

Policy No. 24: Councillor Expense Entitlements, Attendance at Conferences and Training

POLICY MANUAL

Policy No. 24

Councillor Expense Entitlements, Attendance at Conferences and Training

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to provide guidelines for the assistance and support provided to Councillors in undertaking their role.

Department Author

Governance and Community Wellbeing
Jonathan Harmey, General Manager

Council Meeting Date Resolution Number

10 February 2026
022/2026

Next Review Date

February 2030

POLICY

1. Definitions

Councillors

All elected members of the Meander Valley Council including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

2. Objective

To ensure Councillors are adequately reimbursed on a consistent basis for expenses incurred in carrying out their duties including professional development and training.

3. Scope

This Policy applies to all Councillors.

4. Policy

4.1 Allowances

The allowances for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors are as outlined in Schedule 4 of the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2025* and section 340A of the *Local Government Act 1993*. Allowances are paid monthly, by direct deposit, into the Councillors' nominated bank account, paid in arrears.

If the Deputy Mayor is appointed to act in the role of Mayor for a period of four consecutive weeks or more, the Deputy Mayor is entitled to receive, for that period, the allowance payable to the Mayor.

4.2 Travelling and Carer Expenses

Councillors are entitled to reimbursement of travelling expenses and care of any child or dependent while carrying out the duties of office in the following situations:

- a. to attend Council Meetings, Council Workshops, meetings of any Committee of the Council and any other meeting where the Councillor has been delegated or authorised by Council to attend.
- b. upon inspections or business within the Council area undertaken in compliance with a Council decision or Council Meeting Agenda Item.
- c. to attend to business of the Council, outside the Council area, in compliance with a Council decision or Council Meeting Agenda Item.
- d. attendance at the Annual Conference of the Local Government Association of Tasmania or any meeting of a regional organisation or committee to which Council sends a delegate.
- e. attend any conference, seminar and training in compliance with the relevant section of this Policy.
- f. travel must be taken in the shortest route practical.
- g. the travelling allowance for Councillors shall be paid in accordance with the Australian Taxation Office cents per kilometre rate set for each financial year.
- h. reimbursement for Councillors, will be paid in line with the Council's procurement processes.
- i. the Council is to make a fully maintained Mayoral vehicle available to the Mayor, when representing Council at meetings, functions and other activities. The Mayoral vehicle will be managed in accordance with the Council's vehicle policy as approved by the General Manager, with the classification being a private user. The allocated vehicle is for use by the Mayor when attending Council's related activities and may also be used by the Mayor for private purposes.
- j. carer expense claims need to provide sufficient evidence of the cost, net of any reimbursements received or due.

4.3 Telephones

- a. the Council is to make a telephone available to the Mayor, all telephone expenses of the telephone will be met by Council.
- b. the Council will reimburse Councillors for the cost of telephone (including rentals, data and calls) used for Council business, up to a maximum \$500 per 12 months. Claims need to include evidence of the costs incurred and sufficient information to show that it relates to the carrying out of the duties of office.

4.4 Communication Equipment

For each term of office, the Council will provide each Councillor with:

- a. a council mobile telephone, tablet, computer up to the value of \$3,500; or capital reimbursement up to \$3,500, for purchase of a mobile telephone, tablet, a fax/printer/scanner and a computer (loaded with an appropriate operating system and office suite); to assist them in performing their duties.

- b. a capital reimbursement will be paid upon evidence of the purchase of the equipment.
- c. the Council will reimburse Councillors for the cost of home internet, used for Council business, up to a maximum \$500 per 12 months. Claims need to provide evidence of the costs incurred and sufficient information to show that it relates to the carrying out of the duties of office.
- d. the Council will meet the costs of one local newspaper subscription per Councillor, upon request.

Should a Councillor resign or the term of office be terminated prior to the normal four year term, then all communication equipment will be returned to the Council or a pro-rata refund of all communication equipment purchase costs will be payable by that Councillor (this shall be in the form of a cash refund or an equivalent deduction from any allowance payable to the Councillor as outlined in the *Local Government (General) Regulations 2025*).

4.5 Secretarial Assistance

The Council will provide a reasonable level of word processing assistance to enable elected members to carry out their official duties. The General Manager will have discretion in determining the extent of assistance which can be provided.

4.6 Stationery

The Council, shall upon request, provide Councillors with standard stationery held or obtained generally for the organisation's requirements. Stationery may include, but not necessarily limited to paper, business cards, writing implements, diaries, writing pads, facsimile paper, envelopes and the like.

Requests for stationery will be by the way of the completion of a requisition presented to the General Manager.

4.7 Conferences, Seminars and Training

The Council recognises the obligation on Councillors to be properly informed on matters relating to governance and Council decisions. The following guidelines apply to conference, seminars and training:

- a. the Council will provide an annual budget for conference, seminars and training expenses for Councillors.
- b. the Council and General Manager are to ensure that there is equity between Councillors in relation to attendance at conferences, seminars and training courses.
- c. the Council is to ensure that conferences, seminars and training courses are relevant to the current activities of the Council and the training and professional development needs of Councillors.
- d. Councillors attending a conference must submit a written report to the General Manager within four weeks of returning from the conference. This report should outline the conference program and benefits gained.
- e. Councillors attending a training course or seminar shall provide any course notes or handouts to the General Manager for distribution to other Councillors.

- f. Councillors who wish to attend a conference, seminar or training program must lodge a Training Registration Form with the General Manager. Details of the conference, seminar or training program must be attached to the Training Registration Form.
- g. attendance, accommodation, airfares and reasonable meal expenses will be arranged by the Council or paid by reimbursement to Councillors.
- h. where the total cost of registration, travel and expenses is likely to exceed \$2,500, the General Manager will refer the application to Council for consideration and approval. Where the total cost of registration, travel and expenses is less than \$2,500, then the General Manager will have delegated authority to consider and approve the application.
- i. if the General Manager refuses an application, a Councillor may submit an application in writing for consideration at a meeting of Council.
- j. the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are Council's designated delegates to the Local Government Association of Tasmania Annual Conference. Other Councillors may attend by using the Councillor Training Registration Form.

4.8 Legal Expenses

In accordance with section 341 of the *Local Government Act 1993*, the Council will meet the cost of legal expenses for a Councillor or employee, by direct engagement or reimbursement, which are for defense proceedings. This is on the basis of an act or omission that was undertaken by the Councillor or employee, in good faith, and in the performance of their functions under the *Local Government Act 1993* (or other related Acts). In the event of a reimbursement, the Councillor or employee must notify the General Manager (or Mayor in the event of the General Manager) of their intention to seek legal expenses under this Policy, before incurring the legal expenses.

The Council will not cover insurance or legal expenses that are associated with:

- a. any process under the Local Government Code of Conduct framework
- b. any matter intrinsically personal to the Councillor or employee, that a Councillor or employee would initiate personally against another person

4.9 Other Expenditure

Any expenditure not specified above as expenditure for which a Councillor is entitled to be reimbursed or paid by the Council shall be the responsibility of the Councillor, except where Council resolves otherwise.

4.10 General Provisions

The following general provisions apply to this Policy wherever appropriate to determine the amount of out-of-pocket expenses that will be reimbursed to Councillors:

- a. Councillors will not be reimbursed for time spent representing the community; this is taken into account in legislated Councillor Allowances.
- b. Councillors will be provided with name badges.
- c. where travel is by flight the standard form of travel will be economy class, unless agreed with the Council prior to booking.
- d. travelling expenses, carer expenses and out-of-pocket expenses will, unless there are exceptional circumstances, be paid in arrears.

- e. the Council will not reimburse claims later than 12 months after the claim has been incurred by the Councillor.
- f. given that the Councillor Allowance is expected to be treated by the Australian Taxation Office as assessable income in the individual's hands, Councillors are encouraged to consider whether 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.
- g. when claiming out of pocket expenses, copies of invoices, receipts or supporting documentation must be provided to support claims.
- h. claims will be submitted to the Office of the General Manager:
ogm@mvc.tas.gov.au

5. Legislation and Related Standards

Local Government Act 1993

Local Government (General) Regulations 2015

6. Responsibility

Responsibility for the operation of this Policy rests with the General Manager.