councillors attending on behalf of the Mayor (the annual expenditure limit for the activities of the Mayor will be determined in accordance with annual budgets for activities related to the office of the Mayor); or

3.2.2 when attendance is required by a Councillor at Council meetings, events or functions within the municipality (this includes meetings, events and functions with federal government, state government, local government authorities and local government peak bodies).

4. Additional Mayoral expenses

4.1 The City will meet the out-of-pocket expenses of the Mayor (or Deputy Mayor) to attend charity fundraising events. The costs of attending by other Councillor's other than the Mayor (or Deputy Mayor) will be borne by the Councillor's themselves, unless that Councillor has also been invited in addition to the Mayor.

5. Accompanying person (councillors only)

5.1 Subject to paragraph 5.2, the City will meet reasonable expenses incurred for an accompanying person when accompanying a Councillor in the performance of the role of Councillor where the attendance is within Victoria. This includes the accompanying person of a Councillor who is invited to an event or function by the Mayor and/or CEO.

5.2 Reasonable out-of-pocket expenses in paragraph 5.1 are limited to the cost of entry or participation in the event. Costs associated with grooming, special clothing and transportation are not included.

6. Child care and dependent care

6.1 In accordance with sections 41(2)(c) and (d) of the Act, the City will reimburse costs to a Councillor or delegated committee member where:

6.1.1 the provision of child care is reasonably required; or

6.1.2 the provision of care for a dependent is reasonably required; and

6.1.3 it is reasonably required to perform their role.

6.2 The care must be provided by a recognised care provider as defined in the *Carers Recognition Act 2012*. Evidence to support the claim for reimbursement of this out-of-pocket expense must be provided detailing the date and time care was provided and the reason care was needed, for each occasion. Care expenses that may be claimed include but is not limited to:

6.2.1 Child care centre fees;

6.2.2 Home care;

6.2.3 Hourly fees;

6.2.4 Agency booking fees; and

6.2.5 Reasonable travel expenses for transporting the care to the dependent or the dependent to the carer.

6.2.6 Child care centre fees;

6.3 Care related expenses will not be paid by the City or reimbursed to a Councillor or delegated committee member where the care provider:

6.3.1 resides either permanently or temporarily with the Councillor or delegated committee member; or;

6.3.2 has any financial or pecuniary interest with the Councillor or delegated committee member; or

6.3.3 has a familial or like relationship with the Councillor or delegated committee member or their partner.

7. Councillor welfare support

- 7.1 The CEO can approve any Councillor out-of-pocket expenses relating to any particular guidance or coaching that may be required to enhance that person's performance as a Councillor.
- 7.2 A Councillor experiencing difficulties with performing their role, or personal difficulties that may impact on their ability to perform their role, may access free and confidential counselling services through the City's Employee Assistance Program.

8. Travel, accommodation and meals

- 8.1 Eligible out-of-pocket travel expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of Councillor or member of a delegated committee, includes public transport (train, bus, taxi, ride share), air travel and airport transfers, car parking fees, tolls, etc. When travelling interstate or overseas, the City will reimburse the equivalent of a discounted economy class fare unless otherwise determined as necessary or appropriate by Council.
- 8.2 Where overnight accommodation is necessary and reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of Councillor or member of a delegated committee, the amount covered will be limited to 4-star accommodation (or equivalent).
- 8.3 Where long distance travel necessitating an overnight stay is reasonably necessary for the Councillor or member of a delegated committee to perform their role, the City will pay a per diem rate of \$75.00 for meals.

9. Car mileage

Where a Councillor or member of a delegated committee claims the use of a private vehicle to undertake the performance of their role, mileage will be reimbursed at the rate specified by the Commissioner of Taxation from time to time.

10. Working with Children Check

The City will meet the costs of a Councillor or member of a delegated committee undertaking a Working With Children Check upon presentation of a relevant receipt.

11. Insurance

When performing their roles, Councillors and delegated committee members are covered by the following insurance policies:

- 11.1 Personal Accident Insurance;
- 11.2 Public Liability Insurance;
- 11.3 Professional Indemnity Insurance;
- 11.4 Councillors and Officers Liability Insurance; and
- 11.5 Travel Insurance.

The City will meet the insurance policy excess in respect of any claim made against a Councillor or delegated committee member arising from performing their role where any claim is accepted by the City's Insurers, whether defended or not. Insurance is not a reportable expense.

12. WorkCover (Councillors only)

When performing their roles, Councillors are covered by the City's WorkCover insurance policy in accordance with section 46(2)(f) of the Act. The City will meet the insurance policy excess in respect of any claim made by a Councillor arising from performing their role. WorkCover is not a reportable expense.

Appendix 2: Resources and Facilities Available to Councillors

DEFINITIONS

In this part the following definition is relevant:

Terms used in this Appendix 2	Meaning
Council Business	<p>Duties performed by a Councillor as a necessary part of their role, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• attendance at meetings of Council and its committees• attendance at meetings, briefing sessions, workshops, civic and ceremonial events, and 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• duties in relation to constituents concerning Council business

1. RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

1.1 Administrative Support for the Mayor and Councillors

The MCSU team will provide administrative support to the Mayor and Councillors.

1.1.1 Office of the Mayor

As the leader of the Council, the Mayor has additional responsibilities over and above other Councillors.

The City will provide dedicated administrative support to the Mayor reasonably required to enable the Mayor to perform their role.

The City will pay for reasonable expenses incurred in discharging Mayoral responsibilities, in accordance with this Policy. An annual budget will be set and approved by Council for the reasonable expenses of the Mayor.

1.1.2 Mayor and Councillors

The City will provide administrative support to assist the Mayor and Councillors reasonably required to perform their role, including support to:

- Manage and responding to correspondence;
- Manage invitations to attend events and functions;
- Use the Councillor Portal;
- Respond to requests for information or service, in accordance with the relevant organisational standards, protocols and processes;
- Arrange travel and accommodation reservations in accordance with this Policy;
- Access training and development opportunities in accordance with the Council Expenses Policy; and
- Process claims for expense reimbursement in accordance with the Council Expenses Policy.

1.2 Councillor Portal

Access to information and administrative support will be streamlined by the provision of a dedicated Councillor Portal.

The Councillor Portal will provide information, services and support that will assist Councillors to perform their role. Councillor requests for service or information must be made through the Councillor Portal.

The MCSU will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the Councillor Portal and will support, inform and educate Councillors on using the Councillor Portal.

To support Council's commitment to environmental sustainability and our Clever and Creative Vision, Councillors will be provided with IT devices to support mobility and accessibility and to reduce the use of paper.

2. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

Councillors will be provided with the following facilities and equipment to support Councillors to perform their role.

2.1 Councillor Workspace and Meeting Rooms

An appropriate workspace and meeting rooms will be provided for Councillors to perform their role and undertake Council Business.

2.2 Refreshments

Refreshments (excluding alcohol) will be provided in the Councillor workspace for the use of Councillors and their official guests.

Where Council meetings or briefings are conducted between 5pm and 7pm, or where the Mayor is carrying out Council Business between 12pm and 2pm, Councillors in attendance will be provided with a meal (excluding alcohol) prior to any such meeting or briefing.

All Council buildings and events are alcohol free, unless authorised by the CEO.

2.3 Devices, Equipment and Support

Councillors will be provided with the following devices, equipment and support, consistent with the City's standards and policies, for Council Business:

- A laptop computer, or equivalent;
- A mobile phone;
- Mobile internet access and supporting telecommunications to support continuous connectivity;
- Support and consumables for City supplied devices;
- Reasonable stationery;
- Business cards, issued in the current corporate branding of the City; and
- Name badge, issued in the current corporate branding of the City, for use while undertaking Council Business.

The following provisions apply:

- All accounts for City supplied devices will be established and remain on the City's corporate accounts;
- All equipment remains the property of the City and must be returned once a Councillor's term ends;
- Use of City supplied devices and equipment for non-Council Business is not permitted;
- City supplied devices and equipment may only be used by Councillors and Officers;
- ICT devices and equipment not provided by the City will not be supported by the City. Councillors; will be responsible for the purchase costs, consumables and support required for such devices;
- The City will not pay any ongoing service charges for any devices once a Councillor's term ends. The cost of removing any equipment installed at a Councillor's home will be borne by the City, unless otherwise agreed;
- Councillors will be provided with a copy of their telephone and data charges on a regular basis and:

- within 14 days of receiving this information, must identify and inform the MCSU of any costs incurred which do not relate to Council Business; and
 - repay to the City any costs identified as unrelated to Council Business within a further 14 days.
- A Councillor may request network access on each occasion when travelling internationally (international roaming) to enable them to perform their role; requests for international roaming will be approved by the CEO;
- Facilities and equipment, including consumables and replacements, provided by the City in accordance with this Policy are reportable expenses in accordance with the Act.