



Councillor Travel and Attendance Policy

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Department: Executive Office

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1. BACKGROUND

As a result of the reform process, there is an increased pressure on elected members to attend an increasing variety of meetings and events across the region. Attendance needs to be balanced against the costs associated with vehicle usage, accommodation etc.

2. POLICY STATEMENT

1. Expense Incurred by Council

1.1. For the purposes of this policy, expenses incurred by Council may include (but are not limited to):

- Claims for mileage reimbursement;
- Accommodation and associated expenses;
- Use of a Council owned vehicle;
- Entry fees to events;
- Public transport costs;
- Training and conference registration costs and
- Hospitality expenses for reimbursement.

2. Elected Members Professional Development Allowance – Policy Not to Apply

- 2.1. This policy does not apply where elected members are attending functions or events where the expenses incurred are paid for from individual Councillor's professional development allowance.

3. Absence of Council Approval

- 3.1. If an elected member is unable to obtain Council approval prior to an event being held, where that approval is required, the Mayor may approve attendance at his discretion.

4. Annual Budget Considerations

- 4.1. When considering attendance at any meeting, function or event, Councillors must have consideration for, and be aware of, the annual budget available for councillor travel and associated expenditure, and must contribute to keeping within the relevant budgetary allocations.

5. Representation of Council by Elected Members

- 5.1. The Mayor (or Deputy Mayor when acting for the Mayor in accordance with this policy) is authorised to represent Council in any public forum or other meeting;
- 5.2. A portfolio holder is authorised to represent Council in a public forum or other meeting where a matter is directly related to the portfolio the elected member represents and where the portfolio holder and the relevant Director have established the need for or benefit of attendance and representation by Council at the public forum or other meeting;
- 5.3. When representing Council, no elected member is to infer or pre-empt a Council decision where that decision is yet to be made by the full Council;
- 5.4. An elected member representing Council as Mayor or portfolio holder in a public forum should take all reasonable steps to clarify if an opinion is a Council view or a personal view;
- 5.5. Any elected member attending a public forum who is not appointed as Council's representative should, if speaking to the forum, indicate that their attendance is not as an official Council representative; and
- 5.6. The Mayor may authorise any elected member to represent Council in accordance with clause 7.5 of this policy.
- 5.7. In all other cases approval for official attendance / Council representation by any elected members at any public functions or events must be approved by Council prior to the event.

6. Training and Conferences

- 6.1. Attendance at any training or conference event must be approved by Council prior to the event;

7. Meeting and Event Attendance

- 7.1. The Mayor is authorised to attend meetings and functions as he deems appropriate and where vehicle usage costs, accommodation and hospitality expenses are anticipated to be incurred;
- 7.2. The Mayor is authorised to attend meetings and functions (other than general training or conferences) where attendance is specifically requested or invited by State or Federal government representatives, or the Local Government Association of Queensland;
- 7.3. In addition to his portfolio responsibilities, the Deputy Mayor is authorised to attend meetings and functions with the approval of the Mayor, and where the Mayor is unable to attend. Any expenses to be incurred other than vehicle usage costs must be approved by Council prior to the event (hospitality costs are to be approved by the Mayor prior to the event);
- 7.4. Portfolio holders and the relevant Director are to organise the attendance at any meetings or events where there is a direct benefit in Council attending, or where attendance by a Council

representative has been requested, and where vehicle usage costs are the only expenses that are likely to be incurred. A portfolio holder may only represent Council in accordance with section 5.2 of this policy where the Director and portfolio holder have agreed to attendance at a meeting or event prior to the meeting or event taking place;

- 7.5. In addition to clause 7.4, the Mayor is authorised to approve attendance and representation of Council at a meeting or function of any organisation by any councillor who has been specifically invited to attend or officiate at a function;
- 7.6. In all other cases, where any expense is to be incurred by Council, attendance at any meeting or event must be approved by Council prior to the event.
- 7.7. Elected members must provide an update to elected members on any meeting or event that has been attended at the next available portfolio workshop.

8. Record of Attendance

- 8.1. All elected members must keep a diary of all events and activities attended where any expense to Council is anticipated, regardless of whether Council approval is required. This must include details of the event, location, date and any mileage claimed;
- 8.2. All acceptances of invitations to attend meetings or functions must be provided to the Executive Assistant – Executive Office and noted on the Councillor Calendar within 24 hours of the acceptance.

9. Private Vehicle Usage

- 9.1. Councillors will be provided with a monthly allowance of \$200.00 per month to reimburse 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.

10. Use of Council Vehicles on Council Business

- 10.1. Due to the nature of the Mayor's obligations and responsibilities, the Mayor has the ability to use a Council vehicle at all times;
- 10.2. Councillors will have access to a Council vehicle for official business. Use of the vehicle must be booked through the Executive Assistant- Executive Office. 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. PURPOSE

This policy has been developed to provide Councillors with clear guidelines in relation to attendance at events other than Council meetings.

4. POLICY OBJECTIVE

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Provide clear guidelines for Councillors in relation to attendance at functions and events;
- To protect the integrity of Councillors

5. NECESSITY TO COMPLY WITH THIS POLICY

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

REVIEW DATE

June 2025