

COUNCIL POLICY

Councillor reimbursement of expenses

DOCUMENT UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Policy number 076	Status Adopted	Approved by Council
Date approved 4 June 2019	Next review date June 2022	
Directorate Corporate	Department Corporate	Internal / External External

Contents

1. Purpose	4
2. Scope	4
3. Policy details	4
3.1 Official Council Duties	4
3.2 Communication Equipment	4
3.3 Child and Family Care Expenses	5
3.4 Professional Development, Conferences and Functions	6
3.4.1 Authorisation and expenses	6
3.4.2 Accompanying partners/guests	6
3.4.3 Reporting requirements	6
3.4.4 Accommodation/meals/refreshments	6
3.5 Transport	7
3.5.1 Mayoral and councillor vehicles	7
3.5.2 Use of private vehicles	7
3.5.3 Car parking fees	7
3.5.4 Public transport tickets and E-Tags	7
3.5.5 Use of taxis	8
3.6 Accommodation and Incidentals	8
3.7 Travel Expenses	8
3.7.1 Reconciliation of travel expenses	8
3.7.2 Receipts	8
3.7.3 Other expenses	8
3.7.4 Travel expense reporting requirements	8
3.8 Exclusions	8
4. Roles and responsibilities	9
5. Breaches	9
6. Human Rights Charter compatibility	9
7. Supporting documents	10
8. Definitions and abbreviations	10
9. Approval	11

REVISION RECORD

Date	Version	Revision description
02/06/2009	0.01	Draft Version
01/09/2009	1.00	Adopted Version 1
06/08/2013	2.00	Version2 Reviewed and revised after Council general election 27/10/2012 Tabled and adopted with amendments at Ordinary Council Meeting M10 06/08/13
03/09/2013	2.01	Adopted Version 2.01 Includes amendments made by Council on 06/08/2013 Signed and sealed by councillors 03/09/13
05/06/2018	3.0	Adopted Version 3.0 Included amendments to mayor and councillor vehicles and reporting requirements Signed and sealed by council 05/06/2018
4/6/2019	4.0	Adopted Version 4.0 Typographical amendments. Amended requirement to review individual councillor expenses from quarterly to annually in line with legislation.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the parameters for the reimbursement of necessary out of pocket expenses incurred while performing duties as a Councillor as provided for by section 75 of the *Local Government Act 1989*.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all councillors. It does not apply to members of Council committees.

3. Policy details

3.1 Official Council Duties

In this policy, official Council duties are defined as:

- Meetings of the Council or its committees.
- Meetings, briefing sessions and civic or ceremonial functions convened by the Mayor or the Council.
- Meetings of community groups, organisations and statutory authorities to which a councillor has been appointed as a Council representative.
- A meeting, function or other official role as a representative of the Mayor or the Council.
- Meetings, inspections or events attended by a councillor in an official capacity.
- Meetings with Council officers on any matter relating to the Council, including committee responsibilities or the general duties of a councillor.
- Conferences, training sessions and functions in capacity as councillor.
- Meetings where the councillor is a regional or state representative.
- Meetings, conferences and functions with other councillors, councils, officers and relevant stakeholder groups outside the municipality.

3.2 Communication Equipment

Each councillor will be provided with the following home/workplace facilities:

- Mobile computer device with standard ASC applications and data allowance^{1 & 2}
- @alpineshire.vic.gov.au e-mail address
- Mobile phone (a non-smartphone).³

Personal use of a mobile device is allowed subject to all additional and personal purchases being made through the individual councillor's personal iTunes account.

The costs of any consumables used by a councillor (stationery, printer cartridges etc) are to be paid for by the individual councillor.

¹ Data allowance should be utilised for conducting Council related duties only.

² Council will pay an allowance of \$30/month if councillors have a home Wi-Fi internet connection and mobile devices are connected to it.

³ Council will pay an allowance of \$60/month if councillors use their personal mobile phone instead of a Council provided mobile phone.

3.3 Child and Family Care Expenses

The Council will reimburse the cost of child and/or family care expenses necessarily incurred by councillors for their immediate family when performing official Council duties as outlined in section 6.1.

Reimbursement of child and/or family care expenses is subject to the following conditions:

1. The maximum amount per month that an individual councillor will be reimbursed for child and/or family care expenses is \$100.
2. The amount referred to in condition 1 will be calculated on a pro-rata basis in the event of a term of a councillor only coinciding with a part of a month (eg. date of election to the end of the month).
3. Each child and/or family care expense claimed shall be substantiated by a receipt from the caregiver showing the dates and times care was provided and accompanied by a written statement from the councillor explaining why the care was needed on each occasion.
4. Child and/or family care costs are not eligible for reimbursement if the care is provided by a person who is immediate family (eg. partner, mother/father, grandparent, sister/brother or sister in law/brother in law) or normally or regularly resides with the councillor.
5. Claims for reimbursement of child and/or family care expenses must be submitted within three months of the date from which they are incurred.

Reimbursement for the care of adults may be provided in accordance with the above where the councillor is the carer of an adult and the Council has determined that special circumstances exists.

3.4 Professional Development, Conferences and Functions

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.

3.4.1 Authorisation and expenses

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 this Policy.

Prior to any booking or confirmation the following authorisation must be obtained:

	Within Victoria	Interstate	International
Approval required by	Mayor and CEO	Mayor and CEO	Resolution at Council meeting

Any councillor wishing to attend an international event must submit a business case to Council for approval. The business case must include the benefits to be gained from attendance; total costs and Council funds required.

Expenditure per individual councillor will be reported in Council's annual report, as required by the *Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014*.

3.4.2 Accompanying partners/guests

Attendance at seminars, conferences and civic functions with a spouse/partner is subject to prior approval, where all additional costs incurred for the attendance of a spouse/partner will be at the expense of the individual councillor (unless otherwise authorised by the Mayor and CEO).

3.4.3 Reporting requirements

Attendance at any professional development event will be conditional upon the councillor communicating key findings to other councillors on their return.

3.4.4 Accommodation/meals/refreshments

Accommodation will be organised at:

- the hotel used for the conference/workshop/training session; OR
- where a package of hotels is provided, any one of those hotels having regard to cost and standard; OR
- if both of the above are not applicable or available, a hotel/motel close to the conference/workshop/training venue at a similar rate and standard.

Councillors wishing to make alternative accommodation arrangements shall incur/bear all costs over and above the costs that would have been incurred by Council.

Councillors attending conferences/professional development workshops/training sessions, where overnight accommodation is required, will be reimbursed for expenses for meals and refreshments.

Reimbursement of accommodation, meals and refreshments expenses is subject to the following conditions:

1. Receipts must be provided.
2. Reimbursement will be as set out in the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997* and the ATO Taxation Ruling TR2004/6 Income tax: substantiation exception for reasonable travel and overtime meal allowance expenses, and Table 2 of any subsequent ATO Taxation Determination for the financial year.
3. Reimbursement will not be provided for meals and refreshments where meals are included as part of conferences/professional development workshops/training session package.

3.5 Transport

3.5.1 Mayoral and councillor vehicles

Council will provide the Mayor with a fully maintained vehicle to the standard specified by the Council at the time and in accordance with Council Policy No. 48 Motor Vehicle Policy as updated from time to time. The Mayor will have access to the vehicle for official use and full private use during the Mayoral term.

The Deputy Mayor and councillors will have access to the fleet vehicles located at the Bright office, which may be accessed via the fleet booking system (and booked by individual councillors). Fleet vehicles can only be used for legitimate Council business purposes and when the travel is in excess of 50kms return.

3.5.2 Use of private vehicles

Councillors must utilise allocated fleet vehicles for Council business in the first instance before utilising private vehicles.

Costs relating to private vehicle use will be reimbursed where there are no vehicles available in the fleet booking system at the time of use, and it is a necessary Council expense incurred while performing duties as a councillor. The maximum allowance travel rate will be as set by the ATO.

3.5.3 Car parking fees

Car parking fees incurred while conducting Council business will be reimbursed on the basis of original receipts and relevant details regarding the purpose, date and time of the meeting or function.

Claims must be made using the Councillors' Expenses Claim Form.

3.5.4 Public transport tickets and E-Tags

Councillors will be reimbursed costs associated with the purchase of public transport tickets or E-Tag type tolls expended in conducting Council business.

Reimbursement will be on the basis of original receipts and relevant details regarding the purpose, date and time of the meeting or function.

Claims must be made using the Councillors' Expenses Claim Form.

3.5.5 Use of taxis

Councillors will be reimbursed costs associated with taxi services where it is not possible to use public transport or a Council vehicle for travel required in conducting Council business. Travel of a private nature will not be reimbursed.

Reimbursement will be on the basis of original receipts and relevant details regarding the purpose, date and time of the meeting or function.

Claims must be made using the Councillors' Expenses Claim Form.

3.6 Accommodation and Incidentals

When travelling on Council business throughout Victoria, councillors may require accommodation. Councillors may stay in reasonable accommodation appropriate to the area travelled to and the nature of the visit.

Reimbursement of accommodation, meals and refreshments will be as set out in the *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997* and the ATO Taxation Ruling TR2004/6 Income tax: substantiation exception for reasonable travel and overtime meal allowance expenses, and Table 2 of any subsequent ATO Taxation Determination for the financial year.

3.7 Travel Expenses

3.7.1 Reconciliation of travel expenses

Councillors must submit any claims for reimbursement within 30 days of return.

All claims must be supported by tax invoices and receipts.

3.7.2 Receipts

Although receipts cannot always be obtained, every effort should be made to do so in order that claims for reimbursement can be assessed.

A statutory declaration by a councillor is required where receipts have been lost or were not issued.

3.7.3 Other expenses

All other expenses incurred as a result of attending conferences/professional development workshops/training sessions shall be met from the councillor allowance.

3.7.4 Travel expense reporting requirements

The *Local Government (General) Regulations 2015* require the maintenance of a travel register containing details of overseas or interstate travel undertaken in an official capacity by councillors or any member of Council staff in the previous 12 months. The register must include names, the date, destination, purpose and total cost of the overseas or interstate travel.

3.8 Exclusions

Any expenses incurred by an individual councillor resulting from the breach of road, traffic parking or other regulations or laws will not be reimbursed by Council.

4. Roles and responsibilities

The following positions are responsible for approving, implementing, complying with, monitoring, evaluating, reviewing and providing advice on the policy and procedures:

Responsibility	Role / Position
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Councillors• CEO
Compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mayor• CEO
Development/Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Director Corporate• Manager Corporate• Governance Officer
Interpretation/Advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CEO• Director Corporate• Manager Corporate

5. Breaches

Failure to comply with Council policy, supporting procedures or guidelines, will be subject to investigation which may lead to disciplinary action.

6. Human Rights Charter compatibility

This policy has been assessed as being compatible with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 [Vic]*.

7. Supporting documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other relevant, Council policies and procedures, as well as relevant legislative requirements.

Related Legislation

- Local Government Act 1989 [Vic]
- Local Government (General) Regulations 2015 [Vic]
- Local Government (Planning and Reporting) Regulations 2014 [Vic]

Related Guidelines, Operational Directives or Policies

- Councillor Code of Conduct Policy No.080
- Digital Information Security Policy No.111
- Fraud and Corruption Control Policy No.091
- Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy No.065
- Mobile Phone Policy No.066
- Motor Vehicle Policy No.048
- Procurement Policy No.089
- Protected Disclosure Policy No.092

8. Definitions and abbreviations

Term	Meaning
Act	<i>Local Government Act 1989</i>
ASC	Alpine Shire Council
ATO	Australian Taxation Office
Carer	Means a councillor in receipt of a Commonwealth Carers Allowance
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
Child	Up to, but not including, 16 years of age
Disability	Must meet the definition as used by the Commonwealth Government on the 'recognised disabilities list'

9. Approval

THE COMMON SEAL OF THE
ALPINE SHIRE COUNCIL was
hereunto affixed this 4th day of
June 2019 in the
presence of:



.....
COUNCILLOR

.....
COUNCILLOR

.....
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER