

Expenses Reimbursement and Provision of Facilities for Councillors

Version Information

Policy Objective

The objective of this policy is to ensure the payment of legitimate and reasonable expenses incurred by councillors for discharging their duties and responsibilities as councillors; and to provide facilities to councillors for those purposes. This is to ensure that councillors are not financially disadvantaged as a result of carrying out their official duties. The policy is also aimed at reflecting the community's expectations about the extent of a councillor's duties and responsibilities and its expectations about the resources and reimbursement provided to councillors from the public purse. This Policy does not deal with the provision of remuneration, nor does it cover non-business-related expenses or facilities incurred by other people, including a councillor's partner.

The policy objective is aligned with the local government principles in section 4, *Local Government Act 2009* (the Act).

Provision of Facilities

Councillors are entitled to the following facilities for discharging their duties and responsibilities as councillors:

1. A dedicated office for each councillor's exclusive use.
2. Access to corporate meeting rooms
3. Shared administrative support
4. Computer and communications equipment (generally consistent with that provided to the Executive Leadership Team). Limited private use of computer equipment and telephones is permitted providing that the use is lawful and that the use is appropriate (would not bring Council or the councillor into disrepute, e.g. pornography, gambling or operating a business). Private use of Council's landline and mobile phones (calls and texts) will be reimbursed by each councillor by means of salary deduction (\$11.50 per fortnight).
5. Stationery and printing. This excludes use for personal promotion.
6. Newspapers and journals (shared access).
7. Personal protective equipment.
8. Insurance, including: public liability, professional indemnity, personal accident and travel insurance (domestic and international).
9. Newsletters. Council may publish divisional newsletters up to four times per year. None will be published in the period of three months prior to a local government election.
10. Parking space for a motor-vehicle.
11. Salary sacrificing into superannuation, subject to Australian Taxation Office rulings and any other relevant policy.
12. Salary sacrificing to lease a motor-vehicle.
13. Vehicle: Councillors may select one of the following options:

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- a. The option of a fully maintained motor-vehicle* (owned or leased by Council) for official business use, with access to private use of that vehicle. A councillor using a Council supplied vehicle for private purposes, will make a contribution to Council to reimburse it for the private use of that vehicle. The private use component is valued at 10% of the annual cost of the vehicle to Council, inclusive of Fringe Benefits Tax, and will be deducted from the councillor's post-tax salary on a fortnightly basis. Councillors choosing this option will select a vehicle from the range offered by Council; or
- b. The option of reimbursement for the business-related mileage of a privately owned or privately leased vehicle, based upon 90% of the total distance travelled (from odometer readings based on the first three months usage and then averaged out over the remainder of the four-year term), using the ATO rate applicable at the time. Payments will be made through payroll fortnightly, following the initial three months data gathering period.

(* A Council supplied vehicle will be limited to 4 cylinder, petrol or diesel, and must meet all criteria required for use by Council employees, e.g. safety standards and whole of life costs. The vehicle will be chosen from the approved list for managers. The list is based upon a purchase price range set for managers at executive level. The vehicle type must be consistent with community expectations.

A Council vehicle approved for private use may be driven by any driver with a full class C licence, with the prior approval of the councillor. Members of the councillor's immediate family who are currently provisional drivers on 'P' plates may drive the vehicle, however the vehicle must not be driven by anyone on 'L' plates. Councillors will be expected to comply with Council's guidelines relating to motor-vehicle use to the extent that is relevant to their roles, e.g. safety requirements and restrictions on the use of a fuel card.)

No councillor may use any Council-provided facility for any purpose in connection with an election campaign, including the use of Council equipment to contribute to social media sites containing election material. A Council provided motor-vehicle shall not have any election-related material applied to it. Adhesive temporary signs that do not damage paintwork, may be applied to indicate the name of the councillor, his/her division, the council name and the councillor's photograph. No other information, including slogans, is permitted on the vehicle.

These facilities remain the property of Council and must be looked after and, where appropriate, returned at the conclusion of the electoral term.

Reimbursement of Expenses

Councillors are entitled to reimbursement of expenses legitimately incurred for discharging their duties and responsibilities as councillors:

1. Parking charges relating to attendance at meetings and other functions. This includes paid parking related to travel to and from the islands.
2. Travel by air, other public transport, hire car or taxi. Air travel must be booked through Council's Travel Coordinator. Taxi vouchers, Go Cards and ferry/barge vouchers are available upon request.
 - a. Domestic air travel will be in economy class. International air travel may be in premium economy or business class where offered.
 - b. The CEO or delegate may approve a councillor's request to extend a business trip to include a private component subject to all the costs relating to the private component being paid for by the councillor.

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- c. International travel requires the prior approval of Council.
 - d. The CEO or delegate may approve reimbursement of business-related expenses (within budget) incurred by a councillor while on a privately-funded overseas trip. This is limited to costs incurred for travel, accommodation and the cost of attending a conference (if applicable). If a claim relates to a conference or other training, the councillor's discretionary training budget shall be used.
3. Travel to/from the islands. This does not include the cost of ferry/barge transport for a councillor who lives on one of the islands and who is travelling between his/her home and the mainland.
 4. Accommodation associated with attending training, conferences, etc (must be booked through the Travel Coordinator).
 5. Meals associated with overnight stays or full-day activities where a meal is not provided.
 6. Professional development. 'Core training' and 'industry-specific training' are listed in Attachment A.
 - a. Councillors undertaking 'core and industry-specific training' will have the costs met by Council. Training that does not fall within either list will have the costs met by Council, using the councillor's discretionary training budget until that fund is exhausted.
 - b. The discretionary training budget for each councillor is set at \$8,000 per term. The budget includes payment for costs associated with the training, e.g. travel and accommodation. The training must be approved in advance and the content must be relevant to the duties of a councillor.
 - c. Where the training involves attendance at a conference, the councillor must present a report to a Council meeting within three months of their attendance.
 7. Hospitality.
 - a. This includes councillors attending events and functions as a representative of Council. This also includes councillor attendance at events where they have been invited solely or mainly due to their role as a councillor, albeit not in an official capacity. Examples include: fundraising events (for charity), festivals, celebratory dinners (for community groups/members) and other community events. This does not include any event, whether fundraising or not, intended to promote a candidate for election to any level of government;
 - b. Reasonable costs incurred will be reimbursed. Minor expenditure to pay for raffle tickets is acceptable, however any prizes won will be returned to be redrawn or will become the property of Council. Requests from the community for donations of gifts for raffle prizes, etc will not be refunded. Applicants can use Council's small grants programme for such requests.
 - c. A shared pool of funds, set each year in the budget, will be used for reimbursing councillors' hospitality expenses. Other examples of expenses that are not covered include: personal costs associated with being away from home, e.g. kennel fees, in-flight movies, hotel mini bar; and the payment of infringements.
 8. The Mayor is entitled to a corporate credit card because of the larger number of transactions due to the role. The same rules apply to its use as are applied to employees with a corporate credit card.

9. A councillor travelling on business internationally may apply to be issued with a corporate credit card for the period of travel. These cards may only be used to pay for expenses that can be claimed under this policy.
10. Tax receipts must be provided for each claim. If a tax receipt is lost, a statutory declaration will be required prior to reimbursement.
11. No expenses related to any election campaign (not just local government) may be claimed.
12. For reimbursement of expenses relating to motor-vehicles, see the 'Provision of Facilities' section above.

Authorisation of the provision of facilities and the reimbursement of expenses to any councillor is by the CEO or his/her delegate.

The CEO or delegate may use discretion to determine a request that falls outside of this policy, making any decision in accordance with the policy objective.

Related Policies/Legislation/Documents

- *Local Government Act 2009*
- *Local Government Regulation 2012*
- *Redland City Council Procurement Manual*
- *Income Tax Assessment Act 1997*
- *Taxation Rulings issued by the Australian Taxation Office*
- *Redland City Council Procedure PR-2812-001-002 Driver Responsibilities for Use, Care and Maintenance of Council's Passenger Fleet Vehicles*
- *Redland City Council Guideline GL-3043-003 Fuel Card Use*

Reporting Requirements

- Disclosure of publicly funded overseas travel – Annual Report
- Domestic and international travel – Council reports and Annual Report (international only)
- Resolutions made during the year authorising the payment or provision of remuneration, including expenses paid or facilities provided to Councillors or members of committees of the local government – Annual Report
- Particulars of the total remuneration paid or provided, including expenses paid or facilities provided to each Councillor during the year and the total superannuation contributions paid for each Councillor during the year – Annual Report
- A copy of POL-3076 Expenses Reimbursement and Provision of Facilities for Councillors – Annual Report and Council's website
- Changes to POL-3076 – update on Council's website

Version Information

Version number	Date	Key changes
6	October 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Removal of reference to DLG published guideline
7	May 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amalgamates policy and guideline into a single document• Redefinition of training categories• Simplification of facilities and reimbursement types• Broadening of options relating to vehicle expenses

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Attachment A

Core & Industry Specific Training Expenses Reimbursement and Provision of Facilities for Councillors Policy POL-3076

The following is a list of **core training requirements** which usually require attendance by at least one, and in some cases all Councillors. Guidance is provided alongside each item. Payment of expenses incurred in attending these events does not affect each Councillor's discretionary training budget:

1. Australian Local Government Association - National General Assembly (It is usual for one or more Councillors to attend this event. The most senior Councillor, usually the Mayor, attending the event will be the official voting delegate of Council.)
2. Local Government Association of Queensland - State Conference (It is usual for one or more Councillors to attend this event. Council will decide by resolution, prior to the event, which one or more of its attendees will have delegated voting authority as it is usual for Council to have several votes on each motion before the Conference.)
3. Australian Local Government Womens' Association – National Conference (It is usual for one or more female councillors to attend this event, which is also open for male councillors to attend.)
4. Local Government Association of Queensland - Civic Leaders and Financial Summit (It is usual for the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and CEO only to be invited to attend this event.)
5. Local Government Association of Queensland - Elected Member Professional Development (All Councillors attend this training.)
6. Quandamooka Country Cultural Heritage Training – Delivered through QYAC on North Stradbroke Island.
7. Australian Institute of Company Directors – Completion of the Company Directors Course facilitates a high level understanding of the role of a director.
8. Courses provided by providers other than the Local Government Association of Queensland (e.g. the Department of Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning), which relate to updating Councillors with regard to their core responsibilities, e.g. changes to legislation. (All Councillors attend this training.)
9. Redland City Council training programmes which are required to enable Councillors to fulfil their core responsibilities, e.g. information technology/software, occupational health and

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safety, Councillor induction, code of conduct and meeting procedures. (All Councillors attend this training.)

The following is a list of other local government **industry-specific training opportunities** which are of sufficient relevance to a Councillor's responsibilities to be of significant potential benefit to each elected member, and it is likely that a Councillor will wish to attend and present his/her learnings back to the full Council. In that regard, attendance, whilst not mandatory, will not require the use of a Councillor's discretionary training budget to meet the associated costs:

1. Local Government Association of Queensland – Infrastructure Summit
2. Local Government Association of Queensland – Disaster Management Conference
3. Local Government Association of Queensland – Community Wellbeing Symposium
4. Local Government Association of Queensland – Diploma in Local Government Course
5. Local Government Managers Australia – National Congress
6. Local Government Managers Australia (Queensland) – Queensland State Conference
7. Planning Institute of Australia – National Congress
8. Planning Institute of Australia – Queensland State Conference
9. Queensland Environmental Law Association – State Conference
10. Australian Local Government Women's Association – National Conference
11. Australian Local Government Women's Association – Queensland State Conference

Other training, not mentioned above will be funded from each councillor's discretionary training budget.