

# EXPENSES AND SUPPORT FOR COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF DELEGATED COMMITTEES POLICY



Directorate:	Corporate Performance
Responsible Manager:	Manager Governance, Property and Risk
Review Due:	August 2024
Adoption:	Council
Date Adopted:	27 April 2021.

## Acknowledgement

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Central Goldfields Shire Council acknowledges that we are situated on the traditional lands of the Dja Dja Wurrung people, and we offer our respects to their elders past, present and emerging.

## 1. Purpose

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This Policy supports the requirements of the *Local Government Act 2020* in relation to payment of allowances and reimbursement of expenses for Councillors and delegated committee members. It provides an overview of how Council provides resources and training to its Councillors and delegated committee members to ensure they can carry out their functions and duties.

Council must reimburse a Councillor or delegated committee member for out-of-pocket expenses which the Council is satisfied:

- Are bona fide expenses;
- Have been reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of Councillor or delegated committee member; and
- Are reasonably necessary for the Councillor or delegated committee member to perform that role.<sup>1</sup>

## 2. Application and Scope

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This Policy applies to all Councillors elected to the Central Goldfields Shire Council.

This Policy also applies to delegated committee members where specified under this Policy.

Expenditure must always be in the interests of the Central Goldfields Shire community and is allocated from Council's annual budget.

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<sup>1</sup> *Local Government Act 2020* s 40.

Claims for any expenditure not included in this Policy will be subject to a Council resolution.

### 3. Definitions

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**The Act** means the *Local Government Act 2020*.

**CEO's EA** means the Chief Executive Officer's Executive Assistant.

**Training and Conferences** means all training, conferences, events, functions, seminars etc.

**The Role** means, as relevant, the role as Councillor or member of delegate committee.

### 4. General Provisions

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#### 4.1. Overarching Principles

- Receipts/invoices must be provided for any expenses which are being claimed. Failure to produce a receipt/invoice may result in the expense not being reimbursed.
- Receipts/invoices must be itemised and contain relevant information about the expense. EFTPOS receipts/invoices with just a price are not acceptable.
- All reimbursements will be paid in arrears.
- If a Councillor does not claim a particular expense or use a particular resource the budget allocation cannot be rolled over into the next financial year.
- Requests for reimbursement should be received within 60 days of the cost being incurred. Claims for expenses three months or older will not be reimbursed. All claims must be made by 7 July to ensure that they are paid in the correct financial year.

#### 4.2. Claiming Expenses

All claims for reimbursement of expenses must be submitted via an expense claim form (see below), to the CEO's EA, for the CEO's authorisation within one month of the expense being incurred. Tax invoices or receipts must be attached to the claim form to verify the expenditure.

Reimbursement will occur within two weeks of an accurately completed expense claim form, and all required documentation, being received and authorised. Reimbursement will be paid via electronic funds transfer into the Councillor/delegated committee member's bank account.

#### 4.3. Insurance

Council will ensure that policies of insurance are maintained in accordance with the provisions of the Act to provide the relevant protections to Councillors and delegated committee members while performing their duties as a Councillor or delegated committee member.

#### 4.4. Legal Costs

Other than by specific Council resolution or in accordance with a Council Policy, any legal expenses incurred by a Councillor shall be the responsibility of that Councillor.

#### 4.5. Child Care Expenses

The Council will reimburse the cost of necessary child care expenses where the provision of child care is reasonably required for a Councillor or delegated committee member to perform their role.

Child care expenses are not eligible for reimbursement if paid to a family member or a person who normally or regularly lives with the Councillor or delegated committee member, except where a live-in (professional) helper such as a nanny is required to work extra time at extra expense because of the Councillor or delegated committee member's duties.

Each child care expense claimed shall be substantiated by a receipt from the caregiver showing the dates and times care was provided, and the Councillor or delegated committee member shall provide the reason why the care was required on each occasion.

Child Care Expenses will be reimbursed for attendance at:

- Council Meetings, Briefing Sessions of the Council and Committee Meetings of the Council;
- Delegated Committee Meetings;
- Official Council Functions;
- Meetings arising as a result of a Councillor being appointed by the Council to an external body;
- Training or conferences the Councillor is attending which Council has paid for; and
- Other meetings, events or occasions as agreed by the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer from time to time, or by resolution of the Council.

Expenses will be reimbursed to Councillors or delegated committee members following receipt of a completed Claim for Reimbursement of Expenses Form, together with the relevant receipts/invoices.

#### 4.6. Carer Expenses

Council will provide reimbursement of costs where the provision of carer services is reasonably required when a Councillor who is a carer in a care relationship within the meaning of section 4 of the *Carers Recognition Act 2012*.

Payments for carer services will not be made to a person who resides with the Councillor; has any financial or pecuniary interest with the Councillor or has a relationship with the Councillor.

Council will reimburse the out-of-pocket carer expenses incurred by Councillors in the course of carrying out their duties, including attendance when required at:

- Council Meetings, Briefing Sessions of the Council and Committee Meetings of the Council;
- Official Council Functions;
- Meetings arising as a result of a Councillor being appointed by the Council to an external body;
- Training or conferences the Councillor is attending which Council has paid for; and
- Other meetings, events or occasions as agreed by the Mayor or Chief Executive Officer from time to time, or by resolution of the Council.

Carers expenses that may be reimbursed include:

- payment to an accredited child care/attendant care provider, or
- a person providing care who does not:
  - have a familial or like relationship with the Councillor; or
  - reside either permanently or temporarily with the Councillor; or
  - have a relationship with the Councillor or his or her partner such that it would be inappropriate for Council to reimburse monies paid to the care provider.

Fees are generally payable per hour or part thereof, subject to any minimum period which is part of the care provider's usual terms.

#### **4.7. Access and Inclusion**

Council commits to provide support to any individual who requires particular assistance to be able to fulfil their role as a Councillor or delegated committee member. Councillors or delegated committee members requiring particular workplace assistance or modification should contact the General Manager Corporate Performance.

#### **4.8. Councillor Welfare**

Councillors and delegated committee members may approach the CEO with regard to any specific guidance, counselling or coaching that may be required to enhance their performance as a Councillor or delegated committee member.

Councillors or delegated committee members experiencing personal difficulties may seek counselling on a confidential basis through Council's Employee Assistance Program. Details can be obtained from the CEO.

### **5. Councillor Allowances**

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Council will pay an allowance to the Mayor and Councillors as required under the Act.

The allowance will be in accordance with the level of allowance determined by Council, and the notice published in the Government Gazette following the annual review of Mayor and Councillor allowances by the Minister for Local Government.

Allowances shall be paid monthly in advance, provided that upon a Councillor ceasing to hold office or pending an election, payment shall be withheld until such time as the Councillor is declared elected. If a Councillor retires or has their position as a Councillor terminated, they will be required to reimburse Council any Allowance paid in advance.

Payment will be made by electronic funds transfer into the Councillor's nominated bank account.

### **6. Administrative Support**

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#### **6.1. Meeting Room and Mayoral Office**

The Mayor is provided with office accommodation in the Community Hub which may be used for Council business.

Councillors may book meeting rooms owned and controlled by Council for meetings, interviews and other functions where the primary purpose is to allow the Councillor to discharge their Council duties. The Councillor must be in attendance and bookings must be made through the CEO's EA.

## **6.2. Corporate Card**

A Corporate Card will be made available to the Mayor for use while discharging the functions of the office. Use of the Corporate Card must be in accordance with Council's Corporate Purchase Card Policy.

## **6.3. Communication Technology**

All Council and Committee papers, Councillor communications and correspondence will be distributed electronically.

Councillors will be provided with mobile phones and tablet/laptop computers to assist with the conduct of Council business. Councillors will be provided with a Council email address and mobile phone number. These devices are to be used for official Council business only. Council will pay all connection fees, rental charges and all Council business call and data charges. Except for occasional standard phone calls and text messages within Australia, any costs in relation to private use of these devices will be reimbursed to Council by the relevant Councillor.

On request Councillors will be provided with a printer and consumables for the printer for the Councillor to discharge their duties. Councillors who have not been provided with a printer can request that they be provided with agendas and reports for councillor briefings and Council meetings, but electronic provision of documents is preferred due to environmental impact.

Councillors must adhere to Council's Information and Communications Technology Use Policy and Records Management Policy in using any ICT resources provided by Council.

All equipment remains the property of Council therefore any faults or issues with the equipment should be reported to the CEO's EA at the earliest possible opportunity. The CEO's EA will liaise with Council's Information Technology department to have the fault or issue rectified.

All equipment must be returned to Council immediately at the end of a Councillor's term of office or upon retirement or resignation of a Councillor.

## **6.4. Administrative Support**

The CEO's EA will provide administrative support to Councillors to assist them with diary management and in responding to correspondence, enquiries, requests for service, registrations for conferences, reservations for accommodation and meeting rooms as part of their official duties as a Councillor.

## **6.5. Mail Inward**

All hardcopy mail received by Council is deemed to be Council business and will be opened by Central Records staff. Private mail should not be sent via the Council address.

The following provides the basis for how external invitations are received and managed:

- Upon receiving invitations the CEO's EA will distribute invitations and the relevant particulars as specified in the invitation.

- If Councillors advise the CEO's EA that they will be attending an event, the CEO's EA will put the event into the Councillors electronic calendar.
- Invitations addressed to the Mayor will be referred to the Mayor for acceptance. If the Mayor is unable to attend other Councillors will be given the opportunity to attend. The invitation will be discussed at the next Briefing Session of Council, or sent via email if urgent.

### **6.6. Apparel and Stationery**

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

This stationery may include:

- Name plate for Council Meetings;
- Business cards;
- Name badges;
- Paper for printing; and
- Sundry stationery items (excluding Council letterhead) on request.

The Council shall, upon request, lend Councillors protective clothing required to assist in carrying out the duties of office. This clothing is to be returned promptly upon the completion of the activity for which the clothing was required.

This clothing shall be limited to high visibility vests, wet weather pants and pullovers, gumboots, winter jackets and/or hats, as may be held in the store to meet the organisation's requirements.

### **6.7. Return of Resources**

All resources provided to Councillors are provided for use by the Councillor in the conduct of their duties of office. All equipment provided and items purchased shall be returned within one month of the retirement or termination of office to the CEO's EA.

## **7. Travel and vehicle expenses**

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### **7.1. Private vehicle use**

Council will reimburse use for a private vehicle, including car parking fees, incurred for the attendance of meetings, functions and other commitments within Victoria, including within the Shire, reasonably incurred in the performance of the Role.

The allowance payable for reimbursement of private vehicle use will be in accordance with the rates determined by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) 'Cents per kilometre' method calculation.

### **7.2. Travel within Victoria**

Meals within Victoria will not be reimbursed unless an event is a significant distance from the local government area, or an overnight stay is required and has been approved prior. Council will not reimburse the purchase of alcohol.

Accommodation and incidental costs incurred whilst travelling on Council business within the state of Victoria will also be met by Council.

### **7.3. Interstate travel**

Council will cover costs associated with Councillors travelling interstate on Council business as approved by the Council within the limits of the budget approved by Council. This comprises airfares, accommodation costs, car hire, taxis, ride-sharing fares and meals. Council will not cover or reimburse the purchase of alcohol.

### **7.4. Overseas travel**

Council will cover costs associated with Councillors travelling overseas on Council business as approved by the Council within the limits of the budget approved by Council. This comprises airfares, accommodation, passports, visas, passports, car hire, taxis, ride-sharing fares and meals. Council will not cover or reimburse the purchase of alcohol. All overseas travel by Councillors must be approved by resolution of full Council.

All Councillor travel should be undertaken utilising the most direct route and the most practicable and economical mode of transport. When travelling interstate the mode of transport is to be the most cost effective form of transport. All air travel will be in economy class.

Any expenses arising from a breach of road, traffic parking or other regulations or laws or for damage or loss of a vehicle will not be reimbursed or funded by Council.

Travel claims will be from the Councillors notified place of normal residence.

Expenses will be reimbursed to Councillors following receipt of a completed Claim for Travel Expenses Form which includes all required information and supporting documentation.

### **7.5. Vehicles**

A fully maintained vehicle will be provided to assist the Mayor to perform his/her duties and for private use during the Mayoral term.

Where practicable, and by prior arrangement through the CEO's EA, a Council pool vehicle may be made available to Councillors for travel to Council related meetings or engagements. Councillors must complete the log book in pool vehicles.

All vehicle usage must be in accordance with Council's Motor Vehicle Policy.

Alternatively Councillors may use their private vehicle for Council business and request reimbursement at the per kilometre rate determined by the Australian Taxation Office annually.

### **7.6. Parking**

Council will pay for parking when required. Expenses will be reimbursed to Councillors following receipt of a completed Councillor Claim for Reimbursement of Expenses Form, together with the relevant receipts/invoices.

## **8. Training and Conferences**

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Council will cover the registration fees, reasonable travel, meal and accommodation expenses associated with attendance by Councillors at conferences, seminars and functions held locally, interstate and overseas within the limits of the budget approved by Council. Council



will not cover or reimburse the purchase of alcohol. These conferences are normally held by local government related organisations, professional bodies and institutions, and private sector providers on issues and events which impact on the role of Councillors and the Shire in general.

Approval of Councillors' attendance at conferences and events will be determined by the Mayor in consultation with the CEO. Approval for the Mayor's attendance shall be by Council resolution. Consistent with the approval process for travel, all interstate and overseas conferences must be approved by resolution of Council.

Factors to be considered in approval include:

- Relevance of the program to the efficient and effective operations of Central Goldfields Shire Council; and
- Cost/benefit of being represented; and
- Expertise, interest and experience of Councillors in areas of conference business; and,
- Numbers to attend being regulated by distance/cost.

A report of the conference will be provided to all Councillors at the next available Council meeting.

Should Councillor attendance not be considered relevant by the Mayor, and the Councillor still wishes to attend, the matter will be referred to Council for decision.

A Councillor who is funded by Council to attend a conference or training shall participate as a representative of Council, not as an individual.

All attendance at training and conferences shall be booked through the CEO's EA, following approval by the Mayor.

Costs associated with the training, conferences and seminars shall be separately disclosed for and include items such as travel costs, meals, accommodation etc. Separate ledgers exist for each of these items.

The Mayor will approve Councillor attendance at training and conferences. Attendance at training and conferences will only be approved where:

- The event provides an opportunity to receive or upgrade relevant training and skills related to the role of a Councillor;
- The event provides the opportunity to learn key information about an issue of public policy related to the Central Goldfields Shire community; or
- The event has the potential to foster broad economic development opportunities with the Central Goldfields Shire.

There must also be sufficient funds available in the Councillors individual training and conferences budget to cover the cost of the Councillor attending the event.

## 9. Events and functions

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Provision of resources or reimbursement of expenses to a Councillor to attend a function or event will only be provided:

- where a benefit to Central Goldfields Shire can be demonstrated e.g. attendance will contribute towards a commitment under the Council Plan; and If an invitation has been received by the individual, they have been invited in their capacity as a Councillor.

Council does not support political parties, financially or by any other means. Where a Councillor attends a political party event the cost is to be borne by the individual Councillor and no reimbursement will be provided.

### **9.1. Charity fundraising events**

Council may meet the cost of the Mayor or his/her representative to attend charity fundraising events within the Shire where the charity's work benefits the community within Shire. If the Mayor or their representative wishes to make a financial contribution to the charity (e.g. a donation or purchase of an auction item) they will be required to make this contribution personally. If Councillors other than the mayor wish to attend a charity's event, they will be required to make their own contribution to attend.

## **10. Accompanying partners/guests**

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Any additional attendance fees, accommodation costs, meal costs, or any other costs incurred as a result of the attendance of partners and/or children shall be borne by the Councillor.

## **11. Accommodation & Meals**

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Where overnight accommodation is required Council will provide accommodation to a maximum value in line with the rates determined by the ATO.

Accommodation will be arranged to achieve the best value for Council, with breakfast and parking being included wherever possible. The CEO's EA will book the accommodation upon receipt of an approved Councillor Application to Attend Training or Conference Form.

Should Councillors elect to stay at accommodation that is more expensive, Council will only cover costs to the value listed above.

Council will not cover or reimburse the purchase of alcohol.

### **11.1. Refreshments (mini-bar)**

All mini-bar accounts are the responsibility of the Councillor.

### **11.2. Other accommodation costs**

In-room movie charges and dry-cleaning/laundry costs will not be reimbursed to a Councillor or paid for by Council.

### **11.3. Meals**

When a Councillor is attending training and conferences Council will reimburse meal expenses in line with the rates determined by the ATO<sup>2</sup> unless there is a set meal cost included in the training or conference package.

Incidental costs such as snacks, coffee or alcohol will not be covered by Council unless included as part of a meal as stipulated above.

Should Councillors elect to consume meals that are more expensive, Council will only cover costs to the value listed above.

## 12. Reporting

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The Chief Executive Officer shall ensure that any reporting in relation to Councillor expenses and travel required by the Act or the relevant regulations is completed.

Full details of all reimbursements made in accordance with this Policy will be provided annually to the Audit and Risk Committee.

In the interests of transparency and good governance, details of reimbursements to Councillors and delegated committee members will also be published in Council's Annual Report and annually on Council's website.

## 13. Review

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This Policy must be reviewed a minimum of once every 4 years or in line with legislative changes.

## 14. Human Rights Statement

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It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act* (2006). Central Goldfields Shire Council is committed to consultation and cooperation between management and employees.

## 15. Relevant Legislation and Council Policies

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- *Local Government Act 2020*
- Corporate Purchase Card Policy
- Motor Vehicle Policy
- Information and Communications Technology Use Policy
- Records Management Policy

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<sup>2</sup> Table 2 of the ATO's determination for the applicable financial year. For example: <https://www.ato.gov.au/law/view/pdf/pbr/td2020-005.pdf>

## **16. Forms for reimbursement**

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The forms for reimbursement will be based on those included below. If the forms are amended without review of this policy, all the same information will be collected as included in the forms below. The forms may also be made available for online.

**CLAIM FOR REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES**

Councillor: .....

Date of Claim: ..... / ..... / 20...

**Please ensure that all relevant itemised receipts/invoices are attached to your claim. Failure to provide itemised receipts/invoices may result in your claim being denied.**

**PARTICULARS OF CLAIM**

Date	Details	Amount

I certify that the above expenses have been incurred in accordance with the Councillor Expenses Policy.

.....  
Signature of Councillor

.....  
Approved by Chief Executive Officer

<p><b>Office Use Only</b></p>   <p>Ledger Account:</p>
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## CLAIM FOR TRAVEL EXPENSES

Councillor: .....

Date of Claim: ..... / ..... / 20 ...

<b>Date of travel</b>		
<b>Purpose of travel</b> (select)	Council meeting	
	Councillor briefing	
	Meeting with constituent, community group or local business (provide detail)	
<b>Trip details</b>	Travelled from	
	Travelled to	
	Return trip?	Yes / No
<b>Kilometres travelled</b>		
<b>Cents charged per kilometre<sup>3</sup></b>		
<b>Amount claimed for travel</b>		

Table above can be copied and pasted for additional trips.

I certify that the above expenses have been incurred in accordance with the Councillor Expenses Policy.

.....  
Signature of Councillor

.....  
Approved by Chief Executive Officer

<p><b>Office Use Only</b></p> <p>Ledger Account:</p>    
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<sup>3</sup> See <https://www.ato.gov.au/Individuals/Income-and-deductions/Deductions-you-can-claim/Vehicle-and-travel-expenses/Car-expenses/#centsperkm> or similar ATO web page.

**APPLICATION TO ATTEND TRAINING OR CONFERENCE**

Councillor: .....

**TRAINING OR CONFERENCE DETAILS**

<b>Title of Training/Conference:</b>			
<b>Training/Conference Provider:</b>			
<b>Training/Conference duration: (number of days)</b>			
<b>Date/s of Training/Conference:</b>	<b>From:</b>		<b>To:</b>
<b>Cost of Training/Conference:</b>			
<b>Location of Training/Conference:</b>			
<b>Accommodation Required?</b>			
<b>Benefit to Council:</b> <i>(Please provide detail of all relevant benefit/s below)</i>			
The event provides an opportunity to receive or upgrade relevant training and skills related to the role of a Councillor.			
The event provides the opportunity to learn key information about an issue of public policy related to the Central Goldfields Shire community.			
The event has the potential to foster broad economic development opportunities with the Central Goldfields Shire.			

**Please attach details of training or conference.**

I certify that the above expenses have been incurred in accordance with the Councillor Expenses Policy.

.....  
Signature of Councillor

.....  
Approved by Mayor

**Office Use Only**

Ledger Account: