



Brighton Council

POLICY NAME: COUNCILLOR EXPENSES
& ENTITLEMENTS

POLICY NO: 2.2

ADOPTED BY COUNCIL: 16/6/15

POLICY:

In accordance with the *Local Government Act 1993* this Policy seeks to:-

- Identify Councillor entitlements; and
- Clarify the approval process for reimbursement of expenses incurred by Councillors while undertaking their duties.

SCOPE:

To establish the entitlement for a Councillor to have expenditure incurred as a result of being a Councillor either reimbursed or paid by Council.

POLICY:

The following policy framework identifies the allowable expenses, support and resources available to all Councillors:-

Resources/Facilities

- Administrative Support for Councillors
- Computer for Councillors - desktop or laptop and ipad
- Stationery
- Access to fax/copier

Reimbursement

- Travel - including reimbursement of public transport costs
- Telephone - re-imburement of relevant call costs
- Internet
- Child Care

1. EXPENSES

1.1 Child Care

Council will reimburse the cost of child care expenses necessarily incurred by Councillors under the following circumstances; to attend:-

- Attendance at Council, Committee and Special Council Meetings;
- To attend meetings arising as a result of a Councillor being appointed by Council to an internal or external body or committee except where the body or committee reimburses relevant child care expenses incurred by the Councillor.
- Upon inspections or business within the Council area, provided such inspections or business are undertaken in compliance with resolutions of the Council.
- To attend to business of the Council, outside the Council area, in compliance with a resolution of Council.
- Attend any seminar/conference in compliance with a resolution or policy of Council.
- Upon inspections or business as arranged by the General Manager or Departmental Managers

Reimbursement is however, subject to the following conditions:-

- Claims will be paid upon presentation of a receipt from a licensed child care provider as well as evidence of entitlement or non-entitlement to the Commonwealth Government Child Care Benefit Scheme. Any entitlement is to be off-set against the hourly rate charged by the registered Child Care provider.
- At the General Manager's discretion, child care may be paid at an hourly rate of (for example \$20/hour) when no licensed provider is available (evenings for example).
- Childcare costs are not eligible for reimbursement if paid for child caring by a person who normally or regularly lives with the councillor or is a member of the Councillor's immediate family.
- Claims for reimbursement of child care expenses must be submitted within 3 months of the date from which they are incurred; and
- For the purposes of this policy, a child shall be defined as up to, but not including, 16 years of age.

1.2 Travel

Council will reimburse Councillors, upon request, for travel expenses incurred in representing Council as an official delegate or representative as follows:-

- For travel by car, an expense allowance be paid, based on the rate set by the Australian Tax Office – Reimbursement of Vehicle Expenses;
- For travel by Public Transport, the fare will be reimbursed upon production of receipt/ticket;
- Travel must be undertaken by the shortest route possible;
- Claims for reimbursement of travel must be submitted within 3 months of the date from which they are incurred.

Claims are payable for:

- Upon inspections or business within the Council area, provided such inspections or business are undertaken in compliance with resolutions of the Council.
- To attend to business of the Council, outside the Council area, in compliance with a resolution of Council.
- Attend any seminar/conference in compliance with a resolution or policy of Council.
- Upon inspections or business as arranged by the General Manager or Departmental Managers

2. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

This policy acknowledges the obligation on Councillors to be properly informed on all matters pertaining to Council services and the issues of importance to the community.

To assist in this education process, the policy encourages Councillors to avail themselves of opportunities to undertake appropriate professional development (conferences, seminars, workshops and training sessions) that may be of benefit to the individual Councillor and Council as a whole.

Councillors undertaking professional development shall have expenses for transport, accommodation, registration fees, meals and refreshments relating to their attendance paid by Council within the parameters of the Council Budget.

2.1 As Of Right Approval

Attendances are approved as a matter of right for professional development purposes within Australia, subject to the cost falling within the annual budgeted amount allocated for each Councillor.

2.2 Council Approval

Attendances for all other professional development events outside of Australia, are subject to Council approval, at an Ordinary Meeting of Council, based upon the following:-

- The Councillor wishing to attend such an event submitting a business case to Council for attendance – with such to include the benefits to be gained from attendance; total costs and Council funds required.

2.3 Reporting Requirements

Attendance at any professional development event held outside of Tasmania will be subject of a report to Council. The report is to be written, tabled at a Council meeting within 3 months of the professional development event and may be a joint report if more than one Councillor attended.

Such report should include:-

- Details of course topic, content, location, date and duration;
- Relevance of Conference/Workshop/Training Session to Council's business and Councillor's personal development requirements;
- Total costs covering course, course material, travel, accommodation and any other expenses for the Councillor: and
- Benefits from attendance.

2.4 Accommodation/Meals/Refreshments

- Accommodation shall be organised at the Hotel used for the Conference/ Workshop/Training Session OR where a package of Hotels is provided, at any one of those Hotels having regard to cost and standard OR if both of the above are not applicable or available at a Hotel/ Motel close to the Conference venue at a similar rate and standard.
- Reasonable expenses for meals and refreshments will be reimbursed for attending Conferences/Professional Development Workshops/Training Sessions where overnight accommodation is required, upon production of receipts.

3. FACILITIES/EQUIPMENT

This Policy acknowledges that the demands made upon a Councillor's time can be significant and that Council business can therefore be conducted more efficiently if access is provided to necessary facilities. In respect to the facilities/equipment provided:-

- The facilities/equipment provided is for Councillor use and should not be used for electioneering purposes.
- Councillors must ensure the integrity and configuration of equipment provided is maintained at all times.

- Minimal non-Council use of equipment such as computers, that has no direct cost for Council, is allowable.
- Councillors must ensure the protection and safe keeping of all equipment issued.
- All equipment and stationery issued shall remain the property of Brighton Council.

3.1 Communication

Councillors will be provided with a personal computer and printer with -

- All connection fees will be met by Council;
- Rental fees and all Council business call charges may be reimbursed by Council;
- The cost of consumables associated with the computer shall be met by Council; and
- Councillors must meet all costs of electricity.

3.2 Stationery

Councillors will be provided with:-

- Business Cards; and
- Paper;
- Facsimile rolls;
- Printer cartridges

All other stationery requirements shall be met from the Councillor Allowance.

4. OTHER EXPENDITURE

4.1 Expenditure General

Any expenditure not specified within this Policy as expenditure for which a Councillor is entitled to be reimbursed or paid, shall be the responsibility of the Councillor. Such expenditure is to be considered expenses for which the Councillor Allowance applies.

4.2 Allowance - Taxation

Given that the Councillor Allowance is treated by the Australian Taxation Office as assessable income in the individual's hands, Councillors are encouraged to consider whether this other expenditure is deductible for taxation purposes as an expense necessarily and solely incurred in the carrying out of their Council duties.

Prevailing taxation laws and substantiation requirements should be recognised and considered when maintaining records for deduction purposes.

Note: *Councillors should seek their own professional advice in respect to financial/taxation matters.*