



Council Expenses Policy

Responsible Officer	Adoption Date	June 2020
Governance and Reporting Advisor	Approved By	Council
	Review Date	June 2024
Authorising Officer	Policy Type	Major Council Policy
Director Corporate Services		

Statement and Purpose

This policy supports councillors and members of delegated committees to perform their role, as defined under the *Local Government Act 2020*, without disadvantage, by ensuring that expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their role are reimbursed. The policy also provides guidance on entitlements, processes for reimbursement and reporting requirements.

Scope

The policy applies to councillors and members of delegated committees when performing their role.

Councillor duties are those performed by a councillor as a necessary part of their role, in achieving the objectives of council. These duties may include but are not limited to:

- (1) •attendance at meetings of council and its committees
- (2) •attendance at briefing sessions, workshops, civic events, or functions convened by council
- (3) •attendance at conferences, workshops and training programs related to the role of councillor, Mayor, or Deputy Mayor
- (4) •attendance at meetings, events or functions representing council
- (5) •duties in relation to constituents concerning council business.

Members of delegated committees exercise powers of councillors, under delegation. This policy also applies to those members when undertaking their role as delegated committee members.

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Policy

1. General

- (1) Councillors and members are entitled, under section 40 of the Act, to reimbursement of expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their duties.
- (2) This policy ensures that the reimbursement of these expenses is in accordance with the Act and meets the Act's principles of public transparency; achieving the best outcomes for the municipal community; and ensuring the ongoing financial viability of the council.
- (3) Councillors and members will be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses that are:
 - (a) bona fide expenses; and
 - (b) have been reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of councillor; and
 - (c) are reasonably necessary for the councillor and member of a delegated committee to perform this role.
- (4) The following types of expenses may be considered for reimbursement subject to the test set out in clause 1(3).
 - (a) car parking fees;
 - (b) private vehicle use;
 - (c) public transport;
 - (d) private phone and data charges;
 - (e) training and conferences;
 - (f) meals;
 - (g) accommodation;
 - (h) local municipal events and functions;
 - (i) civic functions.
- (5) Council will not provide reimbursement of costs incurred for family members, personal guests or associates of councillors or members accompanying councillors and members when performing their role.

2. Carer and dependent-related expenses

- (1) Council will provide reimbursement of costs where the provision of childcare is reasonably required for a councillor or member to perform their role.
- (2) This applies to the care of a dependent, while the councillor or member is undertaking their official duties; and may include expenses such as hourly fees and booking fees, if applicable.

- (3) Council will provide reimbursement of costs where the provision of carer services is reasonably required when a councillor or member who is a carer incurs reasonable expenses in the performance of their duties.
- (4) Payments for carer and childcare services will not be made to a person who resides with the councillor or member; has any financial or pecuniary interest with the councillor or member; or has a relationship with the councillor, member or their partner.

Procedure

3. Making a claim for reimbursement

- (1) All claims must be made on the approved payment request form.
- (2) Original receipts must be attached for all claims.
- (3) Credit card receipts will not be accepted.
- (4) Where the provider of the goods or service is registered for GST, a tax invoice must be obtained and provided.
- (5) Claims must include sufficient detail to demonstrate that the expense for which reimbursement is being claimed is a reasonable bona fide expense incurred while performing the role.
- (6) Claims must be lodged with Council's Executive Services department each month.
- (7) Claims for expenses not lodged within 3 months of the expense being incurred will not be reimbursed.
- (8) All claims for the financial year must be finalised and submitted by the end of the financial year excepting expenses incurred in the month of June, which must be claimed by the end of July.
- (9) Claims by a Councillor for a previous term must be finalised within one month of a Wangaratta Rural City Council election or by-election. After this time, the entitlement of the Councillor to claim the expense ceases.

4. Payment of reimbursements

- (1) The members of Council staff processing claims will, if required, clarify claims with the relevant councillor.
- (2) Reimbursements will be paid monthly by electronic funds transfer.

Monitoring and reporting

- (1) Each quarter, a report of councillor and member reimbursements will be provided to the Council, and the Audit and Risk Committee.

- (2) Details of the reimbursements paid in the councillor and member reimbursements report must be categorised separately as:
 - (a) travel expenses; and
 - (b) car mileage expenses; and
 - (c) childcare and carer expenses; and
 - (d) information and communication technology expenses; and
 - (e) conference and training expenses.
- (3) The Council commits to monitoring processes and decision making to understand the overall success of the policy's implementation.
- (4) A periodic review of the policy will be undertaken to ensure any changes required to strengthen or update the policy are made in a timely manner.

Definitions

Act	<i>Local Government Act 2020</i>
Audit and Risk Committee	The audit and risk committee established by the Council under section 53 of the Act
Chief Executive Officer	The person occupying the office of Chief Executive Officer of the Council, and includes a person acting in that office
Carer	Has the same meaning as the definition under section 4 of the <i>Carers Recognition Act 2012</i>
Council	The Wangaratta Rural City Council comprised of elected councillors and led by the Mayor
Council	The Rural City of Wangaratta, led by the Chief Executive Officer
Councillor	A councillor of the Council
Council meeting	A meeting of the Council convened in accordance with the governance rules

Delegate	A member of Rural City staff to whom powers, functions and duties have been delegated by an instrument of delegation
Delegated committee	A committee established by the Council under section 63 of the Act
Member	A member of the delegated committee

References

Legislation

- *Carers Recognition Act 2012*
- *Local Government Act 2020*

Internal policies

- Public transparency policy

Review

The policy may be amended by the Council at any time.

It must be reviewed by the Council, and amended if necessary, at least once in each Council term.