

## 1. Policy intent

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that councillors (including mayors) can receive reimbursement of reasonable expenses and be provided with necessary facilities in performance of their role. The policy clarifies the extent of remuneration, expense reimbursement and the provision of facilities, vehicles and resources to Councillors.

## 2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to elected Council members.

2.2 Out of scope:

- a. Entertainment and hospitality expenses (refer to Entertainment and Hospitality Policy)
- b. Travel and accommodation expenses (refer to Travel and Accommodation policy).

## 3. Background / supporting information

3.1 The level of remuneration for Councillors is established annually by the Local Government Remuneration and Discipline Tribunal in accordance with Section 244 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

3.2 A local government is required to develop, adopt or amend an expenses reimbursement policy in an open meeting in accordance with Section 250 and 252 of the *Local Government Regulation 2012*.

## 4. Policy statement

### 4.1 Remuneration

4.1.1 In accordance with Section 177 of the *Local Government Act 2009*, the functions of the Local Government Remuneration Commission (the Remuneration Commission) are:

- a. to establish the categories of local governments; and
- b. to decide the category to which each local government belongs; and
- c. to decide the maximum amount of remuneration payable to the councillors in each of the categories; and
- d. another function related to the remuneration of councillors directed, in writing, by the Minister.

4.1.2 The Remuneration Commission must annually decide and publish the maximum amount of remuneration payable from 1 July of the following year to a Mayor, Deputy Mayor or a Councillor of a local government in each category.

4.1.3 The Remuneration Commission's decision may include, or may separately provide for, remuneration for the duties a Councillor may be required to perform if the Councillor is appointed to a local government committee.

4.1.4 The remuneration fixed by the Remuneration Commission is all inclusive and no additional remuneration is payable for sick leave, annual leave, or any other benefits otherwise applicable to employees other than superannuation. The remuneration can not

include any amount for expenses to be paid or facilities to be provided to a Councillor under its expenses reimbursement policy.

## 4.2 Superannuation and tax

4.2.1 TRC is an eligible local governing body and has elected by unanimous resolution, under s 446-5 of Schedule 1 to the Taxation Administration Act 1953, that the remuneration of members of the body be subject to withholding tax under Part 2-5 (about Pay As You Go withholding). This empowers the withholding of councillors' income tax, and also means that councillors are taken to be "employees" for the purposes of the Superannuation Guarantee Charge (Administration) Act 1992. Council is also therefore compelled to make the minimum mandatory employer contributions.

4.2.2 This resolution is not affected by change in membership.

## 4.3 Expenses

### 4.3.1 Statement of principles

This policy complies with the Local Government Principles as details in the Local Government Act 2009.

### 4.3.2 Payment of Expenses

1. Reimbursement of expenses will be paid to a councillor subject to:
  - a. The limits outlined in this and associated policies Council endorsement by resolution and / or
  - b. Approval by the CEO of properly made Councillor Expenses Reimbursement Vouchers with supporting documentation such as receipts and log book extracts.
2. The Councillor Expenses Reimbursement Voucher must be submitted within 30 days of incurring the expense.

## 4.4 Travel and Accommodation

For information on travel and accommodation provisions for Councillors (including use of private vehicles) , refer to the Travel and Accommodation policy.

### 4.4.1 Vehicles

1. Councillors may have access to a council vehicle for official business. Fuel for a Council-owned vehicle used for official Council business, will be provided or paid for by Council.
2. Other private use of Council owned vehicles is only permitted if prior approval has been granted by resolution of Council. Council will, in its resolution authorise private use and set out the terms for the councillor to reimburse council for the private use.
3. "Private use" in this context does not include incidental and occasional private use if the private destination is on a direct path between the Council business destinations.

### 4.4.2 Use of Councillor's private vehicle

1. Councillor's private vehicle usage may be reimbursed by council if the:
  - a. travel within the region is required to conduct normal business
  - b. travel outside the region has been endorsed by council resolution

- c. claim for mileage is substantiated with log book details; and
  - d. total travel claim does not exceed the cost of the same travel using economy flights plus the cost of taxi transfers.
2. Reimbursement rates for business kilometres as published by the Australian Tax Office will be applied.
3. Claims for private use as per the Fringe Benefits Tax requirements will not be reimbursed (e.g. travel between home and office).
4. Private vehicle insurance is at the risk of the user for both private and business use.
5. Any fines incurred while travelling in council-owned vehicles or privately owned vehicles when attending to council business, will be the responsibility of the councillor incurring the fine.

#### 4.4.3 Policy on vehicle use if accumulating over 12,600 km per year

Reimbursement of private vehicle use is only cost effective under a threshold of 12,600 km (at time of writing).

#### 4.4.4 Car parking amenities

Council will provide councillors with:

1. car parking at the local government office premises and / or
2. reimbursement of parking costs paid by councillors while attending to official council business.

### 4.5 Hospitality and entertainment costs

Please refer to Entertainment and Hospitality Policy.

### 4.6 Provision of facilities

All facilities provided to councillors remain the property of Council and must be returned to Council when a councillor's term expires.

### 4.7 Private use of council owned facilities

- 4.2.1 Based on the principle that *no private benefit is to be gained*, the facilities provided to councillors are to be used only for Council business unless prior approval has been granted by resolution of Council.
- 4.7.3 The Council resolution authorising private use of Council owned facilities will set out the terms under which the councillor will reimburse Council for the percentage of private use.

### 4.8 Administrative tools

- 4.2.1 Administrative tools will be provided to councillors as required to assist councillors in their role.
- 4.8.4 Administrative tools include:
  - a. office space and meeting rooms
  - b. stationery including business cards

- c. phones including chargers and case
  - d. laptop including charger and case
  - e. access to photocopiers and printers
  - f. name badge
  - g. safety equipment (if required)
  - h. publications
  - i. use of council landline telephones and internet access in Council offices.
- 4.8.5 Secretarial support may also be provided for the Mayor and Councillors, within the existing staff structure, unless by Council resolution.
- 4.8.6 Each Councillor will be provided with a single standard laptop that can be used both at the Council work location and at the Councillor's home office. A docking station, keyboard, mouse and computer screen along with access to a networked printer will be provided at the Councillor's Council work location.
- 4.8.7 Each laptop will be loaded with the Microsoft Office Suite and email software. Internet access will be provided at the Council work location, and via mobile phone "hot spotting" when undertaking council business at other locations.
- 4.8.8 All Council supplied electronic devices are provided under Council's policies relating to computer use, security and internet and email usage. Supplied devices will be supported and maintained through Council's IT Request Tracker system within standard business hours.
- 4.8.9 Where required, training in the use of the equipment/software that has been provided by Council will be available.
- 4.8.10 Council will be responsible for the ongoing maintenance and reasonable wear and tear costs of council-owned equipment that is supplied to councillors for official business use.

## 4.9 Insurance cover

- 4.9.1 Council will indemnify or insure councillors in the event of injury sustained while discharging their civic duties.
- 4.9.2 Council will pay the excess for injury claims made by a councillor resulting from conducting official council business.

## 4.10 Professional development

Where Council resolves that all Councillors are to attend training courses or workshops for skills development related to a Councillor's role, Council will reimburse the total costs of the course. In addition, where a Councillor identifies a need to attend a conference, workshop or training to improve skills relevant to their role as a Councillor, other than mandatory training as above, expenses will be reimbursed if within the Councillors allocated budget. Any expenditure beyond the individual councillors budget requires a Council resolution on a case by case basis.

## 4.11 Use of credit cards FOR Councillor expenses and reimbursement

Credit cards issued in the name of Tablelands Regional Council may only be used to pay for Councillor expenses and resources expenditure where:

- 4.11.1 the expenditure has been approved under this or associated policies or authorised by the Chief Executive officer within specified limits; and

4.11.2 payment by purchase order is not appropriate or possible.

## 5. Responsibility

Council is responsible for the adoption, amendment and repeal of the Policy and the Chief Executive Officer is responsible for the development and amendment of any associated procedures and guidelines relevant to the Policy.

## 6. Review

It is the responsibility of the General Manager Organisational Services to monitor the adequacy of this policy and recommend appropriate changes. This policy will be formally reviewed every three years or as required by Council.

This Policy is to remain in force until otherwise amended/repealed by resolution of Council.

This Policy repeals the former Tablelands Regional Council Policy titled "Councillor Remuneration, Expenses Reimbursement and Resources Policy" adopted 8 September 2016.

**JUSTIN COMMONS**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**