

Council Expenses Policy

Approval Body:	Council
Endorsement Date:	18 August 2020
Council Plan Reference:	NA
Current Version:	1.0 <i>Council policy documents change from time to time and it is recommended that you consult the electronic reference copy on Casey Council's Website to ensure that you have the current version. Alternatively, you may contact Customer Service on 9705 5200.</i>
Compulsory Review Cycle:	4 years
Review Date:	18 August 2024 <i>It is recognised that, from time to time, circumstances may change leading to the need for minor administrative changes to this document. Where an update does not materially alter this document, such a change may be made administratively. Examples include a change to the name of a Council department, a change to the name of a Federal or State Government department, and a minor update to legislation which does not have a material impact. However, any change or update which materially alters this document must be by resolution of Council.</i>
Responsible Department:	Governance
Relevant Legislation:	<i>Local Government Act 2020 Carers Recognition Act 2012 Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 Freedom of Information Act 1982 Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 Equal Opportunity Act 2010 Gender Equity Bill 2020</i>
Relevant Council Documents:	NA
Breaches:	Councillors Code of Conduct
ECM ID:	11226336

1. Purpose and Intent

This policy outlines the resources and applicable reimbursement provided to Councillors and members of delegated committees as reasonable support to perform their duties, as defined by the *Local Government Act 2020*, without disadvantage.

This policy provides guidance on entitlements, the process for claiming and assessing reimbursements as well as the applicable reporting requirements.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Councillors in relation to resources and support provided by the organisation.

Sections 4.3-4.5 of this policy apply to Councillors and members of delegated committees.

The *Recognition and Support - The Victorian Government's Policy Statement on Local Government Mayoral and Councillor Allowances and Resources – April 2008* describes the minimum support to be provided to Councillors and the Mayor.

3. Definitions

Key term	Definition
Carer	meaning as defined in section 4 of the <i>Carers Recognition Act 2012</i> .
Council	means Casey City Council, being a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the <i>Local Government Act 1989</i>
Councillors	means the individuals holding the office of a member of Casey City Council
Council officer	means the Chief Executive Officer and staff of Council appointed by the Chief Executive Officer.
Delegated committee	meaning as defined under section 63 of the <i>Local Government Act 2020</i>
Expenses	costs incurred by Councillors in performing their duties as a Councillor
Formal Study	training and education provided by a recognised training or tertiary education provider that leads to a formal qualification.
Reasonable expenses	as referenced in the <i>Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 (ITAA 1997)</i>

4. Policy

Council is required under section 42 of the Act to provide Councillors with resources necessary to effectively perform in their role. These resources are outlined in clause 4.1 and 4.2 of this policy.

Councillors and members of delegated committees are entitled, under section 40 of the *Local Government Act 2020* (the Act), to reimbursement of expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their duties.

Councillors and members of delegated committees will 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 and
- are reasonably necessary for the councillor and member of a delegated committee to perform this role.

4.1. Councillor resources

The City of Casey is a digital first workplace. To enable Councillors to work digitally, each Councillor is entitled to the following:

- 1 x Laptop
- 1 x mobile phone
- 1 x data allowance
- Basic stationery
- Councillors have access to a dedicated resource room which includes access to computers, printers, personal lockers, and desk space from which to support their duties whilst at the Council Offices.

Resources/Facilities Support for the Mayor

A fully equipped office and reasonable administrative support will be provided to assist the Mayor to undertake the role effectively.

A mayoral vehicle is provided for Council purposes and for the personal use of the Mayor. The Mayor may elect to use their own vehicle and be reimbursed for these bona fide expenses monthly at an annualised rate determined by the CEO. The rate will be determined based on the costs which would be otherwise incurred by supplying a Mayoral vehicle.

Where a Mayoral vehicle has been provided cab charges will not be available.

Communication costs

Council will meet reasonable communication costs incurred on provided equipment (data allowance, phone bills).

Mobile devices and associated data allowances are provided to Councillors to conduct Council business. Personal calls/texts and data usage should be minimised and where significant personal use has occurred, costs must be reimbursed to Council. Private international use of mobile devices should not occur without prior arrangements being made.

Where a Councillor has elected to use their own mobile phone or device, Council will provide reimbursement at rates agreed by the CEO. This will align with the average cost incurred should Council have provided the equipment or connection directly.

Ticketed Functions

Council will pay the costs of ticketed functions which relate to Council business for the Mayor and guest, or a Councillor attending as the Mayor's delegate including their guest.

In addition, Council will pay the cost of ticketed functions in accordance with Council resolutions.

4.2. Councillor Training and Education Allowance

An annual budget is set for each Councillor and Mayor from which Council will pay for or reimburse Councillors for costs incurred for relevant training and education expenses. This provides for attendance at conferences, seminars, study tours, formal study and memberships. Individual budget allocations are not transferable between Councillors or for other purposes.

The training and education should provide a professional development opportunity which will enhance the Councillors' performance and/or provide a direct return on investment to the City of

Casey by the Councillor being exposed to information and insights which will assist in the enhancement of Council's policies, services, facilities or programs.

The total cost for a Councillor per annum is not to exceed the budgeted amount unless Council resolves to fund the gap or the Councillor agrees to fund the gap.

Any unspent funds at the end of the financial year are to be preserved for each Councillor to access, subject to this policy, during the following financial year. Unspent funds may only be rolled over once, which will require that the current year allocation is fully expended, before the prior year roll over amount can be accessed. Only unspent funds from the current year allocation can be rolled over at the end of the financial year.

No training or educational funds budgeted or accumulated prior to an election will be available for a Councillor following his or her re-election.

In circumstances where a membership extends beyond the current term of the Councillor, membership fees will only be funded in proportion to the remainder of the term.

4.3. Reimbursement of Expenses

Expenses incurred in performance of official duties includes, but is 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
- duties in relation to constituents concerning council business.

Travel

For travel by car, reimbursement for mileage expenses will be paid based on the rate set out in the Casey City Council Enterprise Agreement. Evidence must be provided including the date, purpose and approximate distance travelled to support the claim. Distance of travel should reflect the use of a direct route or main arterial roads. Alternatively, cab charge vouchers may be provided in lieu of mileage reimbursement.

Parking and road toll expenses will be reimbursed upon provision of relevant documentation. Infringements incurred when driving or for parking violations will not be reimbursed.

Interstate Travel

Where a conference, seminar, event or study tour requires interstate travel, a maximum of two councillors will be approved for attendance at the same interstate conference, seminar, event or study tour, on a "first come, first served" basis. Any additional requests to attend the same event will require a resolution of Council.

The Office of Council will coordinate booking and payment for Councillor accommodation at the conference hotel or appropriate nearby venue, if the cost is less than those promoted by the conference organiser. Prior approval of the CEO is required for use of a hire car.

Councillors travelling on Council business and required to fly or use any other means of regular public transport will be eligible for economy class travel only.

Councillors are entitled to use a taxi from their home to the airport and return, and from the airport to the conference/event venue and return.

Councillors will be paid a daily travel allowance prior to departure which will cover reasonable travel expenses such as meals (including non-alcoholic drinks), transfers, taxi's and other out of

pocket expenses at a rate determined by the Australia Taxation Office (Taxation Determination, tables 1 to 5).

Councillors are required to prepare a report for Council by the third Council meeting after their return from travel outlining: purpose of conference, seminar, event or study tour, learning outcomes, applicable benefits to Casey, issues for consideration of Council, conclusion and recommendation.

Carer Expenses

Childcare and carer services can be claimed where the care is reasonably required for a councillor or member of a delegated committee to perform their role. This includes care

Payments for provision of child care or carer services will not be made to a person

- who resides with the councillor/delegated committee member or
- has any financial or pecuniary interest with the councillor/delegated committee member;

Informal care will be reimbursed a maximum rate of \$15.00 per hour or rate determined by the Casey City Council Enterprise Agreement, whichever is higher.

In the case of care provided through an approved program or by a registered provider, the amount on the official tax invoice will be paid by Council.

4.4. Reimbursement for Election Campaigns

Reimbursement of Councillor's out-of-pocket expenses will only apply to costs that have been incurred in the performance of normal Council duties and will not be provided for expenses that support or are connected with a candidate's election campaign.

4.5. Claiming Expenses

All expenses are to be claimed within three months of being incurred or upon return from the conference, event or study tour, whichever is the later date. Late claims will only be reimbursed subject to a resolution of Council.

Claims are to be made via the approved form and accompanied by proof of expenditure, including receipts.

All claims should relate to specific events that have previously been scheduled by the Office of the Council. Expenses incurred for the purchase of any alcoholic product will not be paid.

Expense claim forms should be forwarded to the Office of the Council, for approval. Reimbursement will be made via electronic funds transfer in the next payment cycle.

Expenses will not be reimbursed when related to any travel where a daily allowance has been paid through a calculation made under the Taxation Determination table by the Australian Taxation Office.

4.6. Departure of Councillors

The CEO will make arrangements for the collection of any equipment provided within the scope of this policy from a Councillor departing Council. The outcome of this process will be reported to Audit & Risk Committee.

4.7. Responsibilities

Who	What
Manager Governance	Responsible for approval and verification of petty cash claims. Responsible for reporting on expenses incurred and reimbursement claims made to Audit & Risk Committee. Responsible for reporting incurred expense details in Annual Report.
CEO	Responsible for approval and verification of travel and care expense claims

4.8. Breaches

- Councillors Code of Conduct

5. Relevant Forms

Council Expense Claim Form

6. Document History

Date approved	Change Type	Version	Next Review Date
20 August 2020	Administrative amendments to the Version control of the document.	1.1	18 August 2024
18 August 2020	Document initiation	1.0	18 August 2024