

**PORT PHILLIP CITY COUNCIL
COUNCILLOR SUPPORT AND EXPENSE
REIMBURSEMENT POLICY**

PART A – COUNCILLOR SUPPORT & EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT

1 OBJECTIVE

- 1.1 To set out a Councillor's entitlement for:
 - 1.1.1 reimbursement by Council of reasonable bona fide Councillor out of pocket expenses incurred while performing duties as a Councillor; and
 - 1.1.2 payment by Council of reasonable bona fide expenses to enable Councillors to perform their duties; and
 - 1.1.3 provision of facilities and resources by Council to assist Councillors in the performance of their duties.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This policy gives a broad overview of how a Council can give assistance to its Councillors in carrying out their functions. It does not attempt to prescribe for every possible situation that may arise.
- 2.2 As well as legislation (see Attachment 1), there is an information guide issued by the Department of Planning and Community Development that outlines the entitlements and support to be provided to Mayors and Councillors.
- 2.3 The information guide is known as "Mayor and Councillors Entitlements, reimbursement of expenses and provision of resources and facilities support for Victorian Mayors and Councillors November 2008". The guide (see Attachment 2) prescribes the minimum toolkit for expenses, support and resources for Councillors.
- 2.4 Mayoral and Councillor allowances are provided separately to reimbursement of expenses and the costs of facilities/resource support.
- 2.5 Where this policy is satisfied and a Councillor has incurred an out of pocket expense they must be reimbursed by Council.

3 DETAILS

- 3.1 Travelling Expenses
 - 3.1.1 Council will reimburse all reasonable costs associated with travel related to attendance at:
 - (a) Council and Special Council meetings, and meetings of committees of Council;

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- (b) Councillor briefings and meetings with Council staff;
 - (c) Council civic and ceremonial functions;
 - (d) meetings arising as a result of a Councillor being appointed by the Council to an external body;
 - (e) meetings, events or occasions attended in the capacity as a Councillor; and
 - (f) any other event as agreed by the Chief Executive Officer or resolution of Council.

3.1.2 All overseas travel will be by a resolution of Council.

3.1.3 Travel reimbursed by Council will be for:

- (a) public transport;
- (b) bicycle maintenance expenses for Councillors using their own bicycles (see Attachment 3 for rates);
- (c) taxi;
- (d) private vehicle – reimbursement of motor vehicle expenses shall be by cents per kilometre at the rate reimbursed to Council employees for use of a private vehicle.

3.1.4 Instead of reimbursements made under 3.1.3, Council can provide:

- (a) cabcharge card or vouchers for travel by taxi;
- (b) sustainable transport (public transport) vouchers;
- (c) a bicycle for exclusive use of any Councillor who rides, or makes a commitment to ride, more than 15 kilometres per week on Council business (see Attachment 3 for conditions); or
- (d) a Council pool vehicle (subject to availability) to be arranged with the Chief Executive Officer or delegate.

3.1.5 Wherever appropriate Council supports the use of sustainable transport.

3.1.6 The conditions below will be applied to determine the amount of travel-related expenses that will be reimbursed or paid for:

- (a) travel must be undertaken as quickly as possible and by the shortest route possible;

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- (b) any time occupied in other than authorised Council business is not to be included in the calculation of any expenses to be reimbursed or paid;
 - (c) claims will only be paid on the basis of the actual form of transport used;
 - (d) where travel is by air, the standard form of travel will be economy class, unless otherwise arranged with the Chief Executive Officer.

3.1.7 The Chief Executive Officer or the Council will approve discretionary trips and interstate travel, with travel related to training and conferences subject to the budget restrictions set out at 3.4.3.

3.1.8 Where reimbursements are beyond the Chief Executive Officer's authority, the reimbursement will be referred to Council.

3.2 Support for the Mayor – Mayoral Vehicle

3.2.1 Where Council resolves to provide a vehicle to the Mayor and the Mayor accepts such a vehicle, Council will provide a fully maintained vehicle (including Fringe Benefits Tax) to the standard specified by the Council at the time at no cost to the Mayor.

3.3 Support for Councillors – Stationery

3.3.1 The Council shall, upon request, provide Councillors with standard stationery held or obtained generally for the organisation's requirements.

3.3.2 The stationery may include, but not necessarily be limited to, paper, business cards, writing implements, diaries, writing pads/books, computer discs and paper, toner cartridges, envelopes and the like.

3.4 Conferences, Professional Development and Training

3.4.1 The City of Port Phillip is committed to helping Councillors meet their training and professional development needs relating to their Councillor role and duties.

3.4.2 Subject to availability of funds within the specific budget:

- (a) Councillors attending relevant conferences and seminars shall have all reasonable expenses for travelling, transport, accommodation, registration fees and meals, and other out of pocket expenses reimbursed or paid on their behalf.
- (b) Councillors may also be reimbursed for professional development including study expenses incurred, subject to approval of the Chief Executive Officer.

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- (c) Development programs and initiatives may be available to all Councillors collectively or individually.
- (d) Professional development expenditure should always be tested against the following criteria:
- is in the interest of the Port Phillip community;
 - meets the budget determined by Council;
 - clearly offers and promotes public benefit, as distinguished from private benefit;
 - is directly relevant to the Councillor's role; and
 - takes place and is able to be utilised during the Councillor's term of office.
- (e) If insufficient funds are available within the budget, Councillors may attend conferences and seminars by paying their own expenses or by reimbursing their expenses to Council.

3.4.3 The Chief Executive Officer or delegate will approve travel, registration and accommodation costs for training and conferences in Victoria or interstate, up to the amount allocated in the annual budget for conferences and courses costs. The Mayor will be entitled to 20% of the annual budget and each Councillor will be entitled to a pro rata allocation of the remaining 80%.

3.5 Reimbursement of Child Care Expenses

3.5.1 Council will reimburse all reasonable costs associated with necessary child care for their immediate family incurred to attend:

- (a) Council and Special Council meetings, and meetings of committees of Council;
- (b) Councillor briefings and meetings with Council staff;
- (c) Council civic and ceremonial functions;
- (d) meetings arising as a result of a Councillor being appointed by the Council to an external body;
- (e) meetings, events or occasions attended in the capacity as a Councillor; and
- (f) any other event as agreed by the Chief Executive Officer or resolution of Council.

3.5.2 Reimbursement is subject to the following conditions:

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- (a) That the hourly rate is reasonable.
 - (b) Each claim for reimbursement shall be substantiated by a receipt from the caregiver showing the name of the provider, dates and times the care was provided, the rate per hour and why the child care service was required.
 - (c) Child care costs are not eligible for reimbursement if paid to a person who normally or regularly resides with the Councillor.
 - (d) All reimbursement claims are to be made on the appropriate form.

3.6 Councillor Support – Equipment/Facilities

3.6.1 Councillors will be provided with the following, noting that the Council will pay all connection fees, rental charges, all Council business call charges and reasonable personal use of the equipment listed below:

- (a) Mobile phone or handheld mobile device eg Blackberry;
- (b) telephone;
- (c) personal computer (desk top or laptop);
- (d) modem;
- (e) printer/fax;
- (f) standard operating software;
- (g) Internet access;
- (h) office space.

4 **CLAIMS FOR REIMBURSEMENT**

- 4.1 In accordance with section 75(1)(a) of the *Local Government Act 1989*, every claim for reimbursement must be lodged in writing. To comply with this requirement, Councillors are to complete an Expense Reimbursement Form and submit it to the Chief Executive Officer or delegate for authorisation, noting and payment.
- 4.2 Councillors are to provide receipts and/or tax invoices for any expenses incurred. Receipts/tax invoices are to be submitted with the Expense Reimbursement Form. If receipts cannot be produced, Councillors may be required to provide a Statutory Declaration.
- 4.3 In accordance with the requirements of section 75(1)(b) of the *Local Government Act 1989*, Councillors should establish that the expenses

were reasonable, bona fide, out-of-pocket expenses incurred while performing duties as a Councillor.

- 4.4 Claims are to be submitted at a frequency convenient to the Councillor, but not less than quarterly.
- 4.5 Bicycle Maintenance Expense Reimbursement may also be paid on an annual basis by provision of an Expense Reimbursement Form by the Councillor.

5 GENERAL PROVISION

- 5.1 Council resources must not be used for the purposes of election campaigning for Councillors.

PART B – REIMBURSEMENT TO MEMBERS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES

1. OBJECTIVE

- 1.1. To enable a member of a special committee to apply for reimbursement of necessary out-of-pocket travelling expenses incurred while performing duties as a special committee member.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Local Government Act states that a Council may reimburse members of Council committees for necessary out-of-pocket expenses incurred while performing duties as a committee member.

3. DETAILS

3.1. Travelling Expenses

- 3.1.1. At the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer, Council may reimburse to members of special committees reasonable costs associated with travel related to attendance at the meetings.

4. CLAIMS FOR REIMBURSEMENT

- 4.1. Members of special committees are to complete an Expense Reimbursement Form and submit it to the Chief Executive Officer or delegate for authorisation, noting and payment.
- 4.2. Members of special committees are to provide receipts and/or tax invoices for any travel expenses incurred. Receipts/tax invoices are to be submitted with the Expense Reimbursement Form. If receipts cannot be produced, members of special committees may be required to provide a Statutory Declaration.
- 4.3. Claims are to be submitted not less than quarterly.

PART C – GENERAL CONDITIONS

1. REVIEW OF POLICY

- a. This policy continues to have effect until amended by the Council.
- b. This policy must be reviewed within seven months of a Council general election.**