

Title	Support and Reimbursement of Expenses to Aldermen
Council Resolution	Item 12 (29 August 2016) as per Council Minutes
Responsible Directorate	Corporate Governance
Due for Review	Four (4) years from Council Resolution Date
Strategic Plan Reference	<p>Leading our community</p> <p>4.1 <i>Govern in an open and responsible manner in the best interests of the community.</i></p> <p>4.2 <i>Manage our resources to achieve community outcomes.</i></p>
ECM	Council policy

PURPOSE

This policy sets out the circumstances in which Council will:

- (a) reimburse Aldermen for expenses incurred in the course of carrying out the duties of their office; and
- (b) provide facilities, materials, devices, and administrative support to Aldermen to assist them to carry out the duties of their office.

SCOPE

This policy applies only to support and reimbursements provided to Aldermen.

It does not apply to other employees or senior management of Council.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Subclause 1(1) (Expenses) of Schedule 5 (Office of Councillors) of the *Local Government Act 1993* (**Schedule**) requires that Council must adopt a policy in respect of payment of expenses incurred by councillors in carrying out the duties of office.

Subclause 1(2) of the Schedule provides that a councillor is entitled to be reimbursed for reasonable expenses in accordance with the policy adopted under subclause (1) in relation to any “prescribed expenses” and “any other expenses the council determines appropriate”.

Clause 2 of the Schedule provides that a council may decide to provide support services, facilities and equipment on a loan to a councillor on any conditions it considers appropriate.

Regulation 43 of the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2015* sets out the prescribed expenses for the purpose of the Schedule, being:

- (a) Telephone rental, telephone calls and 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.

Acts	<i>Local Government Act 1993</i>
Regulations	<i>Local Government (General) Regulations 2015</i>
Australian/International Standards	Not applicable

DEFINITIONS

Alderman or Aldermen	Includes the Mayor
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POLICY STATEMENT

1.0 Travelling

1.0.1. The Mayor will have unrestricted use of a vehicle supplied by the Council that is commensurate with the position.

1.0.2. Council will reimburse an Aldermen (including an Alderman acting as the Mayor's Delegate) for vehicle travelling expenses up to a maximum of 80km for each trip:

- (i) while attending Council meetings, committee meetings, or any other meeting or function that is arranged by, or is attended as a representative of, Council;
- (ii) while responding to a citizen's request or problem;
- (iii) in response to a council staff member's request to meet;
- (iv) in relation to verifying any details relating to an item on the agenda of a Council or committee meeting that the Alderman is required to attend; and
- (v) visiting the council offices for the purpose of carrying out their duties as an Alderman.

Re-imburement under this clause will be limited to \$2,000 (excluding GST if the claim includes a tax invoice where Council can claim back the GST) per financial year.

1.0.3. Council will reimburse an Alderman for vehicle travelling expenses for trips greater than 80km if the Alderman is representing Council as the Mayor's delegate or if the purpose of the travel has been approved by Council or the General Manager under his or her delegated authority to approve conference, seminar or training attendance.

1.0.4. Travelling expenses for the use of a private vehicle will be reimbursed at Tasmanian Public Service rates.

1.0.5. All claims for reimbursement of vehicle travelling expenses must be made on the "Alderman's travel claim form" used for that purpose and must contain sufficient details of each trip to justify reimbursement under this policy. Minimum details required are:

- Date of travel;
- Origin;
- Destination; and
- Purpose (being a purpose identified clauses 1.0.2(i) to (v) of this policy))

1.0.6. If the claim relates to the use of a private vehicle, the distance travelled, the vehicle engine capacity and the number of cylinders of the vehicle must also be provided.

1.0.7. Receipts must accompany any claim for vehicle travelling expenses where public transport (buses, taxis etc) transport is used and must be referenced to the details that are provided in accordance with the requirements of clause 1.0.5 of this policy.

1.0.8. Council will not reimburse an Alderman for the cost of a hire car, except with the prior approval of Council.

1.0.9. Council will not reimburse an Alderman for petrol, oil or any other vehicle related expense, except when the expenditure has been incurred while hiring a vehicle that has been approved by Council.

1.0.10. Council will not reimburse an Alderman for travelling in relation to unsolicited visits to citizens that have been undertaken for the self-promotion of the Alderman (canvassing, door knocking etc).

1.0.11. Council will not reimburse any claims that are more than 3 months old.

1.1 Child Care

- 1.1.1. Council will reimburse an Alderman for child care costs that are incurred to enable an Alderman to carry out the duties of office.
- 1.1.2. Receipts of payments made to the child carer must accompany claims for reimbursement of child care expenses together with details of the date(s) and start and end times that the child care took place.
- 1.1.3. Reimbursement will not be provided where the child carer is a member of the Alderman's immediate family.

1.2 Telephone/Mobile Phones

- 1.2.1. Council will reimburse Aldermen for full installation costs of one communication telephone line.
- 1.2.2. Council will reimburse aldermen for Council related telephone and mobile phone services expenses.
- 1.2.3. Council will consider reimbursing bundled packages costs if it can be demonstrated that the proportion or cost being claimed has been expended in the performance of their duties as an Alderman.
- 1.2.4. A vehicle "hands free" kit can be purchased and installed in an Alderman's private vehicle. Where possible, the "hands free" kit will be "bluetooth" enabled. The cost of the kit, and installation, can be claimed from the Alderman's "telecommunications reimbursement" allocation. If the Alderman ceases to be an Alderman, the hands free kit is to be purchased from Council by the Alderman at its written down value, which is to be determined by pro-rata writing off over 3 years.
- 1.2.5. Computer equipment, internet access and stationery will be provided to Aldermen in accordance with the provisions of section 3.0 of this policy.
- 1.2.6. With the exception of the Mayor, the maximum total amount that can be claimed by an Alderman in any financial year in relation to items 1.2.1 to 1.2.5 is \$2,000 (excluding GST if the claim includes a tax invoice where Council can claim back the GST. Where an Alderman is not in office for a full financial year the maximum amount will be calculated on a pro-rata basis.
- 1.2.7. Council will provide the Mayor with a mobile telephone and will fit a "hands free" kit in the Mayor's vehicle. Where possible, the hands free kit will be "bluetooth" enabled.
- 1.2.8. The cost of accessories, repairs or maintenance associated with an Alderman's mobile phone will be the responsibility of the Alderman and will not be reimbursed by Council.
- 1.2.9. Council will not reimburse an Alderman for telephone calls that have been made for self promotion or other private purposes.
- 1.2.10. Claims for reimbursement of telephone and mobile phone expenses must be made on the appropriate claim form and be supported by sufficient source documentation to justify reimbursement under this policy. Minimum details to be provided are a copy of the account "summary" page for which the Alderman is seeking reimbursement, together with a declaration stating that the amount claimed has been expended in the performance of their duties as an Alderman.
- 1.2.11. Aldermen should submit a claim for reimbursement each month. Claims must be made using the "Reimbursement of Alderman Telecommunications Expenses" form. Council will not reimburse any claims that are more than 3 months old.

1.3 Local Functions

- 1.3.1 Council will reimburse Aldermen for costs incurred attending local functions as a Council representative.

- 1.3.2 All claims for reimbursement for local functions should be made on the appropriate Council form and be supported by sufficient source documentation to justify reimbursement under this policy. The documentation is to include receipts or invoices verifying the expenditure. Council will not reimburse any claims that are more than 3 months old.
- 1.3.3 Council will not reimburse an Alderman for expenditure incurred while at a local function for any additional costs for accompanying persons, except costs that are necessary to provide an Alderman with a disability equal access to the function.

1.4 Secretarial Support & Postage

- 1.4.1 Council will provide Aldermen with secretarial support and postage to reply to issues raised by individual citizens or will reimburse Aldermen for postage expenses incurred in replying to issues raised by individual citizens.
- 1.4.2 Council will provide Aldermen with secretarial support to assist with their duties as Council's representative on working groups, steering groups, special committees, or external committees.
- 1.4.3 Council will not provide secretarial support, address lists, postage or reimbursement of postage expenses for unsolicited correspondence to citizens.
- 1.4.4 Requests for secretarial support which, in the opinion of the General Manager, are excessive, may be refused.
- 1.4.5 Council will provide Aldermen with up to 500 business cards per year of the same quality and design provided to Council's corporate management team.
- 1.4.6 Council will provide Aldermen with up to two reams per annum of "Aldermen's room" letterhead stationery.
- 1.4.7 If the amount of postage reimbursement being claimed by an Alderman exceeds \$10 for any one month, details of the items posted must be provided including:
- The number of items;
 - The purpose of the correspondence; and
 - If an item is not a standard letter, details of the contents of the package and the cost to post the item.
- 1.4.8 Council will not reimburse any claims that are more than 3 months old.

2.0 Aldermanic Training

- 2.0.1 It is the joint responsibility of the Mayor and General Manager to arrange for newly elected Aldermen to be provided with such familiarisation and induction training as may be necessary in each individual case.
- 2.0.2 In providing training opportunities for Aldermen, the Local Government Association of Tasmania and other Tasmanian based training agencies should be accessed in the first place. If a particular training and development need cannot be met through these means, efforts should be made to provide training in house. Only if this is not possible should interstate options be explored and taken up.
- 2.0.3 An Alderman should present a report to the Council on each course, conference or seminar that he or she has attended within 30 days of attendance at the course, conference or seminar.
- 2.0.4 All Aldermen will be provided with details of the Annual Conference and other meetings of the Local Government Association of Tasmania.
- 2.0.5 It is the responsibility of the General Manager to suggest to Aldermen topics for training and development which arise out of the strategic plan or upon issues of concern to Local Government as they arise from time to time.

- 2.0.6 Details of all conferences or training sessions organised by non-Local Government organisations but of relevance to Aldermen will be provided to Aldermen.
- 2.0.7 Should an Alderman wish to attend a conference or training course where the total cost, including travel and expenses, is likely to exceed \$500, plus reasonable costs up to \$500 where there are special needs for any Alderman such as disability or injury, application is to be made in writing to the General Manager for approval.
- 2.0.8 Should an Alderman wish to attend a conference or training course where the total cost, including travel and expenses, will be less than \$500, plus reasonable costs up to \$500 where there are special needs for any Alderman such as disability or injury, details will be discussed with the General Manager who will have delegated authority to consider the request and approve attendance.
- 2.0.9 If the General Manager refuses to grant permission to attend a conference or training course, an Alderman may submit an application in writing for consideration to the Mayor. If the Mayor refuses to grant permission, the Aldermen may submit an application in writing for consideration at a meeting of the Council.
- 2.0.10 The General Manager is to inform the Mayor in writing of decision by him to provide Council funds for an Alderman to attend a training course outlined above.
- 2.0.11 Council will not reimburse or sponsor an Alderman for his or her participation in courses that will result in the award of a secondary or tertiary qualification.
- 2.0.12 Council will reimburse an Alderman for course fees, travel, accommodation and other expenses associated with attendance at a training course, conference or seminar approved by the Mayor or the General Manager in accordance with the provisions of this policy. Council will not reimburse any claims that are more than 3 months old.
- 2.0.13 Council will not reimburse an Alderman for expenditure incurred while at a training course, conference, or seminar for any additional costs for accompanying persons except costs that are necessary to provide an Alderman with a disability equal access to the function, or the cost of one accompanying person's attendance at an official conference dinner.
- 2.0.14 Re-imburement under this clause will be limited to \$2,000 (excluding GST if the claim includes a tax invoice where Council can claim back the GST) per financial year.
- 2.0.15 If an alderman has reached their \$2,000 limit for the year and the general manager wishes to approve the training, the General Manager will submit a report for consideration at a meeting of Council.

3.0 Computing and Mobile Communication Facilities for Aldermen

- 3.0.1 Council will purchase mobile computing technology for Aldermen. Council will consider bundling options if economic to do so. This purchase will be funded from the Aldermen's "telecommunications allowance" budget. The equipment will remain the property of the Alderman.
- 3.0.2 Council will arrange for Council's email and calendar to be installed on the device and synchronised with Council's email system.
- 3.0.3 If the device is lost or stolen, Council will remotely clear all data off the device. Alderman must advise the General Manager as soon as possible if the device is lost or stolen.
- 3.0.4 Council will provide basic "getting started" training and support for use in relation to accessing Council data and email.
- 3.0.5 Council will not support synchronisation software (such as iTunes) or purchases from app stores. This is the responsibility of aldermen through their own personal plans.
- 3.0.6 Council will offer Aldermen the opportunity to put devices on a shared data plan (and SIM card) – the monthly cost will be charged against the Alderman's telecommunications allowance if taken up.

Any data costs in excess of the shared data plan may be costed to the Alderman's telecommunications allowance.

- 3.0.7 This policy will be reviewed and amended as required to ensure Council adopts those technology trends necessary for its efficient operation.
- 3.0.8 All equipment purchased through the telecommunications allowance remains the property of the Alderman.
- 3.0.9 Consumable items such as stationery, printer cartridges etc may be obtained by contacting Council's ICT section who can assist through an online order facility from Council's current provider using Council's account details. Any purchases will be charged to the Alderman's telecommunications allowance account. Alternatively, reimbursement for purchases can be claimed from the Alderman's telecommunications allowance allocation.
- 3.0.10 Aldermen will be required to adhere to Policy 34-2: Aldermen's Information Communications Technology Usage Policy.
- 3.0.11 Council will not allow or be responsible for any global roaming on any mobile device.

4.0 Memberships

- 4.0.1 Council will not reimburse an Alderman for membership of any club, association or professional body.

5.0 Dispute Resolution

- 5.0.1 If, in the opinion of the General Manager, an Alderman's claim or request is unreasonable or does not meet the requirements of this policy, and agreement can not be reached with the Alderman, the matter will be referred to the Mayor who may refer the matter to Council for decision.

BACKGROUND

Councillors naturally incur expenses in the course of carrying out the duties and functions of their office.

The *Local Government Act 1993* provides that Councillors are entitled to be reimbursed for their reasonable expenses in carrying out those duties and functions, that Council adopts a policy in respect of payment of expenses incurred by councillors in carrying out the duties of office, and Council may provide other support services, facilities and equipment to Councillors as it considers appropriate.

As part of its duty to practice responsible and accountable government and to ensure that public funds are not misused, Council must ensure that there are clear guidelines setting out the expenses for which Aldermen are able to be reimbursed and the support which it will provide in accordance with its obligations under the *Local Government Act 1993* and associated regulations.