



COUNCILLOR REMUNERATION, EXPENSES AND REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

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| 2 | GRC 0003 | Amended 18 August 2010 | |
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1. BACKGROUND

Councillor remuneration is determined on an annual basis by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal (“the Tribunal”). The Tribunal determines local government categories based on criteria including population, size of the local government area and services provided. Goondiwindi Regional Council has been classified as a Category 1 local government. Details of the remuneration, expenses and reimbursements payable to Councillors are detailed in this policy.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

The policy complies with the Statement of Principles, set out in the guidelines:

- Reasonable expenses reimbursement to councillors
- Public accountability and transparency
- Public perceptions and community expectations
- No private benefit to be derived
- Equity and participation

1. PAYMENT OF EXPENSES

Expenses will be paid to a councillor through administrative processes approved by a councils’ Chief Executive Officer subject to:

- the limits outlined in this policy and
- council endorsement by resolution.

2. EXPENSE CATEGORIES

2.1. Professional development

A local government will reimburse expenses incurred for:

- mandatory professional development and
- discretionary professional development deemed essential for the councillor's role.

2.2. Travel as required to represent council

A local government will reimburse local and in some cases interstate and overseas travel expenses (e.g. flights, car, accommodation, meals and associated registration fees) deemed necessary to achieve the business of council where:

- a councillor is an official representative of council and
- the activity/event and travel have been endorsed by resolution of council.

Councillors are to travel via the most direct route, using the most economical and efficient mode of transport.

Council will pay for reasonable expenses incurred for overnight accommodation when a councillor is required to stay outside the local governments region.

NOTE: Any fines incurred while travelling in council-owned vehicles or privately owned vehicles when attending to council business, will be the responsibility of the councillor incurring the fine.

2.3. Travel Bookings

All councillor travel approved by council will be booked and paid for by council.

Economy class is to be used where possible although council may approve business class in certain circumstances.

Airline tickets are not transferable and can only be procured for the councillor's travel on council business. They cannot be used to offset other unapproved expenses. (e.g. cost of partner or spouse accompanying the councillor.)

2.4. Travel Transfer Costs

Any travel transfer expenses associated with councillors travelling for council approved business will be reimbursed.

Example: Trains, taxis, buses and ferry fares

Cab charge vouchers may also be used if approved by council where councillors are required to undertake duties relating to the business of council.

2.5. Private Vehicle Usage

Councillors will be provided with a monthly allowance of \$185.00 per month to reimburse Councillors for all costs including fuel, wear and tear, registration and insurance associated with using their own vehicle for Council related activities. It is the responsibility of the Councillors to disclose this arrangement to their insurer.

2.6. Accommodation

All councillor accommodation for council business will be booked and paid for by council. Council will pay for the most economical deal available. Where possible, the minimum standards for councillors accommodation should be three or four star rating.

Where particular accommodation is recommended by conference organisers, council will take advantage of the package deal that is the most economical and convenient to the event.

2.7. Meals

A local government will reimburse costs of meals for a councillor when:

- the councillor incurs the cost personally and
- the meal was not provided:
 - within the registration costs of the approved activity/event
 - during an approved flight.

The following limits apply to the amount councils will reimburse for meals:

- Breakfast \$30.00
- Lunch \$30.00
- Dinner \$45.00

2.8. Incidental Allowance

Up to \$20 per day may be paid by a local government to cover any incidental costs incurred by councillors required to travel, and who are away from home overnight, for official council business.

2.9. Additional Expenses for Mayor Hospitality

Council may reimburse the Mayor up to \$1,000 per annum for hospitality expenses deemed necessary in the conduct of council business.

2.10 Provision of Facilities

All facilities provided to councillors remain the property of council and must be returned to council when a councillor's term expires.

2.11 Private use of council owned facilities

Based on the principle that *no private benefit is to be gained* the facilities provided to councillors by local governments are to be used only for council business unless prior approval has been granted by resolution of council.

The council resolution authorising private use of council owned facilities will set out the terms under which the councillor will reimburse council for the percentage of private use. This would apply when councillors have private use of council owned motor vehicles and / or mobile telecommunication devices.

3 FACILITIES CATEGORIES

3.1 Administrative tools

Administrative tools will be provided to councillors as required to assist councillors in their role. Administrative tools include:

- office space and meeting rooms
- computers
- stationery
- access to photocopiers
- printers
- facsimile machines
- publications
- use of council landline telephones and internet access in council offices.

Secretarial support may also be provided for mayors and councillors.

3.2 Maintenance Costs of Council Owned Equipment

Council will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance and reasonable wear and tear costs of council-owned equipment that is supplied to councillors for official business use.

This includes the replacement of any facilities which fall under council's asset replacement program.

3.3. Uniform

Councillors will be provided with a uniform allowance of \$300.00 for the purposes of purchasing a blazer with an embroidered Council logo.

3.4 Safety Equipment for Councillors

Council will provide councillors with the necessary safety equipment for use on official business. e.g. safety helmet /boots.

3.5 Use of Council Vehicles on Council Business

Councillors will have access to a council vehicle for official business. Use of the vehicle must be booked through the Executive Office Executive Assistant. Usage of the vehicle for representing Council at official events and/or conferences will be given priority. In the event that the council vehicle is not being used by Councillors, it will be able to be used as a pool vehicle by Council employees.

3.6 Telecommunication Needs - Mobile Devices

Council will provide Councillors with a monthly allowance of \$190 per month to reimburse the cost of supplying their own mobile computing device, mobile phone and a reasonable monthly mobile data allowance.

3.7 Insurance Cover

A local government will indemnify or insure councillors in the event of injury sustained while discharging their civic duties.

The local government will pay the excess for injury claims made by a councillor resulting from conducting official council business.

4. PAYMENT OF REMUNERATION

Remuneration will be paid at a base salary rate of two thirds of the remuneration figure determined by the Tribunal for each financial year. The remaining one third remuneration will be paid to Councillors monthly, after certification of the Councillor's attendance at meetings.

4.1. Payment of base rate of remuneration

The base rate of remuneration will be paid monthly to Councillors after the submission of a tax invoice to Council.

4.2. Payment of meeting fee for attendance at meetings

Each local government is responsible for determining how and when it will pay meeting fees to its councillors. Meeting fees are only payable when Councillors attend all monthly meetings unless one of the following exceptions apply. Councillors will still receive the monthly meeting fee in the following situations:

1. Being absent from a meeting to attend to official Council Business (such as attendance at a conference or meeting to represent Council), where prior approval has been obtained from the Mayor;
2. Being absent from a meeting due to illness/accidents;
3. Being absent from a meeting whilst on annual leave;

4. Being absent from a portion or whole of a meeting where prior approval has been granted by the Mayor based on individual circumstances.

The Mayor or Chief Executive Officer will certify the attendance of Councillors at each meeting and note any exemptions for Councillors. Once certified, the payment of the monthly meeting fee will be included in the monthly tax invoice submitted to Council for payment after the meeting.

4.3. Superannuation

Council has established a superannuation scheme for Councillors whereby the Council contributes the minimum prescribed by the Superannuation Guarantee Legislation for those Councillors who wish to participate in the scheme.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that councillors (including mayors) can receive reimbursement of reasonable expenses and be provided with necessary facilities in performance of their role.

4. POLICY OBJECTIVE

The objectives of this policy are to provide clear guidelines for Councillors and staff when dealing with the reimbursement of expenses.

5. NECESSITY TO COMPLY WITH THIS POLICY

If a Councillor fails to comply with this policy, such failure may constitute inappropriate conduct or misconduct pursuant to the *Local Government Act 2009* and will be dealt with accordingly.

6. REVIEW DATE

June 2024