CITY OF MONASH

Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy

COUNCIL POLICY

Governance & Legal (Corporate Services)

OVERVIEW: This Policy supports councillors and members of delegated committees to perform their role, as defined under the *Local Government Act 2020,* by ensuring that expenses reasonably incurred in the performance of their role are reimbursed.

RESPONSIBLE MANAGER:	Manager Governance & General Counsel for the corporate implementation, review, and interpretation of this policy.
RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT:	Corporate Services, Governance & Legal

RESOLVED BY:	COUNCIL
DATE:	29 September 2026
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1. Introduction

This Policy establishes a clear, transparent and accountable framework for the reimbursement of reasonable out-of-pocket expenses and the provision of resources and facilities to Councillors and members of Delegated Committees in order to support the effective performance of their statutory roles.

The Policy ensures that:

- Expenses are reimbursed only where they are bona fide, reasonable and directly related to the performance of a Councillor or Member of Delegated Co official Council business.
- Resources and facilities are provided in a manner that reflects community expectations, good governance and value for money.
- Councillors do not obtain any private or political benefit from expenses or facilities provided by Council.
- Decision-making, reimbursement and reporting arrangements are consistent, auditable and transparent.

This Policy is developed in accordance with the *Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)* and supports Council's obligations relating to transparency, accountability, equity and financial stewardship.

Expenses and facilities not explicitly provided for in this Policy are not eligible for reimbursement or provision.

This Policy consolidates and replaces previous standalone policies relating to Councillor expenses and conference attendance, providing a single, contemporary framework for support, reimbursement and accountability.

2. Legislative Framework

This Policy is adopted pursuant to the *Local Government Act 2020 (Vic).*

The Policy has also been drafted in alignment with:

- *Carers Recognition Act 2012 (Vic)*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)*
- *Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)*

3. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Enable Councillors and members of Delegated Committees to perform their civic duties without financial disadvantage.
- Clearly articulate the types of expenses eligible for reimbursement and the resources and facilities available.
- Provide robust processes for approval, reimbursement, reporting and compliance.

Responsible Officer Statement:

In generating this Policy, Council confirms that its development, implementation, and review comply with the overarching governance principles outlined in the Act. This Policy has considered the importance of engagement, strategic planning, financial management, transparency, and service performance.

4. Scope

This Policy applies to all Councillors elected to Council and Members of Delegated Committees appointed under section 63 of the *Local Government Act 2020 (Vic)*.

This Policy does not apply to Council staff.

5. Exclusions

Council will not incur expenditure, reimburse expenditure or provide facilities where that expenditure relates to

- Councillor's personal or political matters.
- Election campaigning.
- Alcohol reimbursement.
- Parking infringements or speeding fines.
- Any person other than the Councillor or Member of Delegated Committee (e.g. family members).
- Expenses that are not incurred in the role as Councillor.
- Damage to or loss of personal possessions.
- Donations, tips, gratuities, gifts, the purchase of raffle tickets.
- Hotel mini bar, room movies room service (other than a meal) and similar.
- Expenses claimed as a tax deduction.
- Expenses which are fully or partly recoverable from a third party.

Councillors and members of Delegated Committees must not obtain any political benefit from any expense, resource or facility provided under this Policy.

Political benefit includes, but is not limited to:

- Election or re-election campaigning.
- Fundraising activities for political parties or individuals.
- Use of Council resources for political advocacy.

6. Governance Principles

Council commits to the following principles in administering this Policy:

- **Lawfulness and Integrity** – Decisions and actions must comply with relevant legislation and Council policies.
- **Reasonableness** – Expenses must be necessary, appropriate and economical.
- **Equity and Accessibility** – Support mechanisms should enable participation by people from diverse backgrounds, including carers and people with disabilities.
- **Accountability and Transparency** – Clear approval processes and public reporting of Councillor expenses.
- **Appropriate Use of Public Resources** – Council resources must be used efficiently and in line with community expectations.

7. Responsibilities and Roles

Who	Role
Councillors and Members of Delegated Committees	Ensure claims are accurate, justified and compliant with this Policy.
Councillor Support	Administrative review and liaison to ensure completeness of claims.
Manager Governance and General Counsel	Policy compliance, interpretation and secondary review. Delegated authority to approve claims.
Director Corporate Services / CEO	Policy compliance and escalated reviews. Delegated authority to approve claims.

Table 1 – Responsibilities and Roles

8. Provision of Resources and Facilities

Council may provide the following resources and facilities to Councillors and Members of Delegated Committees where they are reasonably required for the performance of official duties.

8.1 Administrative Resources

Council will provide the following administrative and general resources to Councillors and Members of Delegated Committees:

- Administrative support for Council business only.
- Access to meeting rooms and office facilities.
- Stationery and postal services for Council business.
- Access to shared car spaces including e-charging where available.
- Pool vehicle, taxi or ride-share services for Council business.
- Reasonable adjustments to support Councillors with disabilities.
- Meals and beverages in accordance with Council policy.

- Light refreshments in the Councillor lounge in accordance with Council policy.

8.2ICT Resources

The Council will provide to Councillors and keep appropriately updated:

- Mobile phone
- Internet access (dongle or sim)
- Laptop computer
- Tablet

Where possible, the type and kind of equipment provided will be aligned with Council's internal digital technology provisions.

Council facilitates the use of mobile phones and laptops for private use, where a reasonable reimbursement is made from the Councillor or Member of Delegated Committee to the Council.

8.3 Insurance

Council will hold and keep Councillors and Officers liability insurance.

8.4 Legal Assistance

Legal fees for Councillor matters may be paid from the Council's budget only where prior approval has been obtained from a Council resolution. The Council will generally pay or reimburse legal fees in accordance with the Act.

8.5 Additional facilities for the Mayor

Where approved, the Mayor may be provided with:

- A Council-maintained vehicle and fuel card.
- A designated parking space.
- Additional administrative support determined by the CEO.
- Use of the formal ceremonial robe and chains.
- Provision of a Mayoral Event, to be coordinated and held within the Mayoral term.
- Provision of a Mayoral budget for small gifts to the community.

9. Expenses and Reimbursements

This Policy applies to all expenditure that is incurred for or by Councillors or Members of Delegated Committees. This includes expenditure that is incurred by Council on behalf of a Councillor, or expenditure that the Councillor has incurred and has requested reimbursement.

The items below consider the categories for which expenditure can be incurred and any conditions regarding its incurring.

9.1 General Principles

- Expenses must be incurred in connection with official Council business or the duties of a Councillor.
- Expenses must be reasonable, necessary and economical.
- Claims must be supported by appropriate documentation, including receipts.

9.2 Travel and Transport

Councillors may incur travel costs as part of their role. Travel should be undertaken as efficiently as possible using the most cost-effective means of transport.

Eligible travel expenses include:

- Use of a private vehicle (reimbursed at the ATO work-related kilometre rate).
- Public transport, taxis and approved ride-share services.
- Parking and tolls.
- Economy airfare travel.

Where a Councillor claims reimbursement for their private vehicle, their reimbursement claim should include:

- Details of where the claim started and where the claim ended and the purpose for the travel.

9.3 Interstate and Overseas Travel

All interstate and overseas travel requires prior approval by Council resolution.

9.4 Accommodation and Meals

Council may reimburse reasonable accommodation and meal expenses for approved travel.

Accommodation will be booked based on its proximity to the conference, seminar, training or event and will be the most appropriate and economic choice. Where accommodation is required, it will be available from the day prior to registration day and on each day which official sessions are held.

If a Councillor is required to be away from home, then breakfast, lunch and dinner will be reimbursed in accordance with applicable ATO expense thresholds for meals.

Alcohol is not reimbursable.

9.5 Carer and Dependent Care Expenses

Council will reimburse reasonable childcare or carer expenses where they are necessary to enable a Councillor or Delegated Committee Member to perform official duties, consistent with the *Carers Recognition Act 2012* (Vic).

Costs will be reimbursed where the care is provided by a registered provider. Payments for carer and childcare services will not be made to a person who resides with, has any financial or pecuniary interest or has a relationship with the Councillor or Delegated Committee Member.

9.6 Memberships

Councillors are entitled to payment or reimbursement of membership fees to any bodies that support the work of a Council or role of a Councillor.

Council will meet the cost of membership to the AICD.

9.7 Professional Development, Conferences and Events

Council will support both mandatory and discretionary professional development activities relevant to the role of a Councillor.

Mandatory training will form part of the Councillor Professional Development Program as required under section 32 of the *Local Government Act 2020*. Such training should adequately assist Councillors to undertake their roles.

However, Council acknowledges that there is a raft of discretionary training, conferences and seminars that will provide Councillors with additional knowledge and understanding.

Council also acknowledges that attendance at events is necessary to the role of the Councillor.

Council will meet the costs of registration, meals, travel and accommodation associated with attendance at conferences, seminars, training and events required to fulfil the role of Councillor or Member of a Delegated Committee.

Councillors may also choose to undertake the AICD Company Directors' Course. Whilst such training is not mandatory, Council acknowledges the benefits of this particular course, and the costs of the course will be covered by Council.

Council will report on all training undertaken by Councillors twice per year.

9.7.1 Reporting on Conference attendance

Where a Councillor attends a conference, seminar or professional development activity at Council expense that exceeds $1000, the Councillor must report back to Council on their attendance.

The report must include:

- the purpose of attendance and relevance to the Councillor's role;
- key issues, learnings or outcomes arising from the conference; and
- how the information gained may inform or benefit Council decision-making, policy or practice.

Where two or more Councillors attend the same conference, a joint report may be submitted.

The report must be provided to Council within two ordinary Council meeting cycles following attendance, unless otherwise approved.

9.7.2 Failure to attend a conference, seminar or professional development activity

Where a Councillor has been registered to attend a conference, seminar or professional development activity at Council expense, and the Councillor fails to attend, Council will first make every effort to recover the costs associated through:

a. rescheduling the Councillor's attendance to another time, if available.
b. a refund of monies or credit.

Where the Councillor has failed to attend, the Councillor should provide reasonable justification to the Mayor and CEO regarding their failure to attend.

9.8 Appreciation of Service

Where approved, Councillors will receive gifts as a token of appreciation of their service to the Community.

Mayoral and Deputy Mayoral gifts

At the conclusion of the Mayoral and Deputy Mayoral term, a gift will be organised and presented on behalf of Council to the Councillors nominated as Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

Gifts will be organised by the Governance Team and be a reflection on the Mayoral or Deputy Mayoral year served.

End of Term gifts

Councillors are elected for a four-year term of Council. At the conclusion of the term, serving Councillors may be presented with a gift as a token of appreciation for their service to the Community.

9.9 Other Expenses

This Policy acknowledges that there are other types of expenditure that is not clearly outlined in this Policy, but may be reasonably incurred while performing the duties of a Councillor.

Where such expenditure is to be incurred, it is recommended that the Councillor discuss with the Mayor and CEO prior, or in the case of the Mayor, the CEO.

Any approvals will be considered in line the with the principles and approvals contained in this Policy.

10. Claims and Approval Process

All requests to incur expenditure must be made to Councillor Support. Such requests:

- Should be accompanied by sufficient information to evidence that the expense is being incurred by the Councillor in the role of Councillor.
- Details of costs or other requirements, including receipts.

All claims for reimbursement must be submitted to Councillor Support using the approved Councillor Expense Reimbursement Form.

- Claims must be submitted within twelve months of the expense being incurred, preferably within the same financial year. Claims that are made after this time will not be eligible for reimbursement.
- Claims are reviewed administratively, then approved by delegated officers.
- Claims that do not meet Policy requirements will be returned with reasons provided, within two weeks of the claim being made.

- A person who has ceased being a Councillor or Member of Delegated Committee must make their claim within 1 month of ceasing to hold the office. Claims that are made after this time will not be eligible for reimbursement.

The following officers have delegated approval to incur or reimburse expenses on behalf of Councillors.

- Manager Governance and General Counsel – up to a maximum of $2500 per payment or claim.
- Director Corporate Services/CEO – up to a maximum of $5000 per payment or claim.
- Council Resolution – for any amount exceeding $5001 per payment or claim.

11. Reporting and Transparency

Council will:

- Report to Audit and Risk Committee yearly.
- Include Councillor expenses in the Annual Report and LGPRF reporting.

12. Return of Equipment

In the event of a resignation, retirement, suspension or disqualification of a Councillor, the Councillor must return all Councillor supplied equipment and materials within one week of that resignation, retirement, or disqualification.

In the event that a Councillor has been suspended from office, all access to Council systems and programs will be suspended immediately for the duration of the suspension from office.

13. Gender Impact Assessment

Council has a legislative responsibility under the *Gender Equality Act 2020* to conduct a Gender Impact Assessment (GIA) on all new policies, programs and services (and those that are up for formal review) which have a direct and significant impact on the community.

This Policy has been assessed for compatibility with the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)* and the *Gender Equality Act 2020 (Vic)*. The Policy supports equitable participation in civic office and access to reasonable support mechanisms.

14. Review and Amendments

This Policy will be reviewed within the first 12 months of a general election.

Administrative amendments that do not materially alter the Policy may be approved by the CEO. Material amendments require Council resolution.

15. Superseded Policies

Upon adoption by Council, this Policy supersedes and replaces the following policies:

- Policy for Reimbursement of Expenses to Councillors and Members of Delegated Committees and Resources and Facilities for Councillors (adopted on 28 July 2020)

- Councillors' Attendance at Conferences – Policy on Reporting Back to Council (adopted by Council on 25 August 2020).

Any requirements previously contained within the superseded policy relating to Councillor attendance at conferences, professional development and reporting obligations are now governed by this Policy.

16. Document Version

Version Number	Date	Author	Reviewed By	Approved By	Comments
1.0	28/07/2020	Manager Governance & Legal	Corporate Services	Council	Councillors Reimbursement of expenses policy
1.2	1/07/2026	Manager Governance and General Counsel	Director Corporate Services	Council	Administrative review. Further clarity around application of policy. Incorporation of Councillors reporting back to Council re: travel.

17. Contact

If you have any questions about this Policy, please contact Council:

By emailing: governance@monash.vic.gov.au

By calling Manager Governance and General Counsel on 9518 3555.