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# Councillor Expenses and Facilities **Policy**

Date to be updated

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## Policy Summary

1. This policy enables the reasonable and appropriate reimbursement of expenses and provision of facilities to Councillors to help them undertake their civic duties.
2. It ensures accountability and transparency, and seeks to align Councillor expenses and facilities with community expectations. Councillors must not obtain private or political benefit from any expense or facility provided under this policy.
3. The policy has been prepared in accordance with the Local Government Act 1993 and Local Government (General) Regulation 2005, and complies with the Office of Local Government's Guidelines for the payment of expenses and provision of facilities to Mayors and councillors in NSW.
4. The policy sets out the maximum amounts Council will pay for specific expenses and facilities. Expenses not explicitly addressed in this policy will not be paid or reimbursed. The main expenses and facilities are summarised in the table below. All monetary amounts are exclusive of GST.

| Expense or facility   | Maximum amount   | Frequency                                    |
|---|--|--|
| Corporate Uniform   | Name badge per Councillor, 2 neckties/scarves per Councillor on request                                  | Once upon election                           |
| General travel expenses   | \$5,000 per Councillor   | Per year/per Councillor                      |
| Interstate, overseas and long-distance intrastate travel expenses | \$10,000 annual budget for all Councillors   | Per year for all Councillors                 |
| Accommodation and meals   | As per the NSW Crown Employees Reviewed Award clause 6.21  | Per night/per Councillor                     |
| Provision for Partners  | Will meet cost of accompanying person of Councillor for LGNSW Annual Conf and ALGA official dinners only | Per year/per Councillor                      |
| Professional development  | \$30,000 annual budget for all Councillors.  | Per year for all Councillors                 |
| ICT expenses  | \$1,500 per Councillor<br><br>\$3,500 per Councillor (equipment)   | Per year/per Councillor<br><br>Upon election |
| Carer expenses  | \$8,000 per Councillor   | Per year                                     |

|   |                             |              |
|---|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Home office expenses                      | \$300 per Councillor        | Per year     |
| Access to facilities in a Councillor room | Provided to all Councillors | Not relevant |

5. Additional costs incurred by a Councillor in excess of these limits are considered a personal expense that is the responsibility of the Councillor.
6. Councillors must provide claims for reimbursement within three months of an expense being incurred. Claims made after this time cannot be approved.
7. Detailed reports on the provision of expenses and facilities to Councillors will be publicly tabled at a Council meeting every six months and published in full on Council's website. These reports will include expenditure summarised by individual Councillor and as a total for all Councillors.
8. This policy will commence on the declaration of the first election of Councillors to the Central Coast Council.

## Part A - Introduction

### **Introduction**

9. The provision of expenses and facilities enables Councillors to fulfil their civic duties as the elected representatives of Central Coast Council.
10. The community is entitled to know the extent of expenses paid to Councillors, as well as the facilities provided.
11. The purpose of this policy is to clearly state the facilities and support that are available to Councillors to assist them in fulfilling their civic duties.
12. Expenses and facilities provided by this policy are in addition to fees paid to Councillors. The minimum and maximum fees a council may pay each Councillor are set by the Local Government Remuneration Tribunal as per Section 241 of the Local Government Act 1993 and reviewed annually. Council must adopt its annual fees within this set range.
13. Council staff are empowered to question or refuse a request for payment from a Councillor when it does not accord with this policy.

### **Policy objectives**

14. The objectives of this policy are to:

- (a) enable the reasonable and appropriate reimbursement of expenses incurred by Councillors while undertaking their civic duties;
- (b) enable facilities of a reasonable and appropriate standard to be provided to Councillors to support them in undertaking their civic duties;
- (c) ensure accountability and transparency in reimbursement of expenses and provision of facilities to Councillors;
- (d) ensure facilities and expenses provided to Councillors meet community expectations;
- (e) support a diversity of representation; and
- (f) fulfil Council's statutory responsibilities.

## Principles

15. Council commits to the following principles:

- (a) Proper conduct: Councillors and staff acting lawfully and honestly, exercising care and diligence in carrying out their functions;
- (b) Reasonable expenses: Providing for Councillors to be reimbursed for expenses reasonably incurred as part of their role as Councillor;
- (c) Participation and access: Enabling people from diverse backgrounds, underrepresented groups, those in carer roles and those with special needs to serve as a Councillor;
- (d) Equity: There must be equitable access to expenses and facilities for all Councillors;
- (e) Appropriate use of resources: Providing clear direction on the appropriate use of Council resources in accordance with legal requirements and community expectations; and
- (f) Accountability and transparency: Clearly stating and reporting on the expenses and facilities provided to Councillors.

## Private or political benefit

16. Councillors must not obtain private or political benefit from any expense or facility provided under this policy.

17. Private use of Council equipment and facilities by Councillors may occur from time to time. For example, telephoning home to advise that a Council meeting will run later than expected.

18. Such incidental private use does not require a compensatory payment back to Council.

19. Councillors should avoid obtaining any greater private benefit from Council than an incidental benefit. Where there are unavoidable circumstances and more substantial private use of Council facilities does occur, Councillors must reimburse Council.

20. Campaigns for re-election are considered to be a private interest. The following are examples of what is considered to be a private interest during a re-election campaign:

- (a) production of election material;

- (b) use of Council resources for campaigning;
- (c) use of official Council letterhead, publications, websites or services for political benefit; and
- (d) fundraising activities of political parties or individuals, including political fundraising events.

## Part B - Expenses

### **General expenses**

21. All expenses provided under this policy will be for a purpose specific to the functions of holding civic office. Allowances for general expenses are not permitted under this policy.
22. Council will cover expenses and/or provide facilities deemed appropriate and necessary by the Chief Executive Officer to assist Councillors in the performance of their civic duties. This includes but is not limited to ad hoc events for which there is an associated cost such as corporate events, Council events and events at Council facilities.
23. Expenses not explicitly addressed in this policy will not be paid or reimbursed

### **Corporate Uniform**

24. Council will provide a name badge and 2 neckties/scarves upon request per Councillor upon the commencement of their term of office.

### **General travel arrangements and expenses**

25. All travel by Councillors should be undertaken using the most direct route and the most practicable and economical mode of transport.
26. Each Councillor may be reimbursed up to a total of \$5,000 per year for travel expenses incurred while undertaking official business or professional development or attending approved conferences and seminars within NSW. This includes reimbursement:
  - (a) for public transport fares;
  - (b) for the use of a private vehicle or hire car;
  - (c) for parking costs for Council and other meetings;
  - (d) for tolls;
  - (e) for documented ride-share programs, such as Uber; and
  - (f) by Cabcharge or equivalent.
27. Allowances for the use of a private vehicle will be reimbursed at the rate contained in the Local Government (State) Award.

28. Councillors seeking to be reimbursed for use of a private vehicle must keep a log book recording the date, distance and purpose of travel being claimed. Copies of the relevant log book contents must be provided with the claim.

**Interstate, overseas and long-distance intrastate travel expenses**

29. This part includes reference to long distance intrastate travel. At Central Coast Council long distance intrastate travel is travel that is estimated to take more than four hours from the Councillor's residence.

30. In accordance with Clause 4, Council will scrutinise the value and need for Councillors to undertake overseas travel. Councils should avoid interstate, overseas and long-distance intrastate trips unless direct and tangible benefits can be established for the Council and the local community. This includes travel to sister and friendship cities.

31. Total interstate, overseas and long-distance intrastate travel expenses for all Councillors will be capped at a maximum of \$10,000 provided in an annual budget per year.

32. Councillors seeking approval for any interstate and long-distance intrastate travel must submit a business case to, and obtain the approval of, the Chief Executive Officer prior to travel.

33. Councillors seeking approval for any overseas travel must submit a request to, and obtain the approval of, a full Council meeting prior to travel.

34. The request should include:

- (a) objectives to be achieved in travel, including an explanation of how the travel aligns with current Council priorities and business, the community benefits which will accrue as a result and its relevance to the exercise of the Councillor's civic duties;
- (b) who is to take part in the travel;
- (c) duration and itinerary of travel; and
- (d) a detailed budget including a statement of any amounts expected to be reimbursed by the participant/s.

35. For interstate and long-distance intrastate journeys of less than three hours the class of air travel is to be economy class.

36. For interstate journeys by air of more than three hours, the class of air travel may be premium economy where it is available.

37. For international travel, the class of air travel is to be premium economy if available. Otherwise, the class of travel is to be economy.

38. Bookings for approved air travel are to be made by Council staff on behalf of the Councillor.
39. For travel that is reimbursed as Council business, frequent flyer points will not accrue to Councillors. This is considered a private benefit.

#### **Travel expenses not paid by Council**

40. Council will not pay any traffic or parking fines or administrative charges for toll road accounts.

#### **Accommodation and meals**

41. Council will reimburse costs for accommodation and meals (when meals are not provided) while Councillors are undertaking prior approved travel or professional development.
42. The daily limits for accommodation and meal expenses within Australia is as per the NSW Crown Employees Reviewed Award clause 6.21 per Councillor per night.
43. The daily limits for accommodation and meal expenses outside Australia are to be determined in advance by the Chief Executive Officer.
44. Councillors will not be reimbursed for the purchase of alcoholic beverages.

#### **Refreshments for Council related meetings**

45. Appropriate refreshments may be available for Council meetings, Council Committee meetings, Councillor briefings, approved meetings and engagements, and official Council functions as approved by the Chief Executive Officer.
46. As an indicative guide for the standard of refreshments to be provided at Council-related meetings, the Chief Executive Officer must be mindful of Part B Monetary Rates of the NSW Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2009, as adjusted annually.

#### **Professional development**

47. Council will set aside \$30,000 annually in its budget to facilitate professional development of all Councillors through programs, training, education courses, conferences, seminars and membership of professional bodies. This is in addition to professional development opportunities identified by the Chief Executive Officer that may be determined appropriate for all Councillors.
48. In the first year of a new Council term, Council will provide a comprehensive induction program for all Councillors which considers any guidelines issued by the Office of Local Government (OLG). The cost of the induction program will be in addition to the ongoing professional development funding.

49. Annual membership of professional bodies will only be covered where the membership is relevant to the exercise of the Councillor's civic duties, the Councillor actively participates in the body and the cost of membership is likely to be fully offset by savings from attending events as a member.
50. Approval for professional development activities is subject to a prior written request to the Chief Executive Officer outlining the:
- (a) details of the proposed professional development;
  - (b) relevance to Council priorities and business; and
  - (c) relevance to the exercise of the Councillor's civic duties.
51. In assessing a Councillor request for a professional development activity, the Chief Executive Officer must consider the factors set out in Clause 51, as well as the cost of the professional development in relation to the Councillor's remaining budget.
- 52A Council will provide Councillors with access to the Employee Assistance Program as provided to Council employees.

### **Conferences and seminars**

52. Council is committed to ensuring its Councillors are up to date with contemporary issues facing Council and the community, and local government in NSW.
53. Provision for attendance at conferences and seminars is provided as part of Professional Development.
54. Approval to attend a conference or seminar is subject to a written request to the Chief Executive Officer. In assessing a Councillor request, the Chief Executive Officer must consider factors including the:
- (a) relevance of the topics and presenters to current Council priorities and business and the exercise of the Councillor's civic duties; and
  - (b) cost of the conference or seminar in relation to the total remaining budget.
55. Council will meet the reasonable cost of registration fees, transportation and accommodation associated with attendance at conferences approved by the Chief Executive Officer. Council will also meet the reasonable cost of meals when they are not included in the conference fees. Reimbursement for accommodation and meals not included in the conference fees will be subject to Clauses 42 to 45.

### **Local Government NSW Annual Conference**

56. Councillors will be permitted to attend the Local Government NSW Annual Conference. Council will reimburse the cost of registration fees and where the conference is outside the local government area, the cost of travel, accommodation and meals not covered by the conference registration, subject to the provisions in Clauses 42 to 45.
57. For the Local Government NSW Annual Conference only, Council will meet the costs of the official conference dinner for an accompanying person of a Councillor.

### **ICT expenses**

58. Council will provide, or reimburse Councillors for expenses associated with, appropriate ICT devices and services up to a limit of \$1,500 per annum for each Councillor. This may include mobile phones and tablets, mobile phone and tablet services and data, and home internet costs. Allowances will only be made for tablets, tablet services and data to tablets where a Councillor consents to receiving communications and business papers from Council by electronic means only.
59. Council may provide appropriate ICT equipment up to a limit of \$3,500 per Councillor upon the commencement of their term of office. The determination as to what equipment will be provided will be made by the Chief Executive Officer based upon Council's general ICT program and identified business needs.
60. Reimbursements will be made only for communications devices and services used for Councillors to undertake their civic duties, such as:
- (a) receiving and reading Council business papers;
  - (b) relevant phone calls and correspondence; and
  - (c) diary and appointment management.
61. Councillors may seek reimbursement for applications on their mobile electronic communication device that are directly related to their duties as a Councillor, within the maximum limit.
62. Council may from time to time provide Councillors with upgraded equipment or new facilities where doing so will result in efficiencies and aligns to Council's general ICT program.

### **Special requirement and carer expenses**

63. Council encourages wide participation and interest in civic office. It will seek to ensure Council premises and associated facilities are accessible, including provision for sight or hearing-impaired Councillors and those with other disabilities.

64. Transportation provisions as outlined in this policy, such as access to Cabcharges, will also assist Councillors who may be unable or unwilling to drive a vehicle.
65. In addition to the provisions above, the Chief Executive Officer may authorise the provision of reasonable additional facilities and expenses in order to allow a Councillor with a disability to perform their civic duties.
66. Councillors who are the principal carer of a child or other elderly, disabled and/or sick immediate family member will be entitled to reimbursement of carer's expenses up to a maximum of \$8,000 per annum for attendance at official business, plus reasonable travel from the principal place of residence.
67. Child care expenses may be claimed for children up to and including the age of 16 years where the carer is not a relative.
68. In the event of caring for an adult person, Councillors will need to provide suitable evidence to the Chief Executive Officer that reimbursement is applicable. This may take the form of advice from a medical practitioner.

### **Home office expenses**

69. Each Councillor may be reimbursed up to \$300 per year for costs associated with the maintenance of a home office, such as minor items of consumable stationery and printer ink cartridges.

### **Insurances**

70. In accordance with Section 382 of the Local Government Act 1993, Council is insured against public liability and professional indemnity claims. Councillors are included as a named insured on this Policy.
71. Insurance protection is only provided if a claim arises out of or in connection with the Councillor's performance of his or her civic duties, or exercise of his or her functions as a Councillor. All insurances are subject to any limitations or conditions set out in the policies of insurance.
72. Council shall pay the insurance policy excess in respect of any claim accepted by Council's insurers, whether defended or not.
73. Appropriate travel insurances will be provided for any Councillors travelling on approved interstate and overseas travel on Council business.

## Legal assistance

74. Council may, if requested, indemnify or reimburse the reasonable legal expenses of:
- (a) a Councillor defending an action arising from the performance in good faith of a function under the Local Government Act 1993;
  - (b) a Councillor defending an action in defamation, provided the statements complained of were made in good faith in the course of exercising a function under the Act; and
  - (c) a Councillor for proceedings before an appropriate investigative or review body, provided the subject of the proceedings arises from the performance in good faith of a function under the Local Government Act 1993 and the matter has proceeded past any initial assessment phase to a formal investigation or review and the investigative or review body makes a finding substantially favourable to the Councillor.
75. In the case of a conduct complaint made against a Councillor, legal costs will only be made available where the matter has been referred by the Chief Executive Officer to a conduct reviewer or conduct review panel to make formal enquiries into that matter in accordance with Council's Code of Conduct.
76. Legal expenses incurred in relation to proceedings arising out of the performance by a Councillor of his or her functions under the Local Government Act 1993 are distinguished from expenses incurred in relation to proceedings arising merely from something that a Councillor has done during his or her term in office. For example, expenses arising from an investigation as to whether a Councillor acted corruptly would not be covered by this clause.
77. Council will not meet the legal costs:
- (a) of legal proceedings initiated by a Councillor under any circumstances;
  - (b) of a Councillor seeking advice in respect of possible defamation, or in seeking a non-litigious remedy for possible defamation; and
  - (c) for legal proceedings that do not involve a Councillor performing their role as a Councillor.
78. Reimbursement of expenses for reasonable legal expenses must have Council approval by way of a resolution at a Council meeting prior to costs being incurred.

## ASIC or Relevant Searches

79. Council will meet the costs of any ASIC or relevant searches undertaken by Councillors to assist in providing appropriate responses in relation to declarations as Key Management Personnel under the Related Party Disclosures requirements of Council's Financial Statements.

## Part C - Facilities

### General facilities for all Councillors

#### Facilities

80. Council will provide the following facilities to Councillors to assist them to effectively discharge their civic duties:
- (a) a Councillor common room appropriately furnished to include telephone, photocopier, printer, desks, computer terminals, pigeon holes and appropriate refreshments (excluding alcohol);
  - (b) access to shared car parking spaces while undertaking official business; and
  - (c) a name badge which may be worn at official functions, indicating that the wearer holds the office of a Councillor and/or Mayor or Deputy Mayor; and
  - (d) appropriate meeting spaces to allow Councillors to meet with community members as determined by the Chief Executive Officer.
81. The provision of facilities will be of a standard deemed by the Chief Executive Officer as appropriate for the purpose.
82. Council may from time to time provide additional facilities for Councillor use such as protective equipment for use during site visits.

#### Stationery

83. Council will provide the following to Councillors:
- (a) Electronic letterhead template, to be used only for correspondence associated with civic duties; and
  - (b) Electronic Christmas or festive message.
84. Council may from time to time provide stationery or branded items for Councillor use.

#### Administrative support

85. Council will provide administrative support to Councillors to assist them with their civic duties only. Administrative support may be provided by staff in the Mayor's office or by a member of Council's administrative staff as arranged by the Chief Executive Officer or their delegate.
86. Council staff are expected to assist Councillors with civic duties only, and not assist with matters of personal or political interest, including campaigning.

### **Additional facilities for the Mayor**

87. Council will provide to the Mayor a maintained motor vehicle and appropriate, as determined by the Chief Executive Officer, motor vehicle with a fuel card. The vehicle will be supplied for use in attending official business and professional development and attendance at the Mayor's office. The vehicle can also be used for reasonable private benefit.
88. A parking space at Council's offices will be reserved for the Mayor's Council-issued vehicle for use on official business, professional development and attendance at the Mayor's office.
89. Council will provide the Mayor with a furnished office incorporating a computer configured to Council's standard operating environment, telephone and meeting space. On the rare occasions where the Mayor is unable to attend the office and use the equipment provided due to an emergency situation, Council will meet the reasonable costs of reimbursement for office equipment up to \$500 per occasion as agreed with the Chief Executive Officer.
90. In performing his or her civic duties, the Mayor will be assisted by a small number of staff providing appropriate support, as determined by the Chief Executive Officer.
91. The number of exclusive staff provided to support the Mayor and Councillors will not exceed the number of full-time equivalents identified in the adopted organisational structure and as provided in the adopted budget.
92. Council staff in the Mayor's office are expected to work on official business only, and not for matters of personal or political interest, including campaigning.
93. The Mayor will be entitled to travel business class up to an additional annual limit of \$15,000 on any travel undertaken.
94. Council will meet the reasonable costs as determined by the Chief Executive Officer, and up to a \$1,000 annual expenditure limit associated with the attendance of the Mayor's spouse or partner whilst the Mayor is undertaking official business at Conferences, functions, award nights and events.
95. Council will also meet the reasonable cost as determined by the Chief Executive Officer and up to a \$2,000 annual expenditure limit, of travel expenses and additional accommodation expenses (in addition to the expenses incurred by the Mayor) for the Mayor's spouse or partner whilst the Mayor is undertaking official business at Conferences, functions and events.
96. The Mayor will also have access to an additional annual limit of up to \$2,000 for the Mayor and the Mayor's spouse or partner attending dinners, non-council functions, charity and fundraising events, community and corporate or industry events which are relevant to Council's interest and where Council's representation would be expected.

97. The Mayor is entitled to digital subscriptions to two daily newspapers and/or delivery of those same newspapers to the Council office.

## Processes

### Approval, payment and reimbursement arrangements

98. Expenses should only be incurred by Councillors in accordance with the provisions of this policy.

99. Approval for incurring expenses, or for the reimbursement of such expenses, should be obtained before the expense is incurred.

100. Up to the maximum limits specified in this policy, approval for the following may be sought after the expense is incurred:

- (a) local travel relating to the conduct of official business;
- (b) carer costs; and
- (c) ICT expenditure.

101. Final approval for payments made under this policy will be granted by the Chief Executive Officer or their delegate.

102. All requests for reimbursement will be reviewed by two staff members and payment will be authorised by a staff member with the appropriate financial delegation.

103. The Chief Executive Officer will provide a system for the request of reimbursements for Councillors. This will include a form whereby Councillors will be required to specifically identify the clause within this policy to which the request relates.

### Direct payment

104. Council may approve and directly pay expenses. Requests for direct payment must be submitted through the appropriate system for assessment against this policy using the prescribed form, with sufficient information and time to allow for the claim to be assessed and processed.

### Reimbursement

105. All claims for reimbursement of expenses incurred must be made on the prescribed form, supported by appropriate receipts and/or tax invoices and be submitted through the appropriate system.

### Advance payment

106. Council may pay a cash advance for Councillors attending approved conferences, seminars or professional development.

107. The maximum value of a cash advance is \$200 per day of the conference, seminar or professional development to a maximum of \$600
108. Requests for advance payment must be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer for assessment against this policy with sufficient information and time to allow for the claim to be assessed and processed.
109. Councillors must fully reconcile all expenses against the cost of the advance within one month of incurring the cost and/or returning home. This includes providing to Council:
- (a) a full reconciliation against the provisions of this policy of all expenses including appropriate receipts and/or tax invoices; and
  - (b) reimbursement of any amount of the advance payment not spent in attending to official business or professional development.

#### **Notification**

110. If a claim is approved, Council will make payment directly or reimburse the Councillor through accounts payable.
111. If a claim is refused, Council will inform the Councillor in writing that the claim has been refused and the reason for the refusal.

#### **Reimbursement to Council**

112. If Council has incurred an expense on behalf of a Councillor that exceeds a maximum limit, exceeds reasonable incidental private use or is not provided for in this policy:
- (a) council will invoice the Councillor for the expense; and
  - (b) the Councillor will reimburse Council for that expense within 14 days of the invoice date.
113. If the Councillor cannot reimburse Council within 14 days of the invoice date, they are to submit a written explanation to the Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer may elect to deduct the amount out of the Councillor's allowance.

#### **Timeframe for reimbursement**

114. Unless otherwise specified in this policy, Councillors must provide all claims for reimbursement within three months of an expense being incurred. Claims made after this time cannot be approved.

## Disputes

115. If the Councillor disputes a determination under this policy, the Councillor should discuss the matter with the Chief Executive Officer.
116. If the Councillor and the Chief Executive Officer cannot resolve the dispute, the Councillor may submit a notice of motion to Council seeking to have the dispute resolved.

## Return or retention of facilities

117. All unexpended facilities or equipment supplied under this policy are to be relinquished immediately upon a Councillor or Mayor ceasing to hold office.

## Publication

118. This policy will be published on Council's website.

## Reporting

119. Council will report on the provision of expenses and facilities to Councillors as required in the Local Government Act 1993 and Local Government (General) Regulation 2005.
120. Detailed reports on the provision of expenses and facilities to Councillors will be publicly tabled at a Council meeting every six months and published in full on Council's website. These reports will include expenditure summarised by individual Councillor and as a total for all Councillors.

## Auditing/Review

121. The operation of this policy, including claims made under the policy, will be included in Council's audit program and an audit undertaken at least every two years.

## Breaches

122. Suspected breaches of this policy are to be reported to the Chief Executive Officer.
123. In accordance with the Code of Conduct this Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy is a policy of Council and must not be contravened.
124. Alleged breaches of this policy shall be dealt with by the processes outlined for breaches of the Code of Conduct, as detailed in the Code and in the Procedures for the Administration of the Code.
125. Staff must maintain all records relevant to administering this policy in a recognised Council recordkeeping system.

## Definitions

126. In this policy:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Accompanying person</b>             | Means a spouse, partner or de facto or other person who has a close personal relationship with or provides carer support to a Councillor.   |
| <b>Appropriate refreshments</b>        | Means food and beverages, excluding alcohol, provided by Council to support Councillors undertaking official business   |
| <b>Act</b>                             | Means the <a href="#">Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)</a>   |
| <b>Annual Conference</b>               | Means Local Government NSW Annual Conference  |
| <b>Clause</b>                          | Unless stated otherwise, a reference to a clause is a reference to a clause of this policy  |
| <b>Code of Conduct</b>                 | Means the Code of Conduct adopted by Council or the Model Code if none is adopted   |
| <b>Councillor</b>                      | Means a person elected or appointed to civic office as a member of the governing body of Council who is not suspended, including the Mayor  |
| <b>Chief Executive Officer</b>         | Means the General Manager of Council and includes their delegate or authorised representative   |
| <b>ICT</b>                             | Means telecommunications and is an acronym for Information Communications and Technology  |
| <b>Incidental personal use</b>         | Means use that is infrequent and brief and use that does not breach this policy or the Code of Conduct  |
| <b>Long distance intrastate travel</b> | Means travel to other parts of NSW of more than three hours duration by private vehicle   |
| <b>Maximum limit</b>                   | Means the maximum limit for an expense or facility provided in the text and summarised in the table in Clause 4.  |
| <b>NSW</b>                             | New South Wales   |
| <b>Official business</b>               | Means functions that the Mayor or Councillors are required or invited to attend to fulfil their legislated role and responsibilities for Council or result in a direct benefit for Council and/or for the local government area, and includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• meetings of Council and committees of the whole;</li> <li>• meetings of committees facilitated by Council;</li> <li>• civic receptions hosted or sponsored by Council; and</li> <li>• meetings, functions, workshops and other events to which attendance by a Councillor has been requested or approved by Council.</li> </ul> |

|                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Professional development</b> | Means a seminar, conference, training course or other development opportunity relevant to the role of a Councillor or the Mayor |
| <b>Regulation</b>               | Means the Local Government (General) Regulation 2005 (NSW)  |
| <b>Year</b>                     | Means the financial year, that is the 12-month period commencing on 1 July each year.   |

## Related resources

### 127. Legislation:

- a. [Local Government Act 1993 \(NSW\)](#) Sections 252 and 253
- b. [Local Government \(General\) Regulation 2005](#), Clauses 217 and 403

### 128. Associated/Internal documents:

- a. Code of Conduct
- b. Guidelines for the payment of expenses and the provision of facilities for Mayors and Councillors in NSW, 2009
- c. Local Government Circular 09-36 Guidelines for Payment of Expenses and Facilities
- d. Local Government Circular 05-08 legal assistance for Councillors and Council Employees.
- e. NSW Crown Employees Reviewed Award

## History of revisions

| Amendment history                   | Details   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Original approval authority details | Council<br>D12757794<br>26 July 2017 – Minute number 504/17 |

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Policy adopted pursuant to section 253(2) of the Local Government Act.

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**Version # 2**      23 October 2017 – Minute numbers 669/17 and 700/17 (public exhibition)  
18 December 2017 - adoption

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D12835914

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*Amendments:*

Clause 6.2      General travel arrangements and expenses.

The current provisions in this clause are insufficient given the size of the Central Coast local government area, and the number of residents in that local government area. Taking into consideration the likely travel that the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors will need to undertake, it is recommended that this clause be amended to provide for up to a total of \$12,500 per Councillor per year.

Reimbursement under this proposed amended clause will require the submission of appropriate documents such as a log book or opal card statement.

Clause 6.7      Interstate, overseas and long distance intrastate travel expenses.

This clause is recommended to be amended to provide for a maximum of \$15,000 per Councillor per year. It is noted that this is a reasonable maximum for this category of travel given the role of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors in pursuing the interests of the local government area.

Expenditure in this category requires a Councillor to provide a business case and have the prior approval of the Chief Executive Officer. Overseas travel requires prior approval by way of a Council resolution.

Clause 6.18      Accommodation and meals

This clause is recommended to reflect a maximum of \$500 per Councillor per night for accommodation and meals.

Providing a specific amount gives greater transparency as to the provision to Councillors for accommodation and meals. The amount reflects the reasonable costs of accommodation and meals, particularly in metropolitan Sydney.

Clause 6.23      Professional development and Clause 6.29 Conferences and Seminars

It is recommended that these two provisions be combined to allow an amount of \$12,000 per Councillor per year.

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In practice, attendance at conferences and seminars will almost always be part of a Councillor's professional development and distinguishing the two provisions is arbitrary.

It is noted that s. 232 of the Act provides that Councillors are required to make all reasonable efforts to acquire and maintain the skills necessary to perform the role of a Councillor. In addition, the Act provides for regulations to be made for induction and other professional development for Mayors and Councillors. The Office of Local Government advised on 22 December 2016 that it has commenced work on development of these regulations and it is appropriate that Council provide adequate funding to facilitate meeting these future regulations.

Clause 6.42 Special requirement and carer expenses.

It is recommended that the provision for carer expenses be \$8,000 per Councillor per year. This is to reflect the current cost of care for children, those with special needs.

It is noted that this clause includes provision for those who may need to care for a dependent over the age of 16 years upon consultation with the Chief Executive Officer.

Part 10: Additional facilities for the Mayor.

To appropriately reflect the size and scale of the role of Mayor of Central Coast Council a number of provisions are recommended in this Part.

This includes travel expenses, provision of an appropriate vehicle for official duties, newspaper subscription and allowances for a small number of spouse/partner attendances at events and the like. These provisions reflect the community expectations of the role of Mayor of Central Coast Council and the likely impact and time demands this important role brings.

Various: Amendment of all references to 'General Manager' to 'Chief Executive Officer', to reflect the current Council corporate structure and nomenclature.

Amendments to the table in the Policy Summary to reflect the proposed changes.

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Version # 3      9 April 2020 – Minute Number 268/18

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D13186819

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*State reasons for amendments:*

In the table of the new section 4:

| Expense or facility | Maximum amount         | Frequency                          |
|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Corporate Uniform   | \$1,000 per Councillor | Upon election                      |
|                     | \$500 per Councillor   | Per full twelve months there after |

In the new section 23 to 24 under Part B – Expenses, Specific Expense:

**Corporate Uniform**

- 23. Council will cover the costs up to a limit of \$1,000 per Councillor upon the commencement of their term of office to use for the provision of a Council Corporate Uniform as determination by the Chief Executive Officer. This would include the costs of suitable Council professional attire.
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- 24. Thereafter Council will cover the costs up to a limit of up to \$500 per Councillor per annum.

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**Version # 4**      9 July 2020 – Minute Number 649/18

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D13186819

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*State reasons for amendments*

New Clause 57 under Part B – Expenses, General Expenses –Conferences and Seminars is proposed as follows:

- 57 Council will meet the costs of official conference dinners for an accompanying person of a Councillor up to \$1,000 per Councillor per year.

The proposed addition of a new Clause 81 under the following heading:

*ASIC or Relevant Searches*

- 81 Council will meet the costs of any ASIC or relevant searches undertaken by Councillors to assist in providing appropriate responses in relation to declarations as Key Management Personnel under the Related Party Disclosures requirements for Council's Financial Statements

New Clause 22 under Part B – Expenses, General Expenses is proposed as follows:

- 22 Council will cover expenses and/or provide facilities deemed appropriate and necessary by the Chief Executive Officer to assist Councillors in the performance of their civic duties.

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649/18      *That Council adopt the amended Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy set out in Attachment 1 to this report, with the following amendment to Clause 116;*

- *To allow Councillors to claim expenses up until the end of the financial year or within three months of the occurrence of the expense, whichever comes last.*

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**Version # 5**      27 August 2018 – Minute Number 850/18

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D13259207

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*State reasons for amendments*

New Clause 48 under Part B – Expenses, General Expenses Professional Development is proposed as follows:

- 48      Council will set aside \$12,000 per Councillor annually in its budget to facilitate professional development of Councillors through programs, training, education courses, conferences, seminars and membership of professional bodies. This is in addition to professional development opportunities identified by the Chief Executive Officer that may be determined appropriate for all Councillors.

The proposed addition of a new Clause 81 under Part C – Additional Facilities for the Mayor is as follows:

- 92      In performing his or her civic duties, the Mayor will be assisted by a small number of staff providing appropriate support, as determined by the Chief Executive Officer.
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**Version # 6**      14 September 2020 – Minute numbers 455/20 and 456/20 (public exhibition)  
 23 November 2020 Minute Number 1109/20 - adoption

D14371826

*State reasons for amendments*

Amended expenses provisions as follows:

| Expense or facility   | Maximum amount   | Frequency                    |
|---|--|------------------------------|
| Corporate Uniform   | Name badge per Councillor,<br>2 neckties/scarves per<br>Councillor on request                                    | Once upon election           |
| General travel expenses   | \$5,000 per Councillor   | Per year/per Councillor      |
| Interstate, overseas and<br>long-distance intrastate<br>travel expenses | \$10,000 annual budget for<br>all Councillors.   | Per year for all Councillors |
| Accommodation and<br>meals  | As per the NSW Crown<br>Employees Reviewed Award<br>clause 6.21  | Per night/per Councillor     |
| Provision for Partners  | Will meet cost of<br>accompanying person of<br>Councillor for LGNSW<br>Annual Conference official<br>dinner only | Per year/per Councillor      |
| Professional<br>development   | \$30,000 annual budget for<br>all Councillors.   | Per year for all Councillors |
| ICT expenses  | \$1,500 per Councillor (per<br>year)<br>\$3,500 per Councillor per<br>term (equipment)                           | Per year<br>Upon election    |
| Carer expenses  | \$8,000 per Councillor   | Per year/per Councillor      |
| Home office expenses  | \$300 per Councillor   | Per year/per Councillor      |
| Access to facilities<br>in a Councillor<br>room                         | Provided to all Councillors  | Not relevant                 |

New Clause 52A in response to Audit Recommendation:

*52A Council will provide Councillors with access to the Employee Assistance Program as provided to Council employees.*

Small amendments to correct typographical errors

Addition to Clause 22 to clarify the provision:

*This includes but is not limited to ad hoc events for which there is an associated cost such as corporate events, Council events and events at Council facilities.*

Change to Clause 166 and Clause 6 to align to provide three months:

6. *Councillors must provide claims for in accordance with Clause 116.*
116. *Unless otherwise specified in this policy, Councillors must provide all claims for reimbursement for a financial year within three months after the end of that financial year. In the case of the year of an election, Councillors must provide all claims for reimbursement after 30 June of that year by 30 September of that year. Claims made after this time cannot be approved.*

New provision at Clause 91 to provide for emergency provisions:

*On the rare occasions where the Mayor is unable to attend the office and use the equipment provided due to an emergency situation, Council will meet the reasonable costs of reimbursement for office equipment up to \$500 per occasion as agreed with the Chief Executive Officer.*

Clarification in Clause 82(b) as to parking:

*access to shared car parking spaces while undertaking official business*

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