

Category:	Governance	
Adoption:	Council	Date: 20 June 2017
Review period:	4 years	
Responsible Manager:	Principal Governance Officer	
CEO Signature	Adopted by Council at the Ordinary Meeting held on 20 June 2019	
Date	20 June 2017	

Purpose / Objective:

This policy is a specific requirement of Sections 75A and 75B (1) of the Local Government Act 1989. The purpose of the policy is to make clear the entitlements, resource support and expenses reimbursement provided to the Councillors and Mayor of Mount Alexander Shire Council.

Scope of this Policy:

This policy applies to:

- the Councillors and Mayor of Mount Alexander Shire Council.
- members of committees of Mount Alexander Shire Council.

Background / reasons for Policy:

The Local Government Act 1989 (the Act) in Sections 74 and 75 and Recognition and Support – the Victorian Government’s Policy Statement on Local Government Mayoral and Councillor Allowances and Resources – April 2008 requires all councils to provide a minimum toolkit for expenses, support and resources to councillors and the mayor.

Definitions

Council	means Mount Alexander Shire Council, being a body corporate constituted as a municipal Council under the Local Government Act 1989
Councillors	means the individuals holding the office of a member of Mount Alexander Shire Council
Council officer	means the Chief Executive Officer and staff of Council appointed by the Chief Executive Officer.
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.

Policy content:

Councillor Resources / Facilities and Support

In order to perform duties and functions as a Councillor the following resources, facilities and support are provided:

Communication Equipment

- A laptop with wireless internet
- A mobile phone
- A multifunction device (printer / fax / copier) on request

Communication costs

Council will meet the reasonable purchase, installation, maintenance and service, connection, subscription, rental and usage (data / calls / text) costs for all Council provided communications equipment.

All Councillors will be allocated a suitable usage plan for the mobile phone and laptop.

Stationery

Councillors will be provided with business cards, names badges and stationery to support them in their role.

Councillors' Lounge

A room is provided in the Civic Centre for use by Councillors in the conduct of their duties of office. This includes two work areas and a meeting table, with access to a printer, landline and key Council documents.

Each Councillor has an in-tray for them to collect correspondence and other documents or resources.

Access Card

Each Councillor is provided with an access card which provides:

- Access to the Councillors' Lounge and Council Chamber in the Civic Centre (7.00 am to 8.00 pm, Monday to Friday))
- Access to all of the Civic Centre and Town Hall buildings during business hours (8.30 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday).

Online Presence

Councillors will be provided with a page on Council's website containing:

- A photo of the Councillor
- Contact details
- Ward map
- Council committee memberships

Resources / Facilities and Support for the Mayor

Mayoral Vehicle

A fully maintained vehicle will be provided to the Mayor to assist carrying out duties during the Mayoral term.

The Mayor has the option of not taking a Council provided vehicle and rather reimbursed for all travel costs at the Australian Tax Office approved reimbursement rate.

Office Space

A fully equipped office will be provided to the Mayor including communications equipment and meeting facilities.

Administrative Support

An appropriate level of administrative support will be provided to assist the Mayor in undertaking the role effectively.

The level of support will be determined by the CEO in consultation with the Mayor.

Mayoral and Councillor Allowances

Council will pay an allowance to the Mayor and Councillors as required under the Local Government Act 1989 and as set by Council. Any personal taxation implications from the receipt of allowances are the responsibility of individual Councillors.

Training and Education

Councillors are entitled to be reimbursed for expenses incurred, or have Council pay directly where attending conferences, seminars, events and study tours relevant to their role or providing a significant professional development opportunity.

Councillors should discuss the benefit of attending such events with the Mayor, including details of the event, the benefit to Council of attendance and the cost of attendance, prior to requesting Council officers to make a booking on their behalf.

Where Councillors are paid a fee for presenting at a conference or other event the fee will be paid into Council's general revenue.

Councillors are responsible for any expenditure related to their partner attending a conference, training or other events with them, except in such cases where Council has invited a Councillor's partner to attend an event with the Councillor.

Formal Study

Where relevant to the role of a Councillor, and subject to annual budget limits, Council will reimburse Councillors for costs incurred for formal study. Councillors will be reimbursed the tuition fees after producing evidence to show successful completion of each unit

By resolution of Council, Council may elect to pay upfront the eligible study costs of a Councillor, meeting the requirements of this clause, but such payment is required to be refunded back to Council in the event the Councillor does not successfully complete the unit.

Travel arrangements

Councillors may use their personal vehicle for Council business and be reimbursed.

For travel outside the Shire, Councillors may book a Council pool vehicle, or will be provided with a Myki card for travelling on public transport, for travel associated with carrying out Council business.

Where domestic travel is undertaken and a Council vehicle is not available for use a Councillor may claim the cost of public transport or the use of their private vehicle to the event.

Reasonable costs associated with attendance at conferences, training or other events, such as food and beverage costs may be claimed.

Interstate / Overseas Travel

Where the 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.

For overseas travel, Councillors are required to prepare a report for Council by the second Council meeting after their return from travel outlining: purpose of conference, seminar, event or study tour, learning outcomes, applicable benefits to Mount Alexander Shire and issues for consideration of Council.

Council officers will arrange all bookings and payment relating to interstate and overseas travel.

Councillors must ensure that:

- Any private travel associated with Council related travel is identified and paid for by the Councillor.
- They have any required passports and visas.

Meals (including drinks consumed with a meal) and daily expenses for incidentals will be reimbursed at a maximum rate established under annual Australian Taxation Office determinations for reasonable travel expenses subject to the production of receipts. Incidentals includes such expenses as laundry; taxi fares, other than those incurred in travelling to and from the airport, and other reasonable out of pocket expenses related to the business of the conference.

Councillors with a Disability

Council will provide reasonable additional civic support, facilities and equipment for any Councillor with a disability, to enable that Councillor to freely perform their duties.

Reimbursement of Expenses

All expenses are to be claimed within six months of being incurred or return from the conference, event or study tour, whichever is the later date.

All expenses need to be accompanied by documentation including the relevant expense claim form and any proof of expenditure, including receipts. Where invoices and tax receipts are not available Councillors are required to submit a Statutory Declaration outlining the expense and the amount paid.

All expenses claim forms are to be forwarded to the CEO.

The submitted claims will be assessed and payment authorised where claims are deemed reasonable expenses incurred in the conduct of councillor or mayoral business.

The following types of expenses incurred by Councillors may be claimed for reimbursement:

- Travel
- Conference, training or function
- Family care (includes child care)

Travel expenses

Travel expenses can be reimbursed where incurred representing Council as an official delegate or representative at meetings and functions, or in attending Council or Committee meetings, functions or formal briefings of the entire Council called by the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer, or where a Councillor is invited by an external organisation to attend a meeting or function and that event is also attended by a Council Officer in his/her official capacity.

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 the airport to the conference/event venue and return.

For travel by car, an expense allowance will be paid based on the rate set out by the Australian Tax Office. Where a car is used for interstate travel instead of a flight, up to a maximum level equivalent to the economy class return air fare.

Family Care

Childcare and care of frail aged and/or people with a disability can be claimed where the expense is incurred due to attendance at Council meetings, civic functions, committee meetings, functions or formal briefings and when representing Council on Council business as an official delegate or representative and:

- The child or person resides in the Councillor's household and the Councillor is the primary carer or;
- Where the Councillor is in receipt of a Commonwealth Carers Allowance or;
- Where the Councillor's partner is the primary carer and he/she is accompanying the Councillor to a civic function

The care must not be provided by someone who normally lives at the Councillor's residence.

Informal care will be reimbursed at a rate determined by the CEO, following consideration of a reasonable market rate.

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.

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. All Councillors are required to surrender their equipment one week prior to a general local government election.

In the case of a by election or countback, the retiring Councillor must return equipment no later than one week prior to the day of the by election or countback.

Resources include all confidential electronic or hardcopy material obtained in a person's capacity as a Councillor.

Committee members - reimbursement of expenses

Mount Alexander Shire Council is not in the practice of reimbursing committee members (of Council committees) for expenses incurred in their role as committee member.

Reimbursement may only occur under direction of the CEO.

Reimbursement Exclusions

Any expense arising from a breach of road, traffic, parking or other regulations or laws, including Council local laws, will not be reimbursed or funded in any way by Council.

Claims for expenses other than those included in this policy will not be reimbursed, except in exceptional circumstances approved by the Chief Executive Officer.

Related Policies and Documents

- Gift and Hospitality Policy
- Councillor Reimbursement of Expenses Claim Form

Relevant Legislation:

- Local Government Act 1989
- Recognition and Support – the Victorian Government's Policy Statement on Local Government Mayoral and Councillor Allowances and Resources - April 2008
- Information Guide – Mayor and Councillor Entitlements – November 2008