



Councillor Expense and Support Policy

Policy outcome	To enable Councillor understanding of the level of support they can expect to receive in their role as Councillors and the expenses they are entitled to claim to properly discharge their civic responsibilities.
Responsible area	Governance
Version	3
Date approved/adopted	19 June 2024
Planned review date/s	Full policy review: 2028

1. Purpose

- 1.1. Section 41 of the *Local Government Act 2020* requires Council to adopt a Council expenses policy, which outlines the procedures and policy for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses of Councillors and members of delegated committees, and the Audit and Risk Committee.
- 1.2. This policy supports Councillors and members of delegated committees and the Audit and Risk Committee 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. The policy also provides guidance on:
 - 1.2.1. Entitlements;
 - 1.2.2. Processes for reimbursement;
 - 1.2.3. Reporting requirements.
- 1.3. The policy is intended to ensure that Councillors and members of delegated committees and the Audit and Risk Committee are supported to perform their duties without disadvantage.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to:
 - 2.1.1. All City of Port Phillip Councillors;
 - 2.1.2. All members of delegated committees and the Audit and Risk Committee of City of Port Phillip.
- 2.2. Councillors and members of delegated committees and the Audit and Risk Committee will be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses that are:



- 2.2.1. Bona fide expenses; and
 - 2.2.2. Have been reasonably incurred in the performance of the role of Councillor; and
 - 2.2.3. Are reasonably necessary for the Councillor and member of a delegated committee to perform this role.
- 2.3. All requests by Councillors for expense reimbursement or use of support must be as a direct result of conducting official business of Council. Official business of Council is defined as:
- 2.3.1. Council meetings, Planning Committee meetings, and South Melbourne Market and Audit and Risk Committee meetings.
 - 2.3.2. A meeting of Councillors that is scheduled or planned for the purpose of discussing the business of Council or briefing Councillors and is attended by at least one member of Council staff.
 - 2.3.3. A meeting of a delegated committee as established by Council under Section 63 of the Local Government Act 2020.
 - 2.3.4. A meeting of a joint delegated committee as established by Council under Section 64 of the Local Government Act 2020.
 - 2.3.5. A meeting of a Community Asset Committee as established by Council under Section 65 of the Local Government Act 2020.
 - 2.3.6. Meetings held with members of Council staff or other Councillors, where a diary entry of the meeting has been made prior to the meeting occurring.
 - 2.3.7. Civic or ceremonial occasions and functions that have been convened by the Council or the Mayor.
 - 2.3.8. Meetings and functions Councillors have been invited to attend in their role as a Councillor.
 - 2.3.9. Meetings and functions arising as a direct result of a Councillor being appointed by Council to a board or committee, except where the board or committee reimburses relevant expenses incurred by the Councillor.
 - 2.3.10. Meetings with people in the capacity as a Councillor, where the Councillor can outline the purpose and Council business undertaken during the meeting, and where a diary entry has been made prior to the meeting occurring.
 - 2.3.11. Conferences, seminars, official visits and training sessions that a Councillor has received prior approval by the CEO, and in some cases Council, to attend.



2.3.12. Preparatory time; limited to a maximum amount of 12 hours for the day of Council meetings and Assemblies of Council, can only be claimed in relation to childcare expenses.

2.4. The following terms are defined for this Policy:

2.4.1. Carer: A carer is defined under section 4 of the *Carers Recognition Act 2012*

2.4.2. Delegated committee: Delegated committees are defined under sections 63 - 65 of the *Local Government Act 2020*

2.4.3. Audit and Risk Committee: means the Audit and Risk Committee established by Council under section 53 of the *Local Government Act 2020*

2.5. Administration and resolution of issues under this policy will reflect the highest standards of integrity and be undertaken in a manner that builds trust in Councillors, Council and in the system of local government in Victoria.

2.6. Any expenses, facilities support or resources not specifically addressed in this Policy will be assessed by reference to the *Local Government Act 2020* and any relevant Regulations. Should a situation arise that is not adequately resolved by this Policy, the matter will be referred to Council for determination by resolution.

2.7. To assist in implementation of this policy, Councillors and members of delegated committees and the Audit and Risk Committee will:

2.7.1. Not seek to gain personal benefit from expenses that are reimbursed and paid by ratepayers.

2.7.2. Submit honest and unaltered claims for reimbursement.

2.7.3. Take all possible steps to clearly distinguish those activities described as duties as a Councillor from their personal, business and political activities.

2.7.4. Seek to make use of Council's administrative systems rather than incur personal expenditure whilst performing their Duties as a Councillor

3. Policy

The following sections outline the legitimate expenses that will be reimbursed, and support that will be provided to Councillors, members of delegated committees and the Audit and Risk Committee, to support them in undertaking the official business of Council, as outlined in Section 3.3 Where it is not otherwise defined, reference to a Councillor is taken to also refer to a member of a delegated committee or a member of the Audit and Risk Committee:

3.1. Administrative Support

3.1.1. Administrative support that directly pertains to the official business of Council is provided to Councillors by the Councillor and Executive Support team. The service provided includes the scheduling of meetings, answering of phone calls,



responding to invitations, preparing correspondence and record keeping. The service provided is at a level determined reasonable by the CEO.

- 3.1.2. Office equipment and necessary stationery are provided to enable Councillors to undertake official business of the Council. The service provided is at a level determined reasonable by the CEO.
- 3.1.3. Councillors are supplied letterhead and business cards to conduct official business of the Council at a level determined reasonable by the CEO.

3.2. Building Access and Parking

- 3.2.1. Councillors are provided with a twenty-four hour access card to enter St Kilda Town Hall and the Councillor Office, as well as the Port Melbourne Town Hall and Port Melbourne Town Hall Mayor's Office, to enable them to discharge their responsibilities.
- 3.2.2. Councillors may request access to use the 'End of trip' facilities which includes bicycle storage cages at St Kilda Town Hall, and showers and changeroom amenities located at Bubup Nairn basement.
- 3.2.3. Councillors conducting business of Council can park in paid parking locations without purchasing a ticket and are exempt from permit zones and from the time restrictions in timed areas, excluding 15 minute zones, as long as the vehicle clearly displays a valid Parking Permit. Councillors must obey all statutory signage.
- 3.2.4. Councillors have access to shared parking spaces at the St Kilda Town Hall to support them in undertaking official Council business.
- 3.2.5. In the event that a Councillor on Council business receives a parking infringement notice, the Councillor may apply for an internal review of the parking infringement notice. The application must describe the Council business engaged in or the functions the Councillor was performing at the time. The parking infringement notice will be reviewed in accordance with Council's existing processes.

3.3. Carer Expenses

- 3.3.1. Council will provide reimbursement for expenses of a carer, as defined under the *Carers Recognition Act of Victoria 2012*, if a Councillor or member of a delegated committee or the Audit and Risk Committee normally performs carer duties, and external carer support is required to enable a Councillor to fulfill official business of Council as outlined in Section 2.3.
- 3.3.2. Councillors or member of a delegated committee or the Audit and Risk Committee can only seek reimbursement for carer expenses, for the duration of official business of Council and thirty (30) minutes of transit time before and after the official business of Council (extenuating circumstances such as traffic can be approved by exception by the CEO) as outlined in Section 2.3.
- 3.3.3. Subject to the funding allocated to this reimbursement provision set through the annual Council budget, carer expense reimbursement will be capped at the Victorian Government Support for Carers Program Guidelines respite support



hourly rate, outlined in Attachment 1. Reimbursement will be provided for relevant associated booking fees.



3.3.4. To be eligible for reimbursement the:

- 3.3.4.1. Costs of care must be incurred by a Councillor or member of a delegated committee or the Audit and Risk Committee in the course of carrying out official business of Council as outlined in Section 2.2.
- 3.3.4.2. Costs of care must be linked to responsibilities the Councillor or member of a delegated committee or the Audit and Risk Committee would normally fulfil as a carer, as defined under the *Carers Recognition Act of Victoria 2012*.
- 3.3.4.3. Costs must relate only to care and no other domestic duties.
- 3.3.4.4. Costs of care must not have been covered by other entitlements, such as Australian or Victorian Government Benefits.
- 3.3.4.5. In-home carer must hold a Level 2 first aid qualification and be operating as a registered business in Australia.
- 3.3.4.6. In-home carer must not be a family member, relative or household member (family members include spouse or domestic partner, son or daughter, brother or sister, father or mother).
- 3.3.4.7. Centre care must be registered for this purpose in Australia.

3.4. Childcare

- 3.4.1. Council will provide reimbursement for childcare expenses where the provision of childcare is reasonably required for a Councillor or member of a delegated committee or the Audit and Risk Committee to perform their role as outlined in Section 2.2. This includes 30 minutes of transit time before and after the official business of Council (extenuating circumstances such as traffic can be approved by exception by the CEO).
- 3.4.2. Council will provide reimbursement for childcare expenses for preparatory time; limited to a maximum amount of 12 hours for the day of Council meetings and Assemblies of Council.
- 3.4.3. Council will provide reimbursement of full day childcare if the Councillor has met the definition in clause 2.2 for at least 4 hours for the day being claimed.
- 3.4.4. Subject to the funding allocated to this reimbursement provision set through the annual Council budget, reimbursement will be capped at the maximum Federal Government hourly rate for in-home care (updated annually inline with CPI), as outlined in Attachment 1 and any associated booking fees.
- 3.4.5. To be eligible for reimbursement the:
 - 3.4.5.1. Costs of care must be incurred by a Councillor or member of a delegated committee or the Audit and Risk Committee in the course of carrying out official business of Council as outlined in Section 2.2.
 - 3.4.5.2. Costs of care must relate only to care of a child and no other domestic duties.
 - 3.4.5.3. Child must be aged less than 16 years of age, unless the child has a disability and requires assistance with daily living tasks.
 - 3.4.5.4. Costs of care must not have been covered by other entitlements, such as Australian Government Child Care Benefit.



- 3.4.5.5. Childcare / babysitting service provider must not be a family member, relative or household member (family members include spouse or domestic partner, son or daughter, brother or sister, father or mother, or grandparents).
- 3.4.5.6. Centre care must be a registered childcare centre in Victoria.

3.5. Council Business Assistance

- 3.5.1. The Administration shall, if requested, provide individual Councillors with necessary advice and assistance on the nature and form of any motion or alternative recommendations that the Councillor wishes to move. The form and timings of this information and advice are guided by Council's Governance Rules.
- 3.5.2. The Administration will provide Councillors with all necessary advice, information and assistance to support their understanding of matters coming before Council, as well as advice to support them to discharge their legislative obligations, at a level determined appropriate by the CEO.

3.6. Councillors with a Disability

- 3.6.1. The CEO will put in place appropriate arrangements to support Councillors or member of a delegated committee or the Audit and Risk Committee with a disability, which could include implementing adjustments to Council facilities and workspaces, adoption of practices and provision of specific services, facilities, aids, equipment or additional expense entitlements such as transport.
- 3.6.2. As required and appropriate, Councillors or member of a delegated committee or the Audit and Risk Committee with a disability, will be required to provide the CEO with supporting evidence, such as a letter from a medical practitioner or suitably qualified health practitioner, substantiating the need for revised arrangements.

3.7. Councillor Webpages

- 3.7.1. Each Councillor will be provided with space on Council's website to display content such as a photo, contact details, personal statements, hobbies and interests, Councillor assignments, academic qualifications and professional memberships.

3.8. Health, Safety and Wellbeing

- 3.8.1. Councillors and delegated committee members are subject to the health, safety and wellbeing policies and procedures of the Council.
- 3.8.2. Councillors have a health, safety and wellbeing responsibility to all Council staff, including the CEO.
- 3.8.3. A Councillor or delegated committee member injured while carrying out duties as a Councillor or delegated committee member may be entitled to claim workers compensation. All injuries, hazards and near misses identified by a Councillor must be reported through Council's incident management reporting system.



- 3.8.4. Councillors and delegated committee members are entitled to access Council's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to receive confidential counselling, coaching and support for workplace issues.
- 3.8.5. Councillors and delegated committee members are entitled to access a free flu vaccine as part of Council's annual clinics, which provide flu vaccines for staff. If Council includes a COVID19 vaccine to its annual clinic this will also be available for Councillors and delegated committee members.

3.9. Independent Legal Advice

- 3.9.1. Council will not fund any legal costs or advice as a result of the private business of Councillors or member of a delegated committee or the Audit and Risk Committee.
- 3.9.2. From time to time, Councillors may need advice to support them in discharging their role or legal responsibilities. Requests of this nature should be referred to the CEO and/or the Governance Team, who will provide guidance to support the Councillor in making a decision around how they discharge their role. Where required, the CEO or Governance Team will seek independent legal advice at the cost of Council to enable Councillors to discharge their responsibilities.
- 3.9.3. The legal advice outlined at 3.9.2, does not extend to the provision of ongoing legal representation in relation to any legal issue or matter without a resolution of Council to that effect.

3.10. Insurance

- 3.10.1. Councillors and delegated committee members and Audit and Risk Committee members are covered under the following Council insurance policies while discharging, in good faith, official Council business as outlined in Section 2.3:
 - 3.10.1.1. Public liability
 - 3.10.1.2. Professional indemnity
 - 3.10.1.3. Councillor, Delegated Committee Member, Audit and Risk Committee Member and Officer liability
 - 3.10.1.4. Personal Accident.
- 3.10.2. The Council will pay the insurance excess in respect of any claim made against a Councillor or delegated committee member or Audit and Risk Committee member arising from official business of Council, where any claim is accepted by Council's insurers, whether defended or not.

3.11. Mayor and Councillor Allowances

- 3.11.1. The Mayor and Councillors are entitled to receive from the Council an allowance in accordance with a Determination of the Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal under the *Victorian Independent Remuneration Tribunal and Improving Parliamentary Standards Act 2019*.
- 3.11.2. A Mayor, Deputy Mayor or Councillor may elect:
 - to receive the entire allowance to which they are entitled; or
 - to receive a specified part of the allowance to which they are entitled; or



- to receive no allowance.

3.11.3. Councillor allowances are paid fortnightly by electronic funds transfer.

3.11.4. Allowances and amounts paid in lieu of superannuation are taxable income and Councillors should put in place their own processes for documenting claimable expenses. Personal taxation is the responsibility of each Councillor.

3.12. Meals, Refreshments, Newspapers and Magazines

3.12.1. A light meal and refreshments may be provided for Councillors while they are attending Council meetings or briefings, at or about mealtimes.

3.12.2. A Councillor is not able to claim reimbursement of expenses for meals and refreshments, apart from if the Councillor is attending a pre-approved conference or seminar by the CEO or Council (which is being held in an intrastate, interstate or international location) and sustenance is not included as part of the pre-approved event.

3.12.3. In the case of a Councillor attending a pre-approved conference or seminar in an intrastate, interstate or international location, reimbursement of expenses for meals and refreshments will be in line with Council policy.

3.12.4. Access to newspapers and periodicals either in print or online that are required to support the Councillor in undertaking official business will be provided to Councillors.

3.13. Media Support

3.13.1. The Mayor is the principal spokesperson for Council when dealing with the media.

3.13.2. Media support that directly pertains to the official business of Council is provided by the Communications Department to the Mayor and to Councillors who are delegated by the Mayor, to manage a particular issue.

3.13.3. The services provided include responding to media enquiries, providing media advice, developing media releases, writing speeches and arranging media events directly related to the official business of Council. The service provided is at a level determined reasonable by the CEO.

3.14. Office Use and Storage

3.14.1. Councillors are entitled to the use of office accommodation and document storage for the purposes of performing their roles as Councillors during the term of office, as allocated by the CEO.

3.14.2. Councillors are entitled to use available offices and meeting rooms for conducting official business of Council.

3.15. Communication Equipment

3.15.1. Councillors are entitled to appropriate technology to enable them to undertake the official business of Council. Councillors will be provided a mobile phone and a laptop to support them in undertaking their duties and can elect to also access an iPad.



3.15.2. Councillors must acknowledge, and agree to be bound by, Council's Information and Communication Technology User Policy, before they access Council equipment, systems or information.

3.15.3. Mobile Phone

- 3.15.3.1. Council will pay all connection fees, rental charges and all Council business call charges, with accounts being sent directly to Council. All Councillors will also receive a monthly data plan that can be used to connect them to the internet from both their mobile phone and other devices.
- 3.15.3.2. It is recognised that for practical reasons, a Councillor may make a reasonable number of non-Council related calls. They may also make reasonable personal use of mobile devices, including mobile data.
- 3.15.3.3. International calls will not be considered reasonable use unless a Councillor is conducting Council business (such as making arrangements for a conference/tour that has been approved by a resolution of Council). Telephone calls to information service providers which incur a significant per minute charge will normally not be considered reasonable use.
- 3.15.3.4. International Roaming is not enabled on Councillor communication devices by default. Should a Councillor wish to use their Council issued communication device to conduct council business while overseas (for example reading and responding to emails, attending meetings, virtual calls) written approval from the CEO, or their delegate, must be obtained before International Roaming is enabled.
- 3.15.3.5. Where approved, International Roaming will be enabled for councillors travelling to eligible countries as part of the Optus Daily International Roaming Pass (\$10 per day for countries outside of New Zealand and the USA, and up to \$30 per day where required) to allow for remote participation in Council Meetings, in line with Council's existing Enterprise User Agreement.
- 3.15.3.6. Councillors who are taking a 'leave of absence' to go overseas will not be eligible to request International Roaming.
- 3.15.3.7. App store purchases will not be covered by Council and must be reimbursed by Councillors.
- 3.15.3.8. Apps must be appropriate for Council devices, do not interfere with device performance and do not pose any risk to the safety of children or young people.

3.15.4. Damaged or lost equipment

- 3.15.4.1. Equipment provided to each Councillor should last the full Council term. Councillors must regularly perform software updates on mobile phones when notified to do so. If equipment is lost or damaged



Councillors must advise as soon as practicable of the circumstances involved. Requests for replacement or additional equipment will be referred to the CEO or delegate for consideration.

3.15.5. Return of equipment

- 3.15.5.1. If a Councillor is suspended in accordance with the Local Government Act 2020 the Councillor must return all Council equipment and materials to the Council at the beginning of the term of suspension.
- 3.15.5.2. In the case that a Councillor seeks a leave of absence, they will not be required to return their Council provided equipment, unless specifically requested by a vote of Council, where the reason for the leave meets the definition of a conflict of interest with that person's role as Councillor.
- 3.15.5.3. At the end of a Councillor's term or when they no longer perform Duties as a Councillor on a permanent basis:
 - All communication equipment is to be returned to the Council
 - Councillors will be provided a mobile phone number and may elect to continue using this number at the end of their term. Council will coordinate the transfer of mobile phone numbers to individuals requesting this.

3.16. Training and Development

3.16.1. Professional Memberships

Council holds a range of corporate professional memberships that are reviewed on an annual basis. Councillors are able to access information, training and development opportunities through these corporate memberships.

Council does not fund individual professional memberships of Councillors with the exception of memberships to the Australian Local Government Women's Association (ALWGA) to enable female Councillors to participate in their professional development programs.

3.16.2. Professional Development Program

- 3.16.2.1. At the beginning of each Council term, officers will work with Councillors to establish a professional development program to ensure they have the skills and experience required to help them in discharging their role. This professional development program may include initiatives held at Council or attendance at external conferences, seminars or courses that result in formal qualifications. The program will take the form as outlined in Attachment 2.
- 3.16.2.2. Subject to the funding allocated to this provision set through the annual Council budget, each Councillor will be entitled to access up to \$6,000 per annum, and \$10,000 for the Mayor, for the purpose of professional



development. Subject to budget funding, Councillors can exceed this annual limit to participate in the Australia Institute of Company Directors course. All other exceptions to the annual limit must be approved by the CEO. If a Councillor does spend more in a particular financial year, they must not have spent more than \$24,000 as a Councillor, with additional allowance if they have held the position of Mayor at the conclusion of the Council term. This funding can be used to attend conferences, seminars, workshops or courses that result in formal qualifications.

3.17. Attendance at Conferences, Seminars and Workshops

3.17.1. Councillors can seek support to attend a conference, seminar or workshop held by an external body. To be eligible for support the request must:

- be lodged and approved by the CEO or delegate prior to the Councillor registering or attending the activity
- clearly demonstrate the value to the community and Council of the Councillor attending the activity
- be undertaken prior to Council entering into the caretaker period
- be delivered by a reputable provider
- satisfy budget requirements outlined in Section 3.16.2.2.

3.17.2. After attending conferences, seminars or workshops Councillors must provide a report back to the Council on the benefits that were derived and the application of these to further Council business.

3.17.3. Attendance by Spouse/Partner at Seminars, Conferences and Civic Functions

3.17.3.1. Attendance at any seminar, conference or civic function by a Councillor's spouse/partner shall be at the expense of the Councillor except where:

- Prior approval has been given by Council;
- There is an agreed expectation of partners attending, i.e. spouse/partner of the Councillor is specified on the invitation;
- Attendance by a Councillor's spouse/partner is considered to be necessary or appropriate to support the business or representational needs of Council;
- Sufficient provision exists in the approved annual budget for conferences and seminars.

3.17.4.2. Where Council has approved a Councillor's spouse/partner to attend a seminar, conference or civic function, Councillors are entitled to have paid by Council, or reimbursed, their spouse or partner's:

- Registration fees (for a Civic Function, but not a seminar or conference);
- Reasonable costs for meals and refreshments;
- Attendance at one primary conference dinner, when held, for each interstate conference attended.

3.17.4.3. Other than this, all additional costs incurred for the attendance of a spouse/partner will be at the expense of the Councillor.





3.18. Attendance at Courses

3.18.1. Councillors can seek support to attend courses that result in formal qualifications, such as the Australian Institute of Company Directors. To be eligible for support the request must:

- be lodged and approved by the CEO or delegate (with reference to the Mayor) prior to the Councillor registering or attending the activity
- clearly demonstrate the value to the community and Council of the Councillor attending the activity
- be completed more than nine months prior to the end of the Council term, to enable the skills learnt to be applied during the term of Council
- be delivered by a reputable provider
- satisfy budget requirements outlined in Section 3.16.2.2.

3.18.2. Annual membership to the Australian Institute of Company Directors in order to qualify for discount on the course is not considered an individual professional membership as outlined in clause 3.16.1.

3.19. Travel

3.19.1. Each year, Councillors and delegated committee members can incur or claim reasonable expenses for travel associated within the Greater Melbourne area as defined by the State Revenue Office of Victoria, to enable them to undertake official business of Council.

3.19.2. Expenditure outlined in Section 3.19.1 can take the form of reimbursement for vehicle mileage in line with the City of Port Phillip Enterprise Agreement; use of a Council Myki card or reimbursement of personal Myki card use, use of Council cabcharge, reimbursement for taxi or a registered ride share service (including e-bikes and e-scooters) as well as bicycle maintenance.

3.19.3. In all but the case of bicycle maintenance, Councillors must highlight the nature of Council business undertaken for each trip and officers will provide reports to Councillors in the case of Council supplied Myki cards and cabcharges to help facilitate this requirement.

3.19.4. Bicycle maintenance is defined as a tune-up or the requirement to replace and repair parts central to the legal operation of the bicycle including but not limited to helmets, pedals, handlebars, bells, lights, saddle, wheels, tyres and chains. Items that will not be reimbursed include bicycle clothing, baskets, seat coverings and locks.

3.19.5. Councillors will have access to Council carpool vehicles and bicycles to enable them to undertake official business of Council.

3.19.6. The Mayor has the option of utilising a dedicated vehicle to be used when performing official business of Council. The ongoing costs of maintaining and operating this vehicle will be determined by the type of vehicle chosen, in accordance with the City of Port Phillip Fleet Policy and will be reported against the Mayor of the Day for the purposes of monthly Councillor expense reporting.



- 3.19.7. Councillors who incur traffic fines while traveling to or attending an event under the definition of duties as a Councillor will bear that personal cost and cannot seek reimbursement.
- 3.19.8. Councillors can undertake intrastate travel outside of the greater Melbourne area to fulfill responsibilities where they are an appointed representative for Council. All other instances (excluding the Mayor), requires pre-approval by the CEO.
- 3.19.9. Domestic travel for Councillors (excluding the Mayor) requires Council approval. All travel must be in accordance with the achievement of Council's objectives and goals. Councillors must provide detailed reporting on proposals for travelling interstate and written reports on the resultant outcomes and benefits to Council must be undertaken. Such travel will be incorporated into a Councillor's professional development allowance. Unless otherwise approved by Council, all domestic travel is required to be by the most economical means and by the most direct route. Air travel upgrades are permitted if at the Councillor's expense.
- 3.19.10. The Mayor can undertake domestic travel with approval from the CEO (not Council) to attend the Australian Local Government Association and meetings with representatives of the Commonwealth Government on city or Council related issues. Interstate travel outside of these parameters by the Mayor requires Council approval. All other conditions for Mayoral domestic travel are in line with the requirements outlined in 3.19.9.
- 3.19.11. Overseas travel for all Councillors including the Mayor requires formal approval by Council prior to any bookings being made. All travel must be in accordance with the achievement of Council's objectives and goals. Councillors must provide detailed reporting on proposals for travelling overseas and written reports on the resultant outcomes and benefits to Council must be undertaken. Such travel will be incorporated into a Councillor's professional development allowance. Unless otherwise approved by Council, all international travel is required to be by the most economical means and by the most direct route. Air travel upgrades are permitted if at the Councillor's expense.
- 3.19.12. Accommodation associated with interstate and international travel should be the lowest rate available at suitable hotels within a reasonable distance from the main location of the official business of Council. Both domestic and international accommodation must be booked in advance to secure best pricing.
- 3.19.13. Personal travel before or after official business of Council must be pre- approved as part of the approval process for the travel and must not have any detrimental effects on the official business of Council.
- 3.19.14. Where a Councillor is undertaking private travel arrangements in conjunction with Council approved and funded travel, the Councillor must ensure that all costs incurred with private travel are clearly delineated from the Council funded travel arrangements.
- 3.19.15. The cost of a partner, spouse or companion accompanying a Councillor on a business trip must be borne by that person.



3.20. Other Expenditure

Any expenditure not specified above as expenditure for which a Councillor is entitled to be reimbursed or paid by Council shall be the responsibility of the Councillor, except where Council resolves otherwise.

4. Administration of Policy

4.1. Monitoring of Expenditure

- 4.1.1. Councillor expenses will be monitored by the Head of Governance and if a Councillor appears to be exceeding the average expenditure in any of the expense categories, further review of such expenses will be undertaken.
- 4.1.2. If the amount exceeded relates to costs incurred as a result of higher than expected Council business, Councillors will be required to put this in writing to the Executive Manager Governance and Organisational Performance to acquit this matter. If the costs incurred are for non-Council business use, the amount of non-Council business use must be reimbursed to Council.
- 4.1.3. To provide an independent line of assurance, monitoring and compliance will be conducted through internal audit and Audit and Risk Committee oversight, as required and on a regular reoccurring basis, as assessed by the annual internal audit planning process.

4.2. Form of Claims

- 4.2.1. Every claim for reimbursement must be lodged using the Expense Reimbursement Form as outlined in Attachment 3.
- 4.2.2. All claims must be accompanied by appropriate documentation. Appropriate documentation means an original tax invoice clearly identifying the expenditure incurred and including an official receipt for payment received.
- 4.2.3. The financial details of the transaction to be provided on the tax invoice must include:
 - name of the supplier and their ABN;
 - description of the product or service provided;
 - date that the service or goods were received;
 - total amount paid, inclusive of GST (if applicable);
 - date the payment was made to the supplier.
- 4.2.4. In the event of lost or misplaced documentation, a Statutory Declaration that includes the specific details of the financial transaction (per above), and available supporting evidence (e.g., copy of bank statement) will be considered appropriate documentation.
- 4.2.5. In the event a receipt does not contain an ABN, an attestation of the expense provided through the reimbursement form will be considered appropriate documentation.
- 4.2.6. Claims must include sufficient detail to demonstrate, in accordance with the Act, that the expense for which reimbursement is claimed is a reasonable bona fide out-of-pocket expense incurred while performing the duties of a Councillor.



4.3. Timeframe for Submission of Claims

- 4.3.1. All claims for reimbursement must be lodged with officers no later than thirty (30) days from the end of the calendar month in which the expense was incurred, excluding the month of June, where claims must be submitted within seven (7) days of month end, to enable finalisation of Council's financial statements.
- 4.3.2. Claims for reimbursement which are not in accordance with clause 4.3.1 will not be processed excepted where Council resolves to accept the claim.
- 4.3.3. All requests for support must be lodged using the Request for Support Form as outlined in Attachment 4.
- 4.3.4. All requests for support must be lodged prior to any expense being incurred. Requests for support where prior approval is required includes additional support required for Councillors with a disability, interstate and international travel, training, and professional development.

4.4. Assessment of Claims

- 4.4.1. The Head of Governance will be required to consider and either authorise or decline all claims. To support the Head of Governance in undertaking this role, officers from the Mayor and Councillor Support team will be required to:-
 - 4.4.1.1. Ensure the correct form has been completed by the Councillor;
 - 4.4.1.2. Ensure that all supporting documentation and evidence has been provided by the Councillor;
 - 4.4.1.3. Check the diary of the Councillor;
 - 4.4.1.4. Check attendance records where these are available e.g. Council meetings, assembly of Council etc. Where these are not available, require the Councillor to provide details of the time they were in attendance at the respective session / meeting;
 - 4.4.1.5. Attest that they have undertaken all relevant steps to assess the claim and make a recommendation for consideration by the Head of Governance.
- 4.4.2. If the Head of Governance has a question about a claim, they will, in the first instance, discuss this matter with the relevant Councillor. If required, the Head of Governance will seek guidance from the Chief Executive Officer. If required, the Chief Executive officer will refer claims to a Council meeting for determination.
- 4.4.3. Mayor and Councillor Support Office staff will provide Councillors with reports on use of Council supplied Myki cards and cab charges and Councillors will be required to acquit the nature of Council business. The Head of Governance will review and sign-off on these acquittals.
- 4.4.4. Reimbursements will be provided monthly by electronic funds transfer.
- 4.4.5. Budgetary limits for different type of expenses are mutually exclusive. If a Councillor does not claim a particular expense or use a particular facility, this cannot be offset against a claim for an additional amount of some other expense or facility.



4.5. Reporting Requirements

- 4.5.1. A monthly report on Councillor expenses and support will tabled at an ordinary Council meeting and, once passed, be published on Council's website. A copy of this report will made available to the Audit and Risk Committee.
- 4.5.2. These reports will outline the total amount of expenses and support provided to Councillors, a breakdown by category of support, and details of the value provided to Council and the community of this support. This will also include a breakdown of any reimbursements made by Councillors and the broad categories of this support.
- 4.5.3. The Audit and Risk Committee will determine the frequency by which internal audit and other reviews are undertaken.
- 4.5.4. An annual report will be provided to The Audit and Risk committee in July of each year summarising Councillor expenses for the prior financial year.
- 4.5.5. Councillors are required to provide a report back to an Ordinary meeting of Council within sixty (60) days of return for any interstate and international travel.

4.6. Policy Review

- 4.6.1. The CEO is authorised to make administrative updates to the policy as required which do not materially alter the purpose or outcomes of the policy.



5. Supplementary policy documents

- 5.1. Appendix 1 - Hourly Rate Caps
- 5.2. Appendix 2 - Professional Development Program
- 5.3. Appendix 3 - Expense Reimbursement Form
- 5.4. Appendix 4 - Request for Support Form
- 5.5. Appendix 5 - Expenses Matrix

6. Related legislation and documents

Child Safe

The City of Port Phillip is a Child Safe organisation and has a legal and moral responsibility to understand and activate their role in preventing, detecting, responding and reporting any Child Safety concerns. Council has zero tolerance for child abuse and is actively committed to embedding a culture of safety, wellbeing and inclusion for children and young people.

Consideration has been given to the Child Safe Standards in the development of this policy.

Gender Equality

Under the *Gender Equality Act 2020*, Council has a positive duty to advance gender equality in our organisation and our community.

Through the development of this policy, Council have assessed any impacts for people of different genders (women/girls, men/boys and people who are gender diverse). While gender impact assessment starts with gender, it also has considered impacts of other social factors such as age, Aboriginality, race, religion, (dis)ability, sexual orientation and socio-economic status.

Other

Council Policies:

- Councillor Code of Conduct
- Governance Rules
- Public Transparency Policy
- Information Privacy Policy

Legislation:

- *Carers Recognition Act 2012*
- *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*
- *Freedom of Information Act 1982*
- *Local Government Act 2020*
- *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*
- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*



- *Gender Equity Bill 2020*



7. Document history

Version	Date of approval/adoption	Changes made	ECM record
2	September 2021	Amendment to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - childcare provisions, - timing requirements for claims - accepting receipt provisions - provides for a maximum amount of preparatory time - allows for retrospective claims - change to the childcare access provision 	
3	June 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Removal of 'South Melbourne Town Hall 24 hour access' provision until building remediation works are completed. - Update to reflect Councillor access to 'End of trip' facilities. - Update to reflect changes to Council parking process and issuing of permits. - Update to include the International Roaming provisions on Council issued communication devices. - Expand the term 'ride share' to include 'e-bicycles' and 'e-scooters' (previously 	



Version	Date of approval/adoption	Changes made	ECM record
		just vehicles). - Update to include operating expenses associated with use of Mayoral vehicle being an expense recorded against the Mayor of the day. - Update to include annual reporting requirement for Audit and Risk Committee.	



Appendix 1 – Hourly Rate Caps

Type of Support	Hourly Rate Cap	Benchmark
Carers Support	Up to \$48 per hour	Victorian Government Support for Carers Guidelines 2019 – respite support
Childcare	Up to \$38.87 per hour	Federal Government Child Care Subsidy



Appendix 2 – Professional Development Program

Officers will work with Councillors at the commencement of their term to tailor this program to individual needs, taking into consideration any mandated training, prior learning, qualifications and experiences, in addition to the budget available each year for activities of this nature.

Year	Focus	Suggested Program
Year One	Induction to local government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance i.e. role of Councillors, Local Government Act, conflict of interest, meeting procedure, chairing of meetings, code of conduct, occupational health & safety, etc. • Financial literacy and budget management • Land use planning and building • Media, including social media • Public speaking
Year Two	Strengthen understanding of governance, strategy, public policy development and citizen engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance Training e.g. Australian Institute of Company Directors • Strategic thinking • Public policy development • Community engagement and involvement in civic decision making • Councillor & Mayoral Sector Development Days – MAV / VLGA • Negotiation and influence
Year Three	As per Year two with an opportunity to focus on specific subject matter that will directly benefit Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As per Year Two with addition of areas of emerging interest that directly support Council policy or program development in a particular area, e.g. waste management, within the Council term
Year Four	Refresher courses as required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairing of Meetings • Councillor & Mayoral Sector Development Days – MAV / VLGA • Short seminars or information sessions on items of interest.

Note: For those Councillors who are returning Councillors, their Year One Professional Development (apart from any mandated training by the Victorian Government) is more likely to take the form of a Year Two and/or Year Three Program. The Professional Development Program in Year Four of a Council term is always focused on refresher activities and short sessions, where information and knowledge can be directly applied in the remainder of the Council term.



Appendix 3 – Expense Reimbursement Form



ATTACHMENT 3 - EXAMPLE - COUNCILLOR EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT FORM

Date 17/12/2019

Submitted by Cr John Smith

Date	Expense Type	Council Business Type	Details	Attachment	Amount	Officer Determination
4/12/2019	Transport	Council Meeting	Travel from St Kilda Town Hall to home after Council meeting by ride share. Council meeting concluded 11.00 PM.	Tax Invoice <input type="checkbox"/> Receipt <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda <input type="checkbox"/>	\$10.00	Approved Council business verified & appropriate receipt provided
Click or tap to enter a date.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Include relevant details to assist in processing your reimbursement e.g. meeting times / agenda for meetings held with constituents	Tax Invoice <input type="checkbox"/> Receipt <input type="checkbox"/> Agenda <input type="checkbox"/>		
Click or tap to enter a date.	Choose an item.	Choose an item.	Include relevant details to assist in processing your reimbursement e.g. meeting times / agenda for meetings held with constituents	Tax Invoice <input type="checkbox"/> Receipt <input type="checkbox"/> Agenda <input type="checkbox"/>		
Total						

<p>Councillor Attestation</p> <p>I, Cr Smith attest that all expenses I am seeking reimbursement for meet the definition of Council Business and are eligible reimbursement requests as outlined in the Councillor Expenses & Support Policy.</p> <p>Signed Date</p>	<p>Officer Attestation</p> <p>I attest that I have checked and applied the Councillor Expenses & Support Policy requirements to my determination in each of the expenses listed above.</p> <p>Signed Date</p>
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Appendix 4 – Request for Support Form



ATTACHMENT 4 - EXAMPLE - COUNCILLOR REQUEST FOR SUPPORT

Date 17/12/2019

Submitted by Cr John Smith

Date	Support Type	Details	Benefit to Council	Attachment	Amount	Officer Determination
4/12/2019	Training & Professional Development	Australian Company Directors Course	As a member of the governing body, there will be a direct benefit to Council and the Port Phillip community by me gaining additional knowledge and experience in governance matters.	Program <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Costs <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	\$7,000	Approved Support provided by reputable provider that will have a direct benefit to Council and the community. Costs are within budgeted amounts.
Total					\$7,000	

<p>Councillor Attestation</p> <p>I Cr John Smith attest that all expenses I am seeking reimbursement for meet the definition of Council Business and are eligible reimbursement requests as outlined in the Councillor Expenses & Support Policy.</p> <p>Signed Date</p>	<p>Officer Attestation</p> <p>I attest that I have checked and applied the Councillor Expenses & Support Policy requirements to my determination in each of the expenses listed above.</p> <p>Signed Date</p>
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Appendix 5 – Expenses Matrix

Entitlements	Criteria	Requirements
Carer Expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs of care must be linked to responsibilities that would normally fulfil as a carer as defined under the <i>Carers recognition Act 2012</i> • Costs can only relate to care • Costs must not be covered by other entitlements • Must hold level 2 first aid qualification and be operating as a registered business • Carer must not be a family member, relative or household member • Centre care must be registered 	<p>Can include 30-minute transit time before and after official business.</p> <p>Must use the Expense Reimbursement Form.</p> <p>Must include original tax invoice and official receipt.</p>
Childcare Expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs can only relate to care of a child and no other domestic duties • Child must be under 16 years of age, unless the child has a disability and requires assistance with daily living tasks • Costs must not be covered by other entitlements • Must be operating as a registered business • Carer must not be a family member, relative or household member • Centre care must be registered 	<p>Can include 30-minute transit time before and after official business.</p> <p>Supporting evidence of disability is required if child is over 16 years.</p> <p>Must use the Expense Reimbursement Form.</p> <p>Must include original tax invoice and official receipt.</p>
Adjustments to Council facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjustments to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council facilities and workspaces - Workplace processes - Provision of specific services, facilities, aids or additional expense entitlements 	<p>Supporting evidence of disability is required.</p> <p>Pre-approval must be given prior to any expenditure.</p>
Meals and Refreshments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be pre-approved conference or seminar where sustenance is not included. • Cost must comply with Council policy 	<p>Pre-approval is required by CEO or Council</p> <p>Must use the Expense Reimbursement Form.</p> <p>Must include original tax invoice and official receipt.</p>
Newspapers and Magazines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be required to support official business 	<p>Must include original tax invoice and official receipt.</p>
Communication Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • International calls and calls to information service providers which incur a significant per minute charge. 	<p>Must provide evidence how these charges relate to Council business.</p>



Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kilometer reimbursement • Myki card reimbursement • Cab charge or registered ride share reimbursement • Bicycle maintenance reimbursement 	<p>Must advise nature of Council business undertaken for each trip.</p> <p>Must use the Expense Reimbursement Form.</p> <p>Must include official receipt.</p>
Professional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit of \$6,000 p.a. for a Councillor and \$10,000 p.a. for Mayor 	<p>Must not exceed \$24,000 for the term, with additional amount if they have held position of Mayor during the term.</p>